



STRESS MANAGEMENT, WORK AND FAMILY BALANCE - RIGHT APPROACHES TO TACKLE FAMILY LIFE AND WORK

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Abstract:

The present life and work run behind the money without understanding the actual value of self-satisfaction. Education and vast opportunities open the door for talented and skilled people. Nowadays, nuclear families are raised at a significant level due to work and financial needs. People are stressed about maintaining family as well as position. This paper investigates how one can avoid stress and tension and how to balance life in the working environment and familial situation. Stress can originate from various sources, such as employment, finances, relationships, and other factors. However, it can also arise internally within the body due to illnesses or inflammation. These anxiety-inducing occurrences trigger the activation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal axis. Upon experiencing stress, our initial response may be a surge of energy. This is because cortisol provides the power to evade predators or combat sickness and inflammation.

Excessive stress can lead to an imbalance in cortisol levels, resulting in a sensation of being over stimulated or tired. You can assess your cortisol levels with a convenient at-home test. Subsequently, as time elapses, we begin to experience fatigue. This is because our bodies are naturally programmed to receive short bursts of energy to pursue our next meal or escape from a lion. However, in our contemporary society, we face persistent and long-lasting stress that gradually depletes our energy and resilience. This can have a profound impact on our mental and physical well-being. Furthermore, we may require a stress detoxification process to eliminate the accumulated stress hormones and restore the optimal functioning of our bodies.

Key Words: Family, Profession, Balance, Stress, Tension, Psychology, Finance

Introduction:

Busy work and family responsibilities are a prevalent cause of stress among employed individuals. In our current culture, which prioritises efficiency, an increasing number of individuals struggle to effectively meet their responsibilities throughout their personal lives and professional careers. Frequently, individuals work to achieve equilibrium between their professional endeavours and their familial obligations, resulting in the prioritisation of one over the other. This behaviour has been linked to various negative consequences, including damaged family connections, decreased productivity at work, and compromised physical and mental well-being. Therefore, individuals must acquire the skills to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal lives. Although the concept may appear intimidating, it may be performed by dedicating sufficient time and attention to prioritise it.

The Reasons for Stress:

Work-related stress occurs when the mind and body react to excessive work expectations that they cannot handle. People may reach a stage when they cannot manage the list of tasks effectively, typically due to excessive chores. Stringent time constraints and augmented job responsibilities result in heightened pressure, escalating stress in the workplace. Certain work situations impose greater emphasis than others, particularly those that demand quicker results or perform within high-pressure industries. However, no individual is exempt from experiencing job-related stress. Workplace stress persists among many workers, including healthcare providers, professionals, teachers, and CEOs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges faced by employee mental health. Studies have revealed that the epidemic worsened economic decline and employment uncertainty. The apprehension of falling unwell, which could lead to absenteeism or permanent incapacitation, also has an enduring effect. Elevated levels of stress correspondingly lead to heightened levels of work-related burnout. In occupations such as healthcare, the demands have reached a critical threshold. Research has indicated that the escalating work requirements have resulted in many nurses resigning due to burnout.

Organisations Must Effectively Handle Work-Induced Stress:

- Increasing the duration of work: Be vigilant of coworkers who commence work early, extend their working hours, and forego breaks. You may also observe these coping methods in your behaviours. These are common indicators of someone grappling with their workload
- Displaying signs of fatigue: Individuals experiencing stress often encounter challenges in achieving restful sleep throughout the nighttime. If a coworker consistently exhibits signs of exhaustion, it could indicate a clear and unmistakable indication of anxiety.
- Heightened absenteeism: Beware of coworkers who abruptly increase their frequency of taking time off. Frequent, intermittent absences due to a persistent issue may indicate an underlying state of stress.
- Abnormal conduct: Stressed individuals often exhibit behaviour that deviates from their usual character. For example, they may begin to arrive tardy, display violent behaviour, or show an abnormally reserved demeanour.
- Decrease in job productivity: Experiencing work-related stress significantly hinders an individual's ability to function optimally. Signs to be mindful of include a deficiency in focus, hesitation, and an incapacity to finish activities.

- Agitation: Irritability and stress are frequently interconnected. Signs to be vigilant include briskness, directness, and excessive assertiveness, significantly if these behavioural tendencies deviate from one's usual demeanour.
- Disengagement from workplace social events: If an individual has work-related stress, they may tend to disengage from any activities associated with their employment, such as out-of-office events like work socials.
- Absence of timeliness: Time management frequently becomes problematic in the context of work-related stress. If a coworker abruptly begins failing to meet deadlines, it may indicate that their workload has become overwhelming.
- Heightened sensitivity: If a coworker is experiencing work-related stress, they may exhibit heightened sensitivity, especially regarding work-related discussions. As an illustration, individuals may discover that remarks or jests regarding their performance are more distressing than they typically would be.
- Devoid of vitality: Stress can have detrimental effects on both mental and physical well-being. Observing a coworker exhibiting unexpected sluggishness and apathy may indicate that work-related stress impacts their physical health. Take initiative in assisting employees who are facing challenges.

