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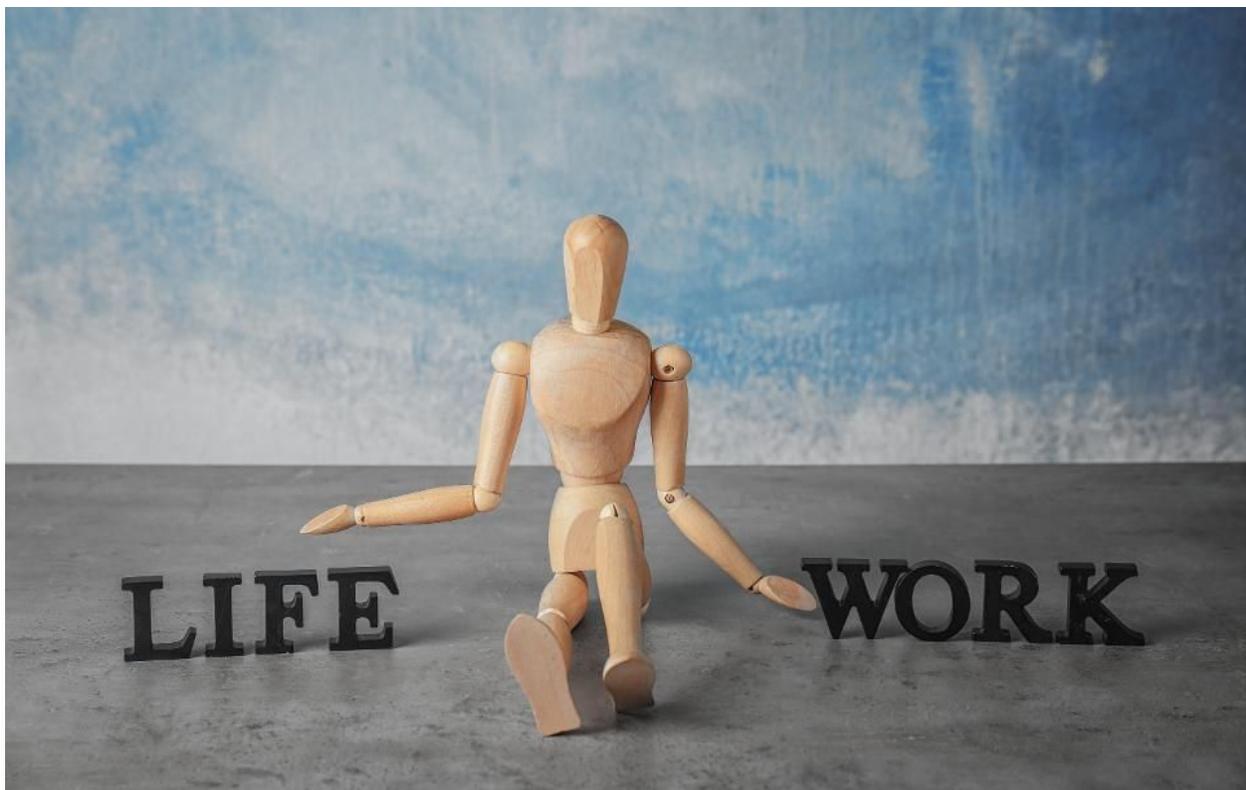
How To Prioritize Yourself And Work At The Same Time

Shelley Zalis

[ForbesWomen](#)

TWEET THIS

- Get comfortable putting yourself in the equation every day.
- Give yourself—and your team—permission to take a time out.



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The topic of work-life balance comes up all the time in the Girls' Lounge. We actually don't think that the word "balance" should be in your vocabulary. There is no such thing as 50/50. You don't turn one thing on and the other thing off. Life is not so neat, and does not function in time blocks.

Rather, we have one life with many dimensions. These dimensions include work, family, community, friends and—we often forget about an important one—ourselves! At different stages of our life, we might need to prioritize differently, especially women in the messy middle. This is a time in our lives where we might have growing responsibilities at home and growing responsibilities at work.

In general, women often put others first. We are nurturers...which is wonderful, but as Alexia Brue, co-founder and CEO of Well+Good, says, “Taking care of yourself and making sure your own batteries (and not just your cell phone's) are getting continuously recharged is really important in order to be effective at work and contribute to societal change.”

