

Personal Balance

By Katie Darden

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(NOTE: Although this article was originally written for a woman's publication, the same basic principles of self-care apply for each of us, regardless of gender.)

Women are natural supporters. We take care of our families – our children, our spouses and our parents. It's a natural extension for us to take care of others who need us. That's why so many women "naturally" find themselves in a supportive role in business – whether the job title is clerical support, secretary, or administrative assistant.

Even those of us who have never actually held the "secretarial" title, find that in general, we are more concerned than our male counterparts with the well-being of our employees. As women, we tend to empathize with the child-care and personal life issues when they come up because they are so close to us in our traditional roles.

Unfortunately, we caregivers (male and female alike) don't always take as good care of ourselves. To be successful in our modern multi-tasking world, it's just as important for us to be concerned and considerate with ourselves as with our employees.

And that means that sometimes you must simply put yourself first, regardless of deadlines or other outside requirements.

This translates into time for yourself and your personal needs. Each of us is different, and our individual needs will be different. Just as we have schedules that require us to block out time for various projects, it's important to create appointments with ourselves to take care of our needs and nurture the creative parts of ourselves.

Take time to rejuvenate yourself – in whatever way is important to you. This also means taking the time to just "be". As Deepak Chopra says, we are human beings, not "human doings" or "human thinkings". When you take time to "re- create" yourself, not only do you recharge your own batteries, you will discover that ultimately you have even more to give to your work and to others.

So pay attention to what is important to you. Discover and develop a personal regimen that is right for you.

Notice your diet and what works. Understanding your body and what it responds to well will give you a better sense of control and may ease some of the bodily tensions of keeping to rigid and artificially imposed schedules. This could mean spending 2 hours on Sunday reading, doing your

nails (or waxing the car), or walking on the beach with the dog. It could mean working out with weights or creating a regimen for yourself that includes a walk every morning.

Personal time also means recognizing that no matter how efficient and effective we may be on the job, being a superwoman/superman is an unrealistic goal. Life has a natural order of activity and rest. We have the seasons, and we have the agricultural growing cycles to remind us. Creating balance is what life does naturally. If we want to offer 100% of ourselves in our business roles, then we have to play as hard as we work.

Being a whole and complete person means taking good care of ourselves, too. Maintaining our mental, physical and spiritual health and vitality will go a long way towards insuring our longevity and business success over time.

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