Knowing the primary factors that contribute to work-related stress, it is essential to note that assisting employees does not necessarily have to be a response to a problem. Exemplary employers will take proactive and reactive measures to help employees facing difficulties. To effectively support employees or colleagues experiencing work-related stress, it is essential to actively identify probable causes or indicators of stress. After recognising work-induced stress, you can determine the most effective approach to assist each staff member. Taking proactive measures to support your staff may foster a culture of compassion inside your company, greatly enhancing employee performance. A healthy work-life balance entails the maintenance of a harmonic equilibrium between one's professional and personal life. It involves deliberately overseeing your time and energy to fulfil work-related and personal obligations while prioritising self-care and well-being. According to this school of thought, in a perfect world, we would have the opportunity to dedicate our time after work to activities that enrich us. This may entail socialising with friends and family or pursuing a personal interest. "It provides a number of features that aim to improve the communication skills of students, such as lessons, practice, progress and recording. The content of each feature is interesting, and you may study it repeatedly in order to improve your ability to speak" (Dr. M. Kannadhasan 26).

Several Attributes of a Robust Work-Life Equilibrium May Encompass:

Establishing boundaries entails creating distinct parameters between professional and personal life by delineating particular working hours and segregating work-related responsibilities from personal endeavours. Effective time utilisation: Effectively managing and arranging duties, ensuring adequate time allocation for work obligations and personal endeavours, such as quality time with family, pursuing hobbies, or achieving personal aspirations. Stress management involves the implementation of several tactics to regulate stress levels effectively. These strategies may include practising mindfulness, engaging in regular physical activity, taking breaks, and disconnecting from work-related tasks when necessary.

Flexibility is the capacity to modify and alter one's schedule to address unexpected situations or personal needs while maintaining job obligations. The significance of work-life balance is ensuring a harmonious equilibrium between professional commitments and personal life. Individuals require diversity to maintain good health and sustained energy levels over a prolonged period, much like in their dietary choices. To achieve work-life balance, individuals must participate in various activities and prioritise rest. It is common for us to mistakenly believe that we can maintain high levels of productivity at all times or that spending eight hours at work automatically results in eight hours of work output. Nevertheless, attaining such a goal proves arduous, if not unattainable, for numerous individuals.

In addition, excessive workloads have detrimental effects on both individuals and companies. Individuals who are excessively dedicated to work and have difficulty prioritising self-care are more susceptible to experiencing burnout, weariness, and health problems associated with stress. Inadequate work-life balance might result in employees working longer hours while experiencing decreased productivity. An unhealthy work-life balance refers to a situation when an individual's professional commitments significantly outweigh their personal and leisure activities, leading to a detrimental impact on their overall well-being and quality of life. Conversely, an imbalanced work-life dynamic arises when work becomes too burdensome and supersedes personal life, adversely affecting an individual's overall welfare. Indicators of an imbalanced work-life equilibrium may encompass:

Perpetual labour: Consistently engaging in extended work hours, which may encompass weekends and holidays, without adequate opportunities for rest, leisure, or personal pursuits. Lack of attention to one's personal life: Compromising personal connections, hobbies, and leisure activities as a result of overwhelming work obligations. Burnout refers to experiencing physical, mental, and emotional weariness due to prolonged stress and pressure associated with work. Insufficient attention to personal well-being: Neglecting to give proper importance to self-care practices, such as engaging in physical exercise, getting sufficient sleep, and taking leisure time, leads to a decline in both physical and mental well-being.

Strained connections: Facing challenges in maintaining robust relationships with family, friends, and loved ones as a result of work-related obligations. It is important to note that attaining a harmonious equilibrium between work and personal life might differ across individuals, depending on their unique circumstances and preferences. It is establishing a balance that suits you and enhances your general state of being.

Indicators of an Imbalanced Work-Life Equilibrium:

Inadequate work-life balance can have a significantly more significant influence than simply neglecting physical exercise. A study revealed a positive correlation between working more than 55 hours per week and an increased susceptibility to stroke. Equally long work hours are also linked to an increased exposure to anxiety and sadness. Furthermore, a separate study discovered that even after accounting for typical sleep patterns, an increase in working hours was associated with a deterioration in physical well-being. Work-life balance, by its inherent nature, significantly influences all aspects of your life. It manifests variably among individuals. The following are eight attributes commonly linked to impaired balance. The quality of your

interactions, both within and outside your work environment, is deteriorating. You may have heightened irritability towards colleagues and exhibit emotional detachment from your loved ones.

