Work / Life Balance & Time Management

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# My Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.S., Ph.D., Columbia University (1986, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs (post PhD)</td>
<td>NYNEX Science &amp; Technology (1990-94)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Williams College (1994-present)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>CRA-W, LACS, CS2013, College and Research Community (ICML, AAAI, SIGCSE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Married to Andrew (1984)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Son (college senior)</td>
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<td>Daughter (college sophomore)</td>
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<td>Elderly mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Family activities, time with friends, outdoors (hiking, biking, skiing), travel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Seven places for your time

- Personal
- Partnership
- Family
- Home
- Job
- Friends
- Community
Seven places for your time

- Personal
- Partnership
- Family
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- Friends
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- Teaching
- Research and Scholarship
- Service: Department, School, Community
- Career development
- Advising and Mentoring
Seven places for your time

- **Personal**
  - Physical (exercise)
  - Intellectual (reading novels)
  - Spiritual (meditation)

- **Home**
  - Just chores (cleaning)
  - Enjoyable tasks (cooking, gardening)

- Partnership
- Family
- Job
- Friends
- Community
Time commitments will differ

- Different focus at different institutions (even within the category of “teaching colleges/universities”)
Time commitments will change

- Status of career
  - Grad student
  - Pre/post tenure
  - Assistant / Associate / Professor
- Single/Married/Partnered
- Ages of children, parents, …
Maintaining work-life balance: Know your goals

- Know your long-term and short-term goals.
  - Have goals for all your roles, not just work.
- Prioritize them.
- Use them as a guide.

- There was a time when I found it useful to prominently post a list for myself.
“You will never ‘find’ time for anything. If you want time, you must make it.”

Charles Bruxton
Maintaining life-work balance: 
Carve out personal time

- Put it on your to-do list.
- Schedule a regular activity (or a special one) with a partner or friend
- Streamline & parallelize
- Hire help when you can
- Get good child/parental care
  - Aim not just for care that gives you time, but for quality of care that gives you peace of mind
- Share responsibilities with friends & family
Time management: Enemies of effectiveness

- Mental clutter (and other clutter)
- Procrastination
- Perfectionism
- Overcommitment
- Indecision
- Poor prioritization
“It’s not enough to know the projects you’re working on.”

101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress by Robert W. Bly
Time management: Get organized

- To-do lists
  - Long term
  - Weekly
  - Daily
- Keep a calendar
- Break your day into manageable segments
- Be realistic about timing of tasks
- Allow time for interruptions and distractions
- Set aside time to review your schedule
  - Commit to revisiting and updating your schedule if you need to
“Why do hour increments work so well? Precisely because they give you a deadline - one hour - to get things done. Work expands so as to fill time available for its completion.”

101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress by Robert W. Bly
Time management: Overcome procrastination

● Break your task/day into segments
  ● One-hour increments good

● Reward yourself for completed tasks
Time management: Overcome perfectionism

- Break your task/day into segments
  - One-hour increments good
- Reward-Stop yourself
  - “My flight will arrive in Atlanta in 30 minutes. That’s when I will need to be done.”
Time management: Design a good workspace

- A cluttered desk can mean a cluttered head
  - Develop a filing system that works for you
- Make the space comfortable
  - Don’t underestimate the importance of a good chair, pen, cup of coffee…
Time management: Avoid distractions

- Acknowledge your bad habits
  - This is another case where I’ve sometimes found it useful to post it where I can see it.
- Set aside quiet time
  - It’s ok to close the door from time to time!
  - Put it on your schedule/to-do list
- Set aside time for email, phone calls
  - Or, if you’re like me and can’t resist email, find a productive workspace where it’s hard to read email
- Pick a time to work when others aren’t there
- If a stray worry, idea, to-do item pops into your head, write it down and deal with it later.
One cannot manage too many affairs: like pumpkins in the water, one pops up while you try to hold down the other.

Chinese Proverb
Time management:
Saying “yes”

- Saying “yes” to one thing means saying “no” to something else.
  - Or, at least, it means having less time for the things you’ve already committed to do.
- Does it fit into your goals?
  - Don’t fall victim to thinking you must take all career opportunities presented.
- Don’t do it out of guilt
  - Say “yes” or “no” to the task, not the person.
- Take some time before you decide.
Time management: Saying “no”

- Do it as soon as possible.
- Suggest someone else who might be available and want to do it.
- If you really want to say “yes”
  - Decline but indicate that you’d like to be asked again. Indicate when you’ll be available.
  - Set parameters.
    - “I can’t review 10 papers, but I can do 5.”
    - “I could get it done in 6 weeks rather than 4.”
    - “I’d need such-and-such resources…”
Life is full

- Family, friends, work will place demands on our time.
  - Pressures don’t disappear; they evolve.
  - In a moment of “no pressure”, enjoy!
- Enjoy the positive
  - Our family and friends are amazing!
  - There are so many cool things we can do!
  - We have awesome jobs!
- Empower yourself for the rest
  - Remember there are only 24 hours in a day, and you’re human
  - Live to your priorities
References

- Bly, Robert W. *101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress.*
- Prochaska-Cue, Kathy. *Thirteen Timely Tips for More Effective Personal Time Management.*
- Covey, Stephen. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.*
With special thanks to

- Deborah Knox (2003)
- Joan Francioni (2005)
- Jan Cuny (2007)
- Carla Brodley, Carla Ellis, Judy Goldsmith, Tessa Lau (2009)
- Marie des Jardins (2012)

… who’ve given similar presentations from which I’ve borrowed for this one.
Possible discussion points

- Ideas for:
  - Getting out of a commitment gracefully?
  - Allocating thinking time; setting aside longer periods of time for projects that have high start-up/shut-down cost?
  - Dealing with a steady stream of students?
  - Coordinating time management with others (colleagues, students, partners, family, friends)?
    - Reconciling your need to manage time with the culture of your department/institution?