Here are some ideas on how to take care of yourself—no matter how busy you are at work, at play and impacting change!

Take a “me” moment

Putting yourself in the equation should not be something that's one and done, or practiced only when you're reaching burnout. “Self-care is simply every day, healthy rituals that keep your body and mind energized,” says Brue. “It could be as simple as going to bed every night at the same time, scheduling a regular massage or lighting candles and taking a pause. It's finding whatever recharges you, and then incorporating it as a ritual into your life.”

Get comfortable putting yourself in the equation every day. My “me” time ritual is a daily bath.

Be present—your way

Unplug in the moment. I do not bring my phone to the dinner table in order to eliminate the temptation to always “be on.” I want to be fully present and focused on who I’m with. You can’t be a little of everything with everyone at the same time.

“Technology has created this always-on expectation and now there are so many platforms for communication. It’s leaving people feeling very depleted. In fact, Google searches for 'self-care' are now 20% higher than they were at this time last year,” says Brue. “Establishing guidelines around communication can be really helpful in making sure that when people are not at work, they can truly *not* be at work. That gives them permission to focus on their families and their lives outside of work.”

For example, Brue’s company recently shared guidelines that employees won’t Slack after 7 pm, and, if an email is sent after normal business hours, responses are not expected until the morning.

What if you work at a company where an almost-instant response is the expectation? “Each person needs to navigate the understood or implied rules of the workplace culture you’re in because that’s part of succeeding at a company, but hopefully more companies will understand that people will be more productive and creative when they have time for themselves,” says Brue.

Embrace an “integration” mindset

I think the best way to sum it up is called “life integration.” A day in the life for me includes every aspect of what I need to do in the moment. I ink my personal commitments into my daily diary so that they are equally prioritized with my work commitments. I do not ever say to myself, ‘I wish I could do this

if I could find the time.' I make the time I need when I need it and manage to get it all done...my way.

[Studies](#) have found that even [short breaks can boost your focus](#) and productivity. “Self-care doesn’t have to be time-consuming,” say Brue. “Even five minutes of mediation can be grounding and give you energy. You can book a conference room or find a phone booth and sneak away for a few moments to put on a mediation app.” Some to try: [Buddhify](#), [Calm.com](#) and [10% Happier](#).

Other ideas for carving out some time for yourself at work might include taking a walk around the block, [journaling](#) for a few minutes or doing light stretches at your desk.

Create your own formula

I multitask on steroids pretty much every day. I have an always on-the-go schedule, which means I have to check in with myself often. If I’m exhausted, I take time to myself with no apologies. I travel every week and so my commitment to myself is a no-work-on-airplanes policy. It’s my time to unwind and catch up on all my TV shows.

“It’s really about knowing yourself and finding that self-care recipe that works for you,” says Brue. “For me personally, exercise is my stress relief. I feel more patient, creative and happier when I work out every day. For someone else, it could be completely different.”

Amy Stanton, founder and CEO of Stanton & Company, a full-service marketing and PR agency, advocates learning our personal boundaries so that we know clearly when things become too much to handle. She also suggests that we recalibrate our boundaries as life changes occur—this way, we can shift our focuses as needed. Sometimes we need to work more on our mental

health while at other times, it's about our physical health. Listen patiently to your body and to your needs so that you can give yourself the best kind of TLC.

Make it a team effort

Self-care doesn't have to be a solo practice. In Stanton's office, several of her employees decided to participate in weekly lunches where each employee takes a turn cooking a healthy lunch for her co-workers. These moments allow people to share recipes, ideas and to learn about new health-driven ingredients. Stanton also suggests shifting work happy hours to group exercise dates that allow people to try a new fitness class. Stanton's office recently signed up for a boxing class together. In addition to boosting endorphins, these healthy activities are another way to bond over something other than those spreadsheets. I personally love to go to Soul Cycle with my girlfriends.

Lead with generosity

Give yourself—and your team—permission to take a time out. As we all know, managers often set the tone for workplace culture. For cultures to shift, it's helpful for managers to walk the talk and demonstrate to their co-workers that self care is a priority. Most important, know that a better “me” leads to a better “we.”