During non-employment, one may perceive that everything appears dull or insignificant. Lacking the motivation to engage in any activity unless it is obligatory. You frequently decline invites, exacerbating your social isolation from your peers. Allocation of substantial funds towards the external procurement of assistance for individual responsibilities. Laundry, dishes, and mail accumulate, awaiting you to attend to them. The difficulty allocating time for rest when you are unwell, experiencing mental pressure, or have to attend to personal obligations. You have no recollection of your previous vacation or intentions of embarking on a new one. The envision envision engaging in your current occupation indefinitely. Despite being employed in a field or organisation that was formerly cherished, it seems inconceivable to imagine sustaining the current state of affairs for an extended period. There is a constant sense that regardless of your current activity, you have an underlying feeling that you should be engaged in a different task. Over time, the absence of guidance frequently results in an existential crisis.

Strategies for Enhancing Work-Life Balance:

In reality, no universal remedy can be applied to everyone. "Stress may be explained from a personality perspective which triggers health and cognitive effects via mechanism unconnected to environmental factors" (Bolger & Schilling 91). Additionally, you might need to experiment with the time frame that appears most applicable to your situation. Attempting to attain equilibrium within a single day might be exasperating, but it may be more feasible to establish balance over a week or longer. To ascertain the optimal equilibrium for oneself, one must acquire the skill of introspection and evaluate the outcomes accordingly.

Here are Some Important Strategies to Achieve a Healthy Work-Life Balance:

- Anticipate and prepare in advance: Strategies to integrate job tasks with recreational, social, or physical activities. If you have multiple consecutive virtual meetings, consider participating in them while engaging in a walking activity. If the ambient noise permits, you may consider taking a call outdoors or inviting a friend to collaborate with you.
- Embrace the cognitive processes of your brain: Utilise productivity strategies such as employing a Pomodoro timer to engage in brief, concentrated work periods. Eliminate any additional sources of disturbance to maximise your productivity.
- Allocate certain time intervals for various tasks: Allocate specific time slots for reviewing and addressing messages, attending meetings, and engaging in cognitively demanding tasks. It is beneficial to schedule these duties based on the periods when you are most productive.
- Establish a specific time to conclude work: An often-used phrase states, "Work expands to occupy the available time," when you work remotely, it becomes even more effortless to let work infringe upon personal time. Establish a designated time to conclude your work for the day and strengthen this commitment by shutting down work-related gadgets, securing your office, or arranging a subsequent engagement.
- Utilise technologies to assist in disconnecting from digital devices: Utilise a mobile application to restrict access to websites that cause distraction during the daytime and then restrict access to work-related resources outside of working hours. Limit your work activities to a single device or designate one device exclusively for non-work purposes to enable a complete disconnection.
- Indulge in a midday meal outside of the workplace or partake in a mealtime gathering with colleagues: Take the lunch break outside or engage with your coworkers despite working remotely. The alteration in tempo will be refreshing and, naturally, will serve as a reminder for you to consume nourishment. "Organisations are keeping up with this trend to enhance performance which can lead to greater competitive advantage" (Al-Damoe, Ab Hamid & Omar 314).
- Allocate a period of rest: When you are constantly at home, you often attempt to continue working while being ill, which would have undoubtedly caused you to stay home if you were at the office. Taking time off, including sick leave, personal leave, vacations, and bereavement leave, is crucial for nurturing your overall well-being.
- Cultivate awareness: Mindfulness amplifies the difficulty of disregarding imbalance. Engaging in mindfulness practices such as meditation or breath awareness enhances your ability to attune to your emotions and physical sensations. Attending to these emotions aids in developing the ability to recognise instances where one may be repressing a requirement to engage in a task. Resuming work on the spreadsheet becomes challenging once you become aware of the growling sensation in your stomach.
- Discover a passion outside of your professional life to participate actively: A compelling activity to look forward to after work facilitates disengaging from work-related messaging and adhering to a planned end time for the day. Engaging in hobbies enhances our vigour and liveliness. Engaging in play and experiencing a sense of creativity allows us to rejuvenate ourselves and bring renewed energy to our work.
- Reevaluate tasks that evoke a strong desire for equilibrium: Suppose your job seems entirely disconnected from the things that ignite your curiosity, passion, vitality, and sense of purpose. In that case, it may be necessary to examine how you might alter either the nature of your work or your approach. Although employment cannot fulfil all of one's demands for purpose, meaning, social connection, and challenge, it is reasonable to anticipate that work will offer instances of fulfilment, accomplishment, and fellowship. "As individual response to stressful situation varies, so is the coping strategy adopted to cushion its effect" (Abe, Fields and Atiku 206).
- Engage in effective communication with your supervisor: The worry of inadequacy often worsens the problem of having an unsatisfactory balance between work and personal life. Engaging in conversations with your leaders can assist you in determining the most critical areas to allocate your time. If there is indeed an excessive workload, it may be appropriate to discuss the possibility of recruiting additional assistance or optimising specific duties.
- Engage in collaboration with a coach or therapist: Engaging the services of a professional can prove to be immensely useful if you are experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed, stuck, or unsure of how to initiate the disconnection

process. A coach or counsellor can inquire effectively, assist you in determining which modifications will have the most significant influence, and guide you in initiating them. Here's a piece of advice: Begin with something tiny. While you may desire an improvement in your work-life balance, it is essential to acknowledge that your work habits have been developed gradually and are unlikely to undergo immediate transformation. Attempting to limit oneself to a specific number of hours to decrease screen usage will likely result in frustration. Increasing the likelihood of maintaining a new habit can be achieved by commencing with a smaller objective, such as including a single five-minute period without technology into your daily routine.

Seven Strategies Managers Can Employ to Facilitate their Workers' Work-Life Balance:

Establishing a robust work-life equilibrium might provide challenges. As a manager and a leader who possesses empathy, you can assist your staff (as well as yourself) by creating avenues for them to implement these modifications. Managers can help their staff in cultivating a healthy work-life balance through the following seven methods:

- Instruct your staff to disconnect the power supply: Promote refraining from bringing laptops and work phones on vacation among your team members. While you may assume it is unnecessary to state explicitly, the recipients will value the explicit authorisation.
- Provide staff with many opportunities to establish connections: Facilitate virtual gatherings such as happy hours, birthday parties, book clubs, and other events to foster social connections. Schedule your lunch break in your schedule to demonstrate that you also take time to eat. "Lack of job flexibility may affect the ability of the family to maintain a balance between work and family, thus resulting in conflict" (Lazarus 58).
- Provide employees with comprehensive information regarding their benefits: Ensure that your staff know that sick leave and paid time off (PTO) are included in their overall compensation package, and remember to utilise these benefits for yourself as well. Regarding the matter of taking time off, one's actions carry more weight than their words.
- Communicate with subordinates to receive updates and ensure progress: Allocate a specific portion of your check-ins to inquire about the welfare of your employees. It may be necessary to infer or deduce the unspoken information. Failure to meet deadlines or a lack of prompt response may indicate being overwhelmed.
- Exemplify leadership for your team: Engage in ambulatory meetings, incorporate your children into Zoom sessions (acknowledging their presence), or schedule meetings with sufficient intervals for relaxation.
- Familiarise yourself with the company's culture and established standards: Avoid normalising a culture centred around instant messaging. Explicitly communicate that messages delivered during non-working hours do not necessitate immediate response and refrain from equating promptness with active involvement.
- Adhere to designated work hours: Avoid scheduling meetings outside of regular working hours. Navigating time zone differences can provide a challenge. Promote a culture where your employees adhere to a predetermined work schedule and monitor those who routinely work beyond regular working hours.

Achieving Work-Life Equilibrium While Working Remotely:

Working remotely could be perceived as facilitating the attainment of work-life equilibrium. Nevertheless, remote labour has its own set of difficulties. Engaging in professional activities outside of the office often leads to multitasking, diversions, and challenges in maintaining a rigid schedule, negatively impacting productivity and maintaining a clear boundary between work and personal life. "Organisations around the world have seen the need to adopt WLBS as part of HR strategies to help employees cope with stressors and attract the best talent in a competitive labour market" (Patterson 65).

Conclusion:

Preceding the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, roughly 20 per cent of the labour force in the United States engaged in remote labour. Almost instantaneously, the figure surged to nearly 70 per cent. Homes have transformed into multifunctional spaces, such as workstations, classrooms, dining areas, recreational zones, and even fitness centres. There are discernible advantages. Bringing your lunch to work has become increasingly convenient, eliminating the hassle of rush hour. Additionally, you can quickly start a laundry wash just a minute before your next meeting. Nevertheless, participating in numerous activities within the same environment poses challenges for your brain in differentiating between work and relaxation. We lack the customary indicators of individuals departing from the workplace, which serve as signals for concluding work. Workspace is confined to a small area in your bedroom or dining room table; it becomes challenging to disengage from work once you have finished your tasks. Consequently, succumbing to the temptation of checking your email again becomes effortless. Furthermore, while we do reclaim time by eliminating the commute, numerous individuals yearn for the opportunity to have a dedicated period for transitioning between their personal and professional lives. Amidst social alienation, our ability to maintain a healthy equilibrium between work and personal life is already facing challenges. While our profession has primarily adapted to the pandemic, many of our leisure activities and preferred outlets have not. Consequently, it is even more effortless to become engrossed in tasks. The meeting with the Marketing team is anticipated to offer little of the desired social engagement and stimulation typically experienced at the gym, a concert, or socialising with friends.

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