



My Work/Life Balance Lessons

by Kathleen Beausoleil

Just like other working mothers at Turner and elsewhere, I struggle with the work-life balance issues that come with a busy job and family responsibilities. I have three children ages 7, 12 and 15. As all parents know, every year brings new parenting challenges – when they're very young, you hurry to get them to daycare so you aren't late for work. When they're older, you struggle to attend enough of their games or other activities. The challenges are always there – they just vary from year to year.

Because of this, I have made strategic choices – about the work I do, where I live, and the people I surround myself with – that have made it more likely that I will achieve my goals at work and at home.

Here are some strategies I have found that have helped me during the past 15 years.

Specialize. I have focused on a specific skill set – estimating – that I enjoy. Knowing I can do my job well day in and day out after 20 years with Turner is less stressful for me than continually learning a new job every few years. This, in turn, leaves me with more energy for the responsibilities of parenting when I leave work.

Minimize distractions at work. Multi-tasking is popular, but I find that when I'm doing too many things at once, I don't do any one thing well. That's why when I talk with someone in my office or attend a meeting, I don't peek at e-mail or take calls. This makes me a better listener, which in turn helps me do my job better.

Select a position with family-friendly hours. Any working mother knows it's nearly impossible to be on a construction job site by 7:00 a.m. every day. I have spent most of my career in pre-construction so that I can work in the office, where the hours are a better fit with my family's schedule.

Live as close to your workplace as you can. I don't want to spend a lot of time commuting. For me, the extra time at home – not on the highway – is worth any other trade-offs.

Find a regular way to stay connected with family. We use dinners together to catch up on the day's activities. It's one way our children see that we're interested in what they're doing.

Assemble a personal support network you can count on. The parents in our family's carpool network make sure that my three children and theirs get to school or to and from after-school activities without problems.

Exercise. Working out helps reduce stress while giving

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Life's Everyday Magic - Don't Miss It!

Every day there are certain moments that can multiply the enjoyment, value and balance of your life much more than others. These are the magic moments you don't want to miss. **(Reading time 120 seconds)**

A few years back our company held a meeting at a coastal hotel. At the end of the day ten of us took a couple of pontoon boats and went exploring. We ended up on a tiny island with no vegetation, just sand, shells and water.

After an impromptu baseball game, one of our managers, Mike, and I sat down together. As we talked, Mike scooped up a handful of tiny shells. "Look at these, Jim. They are beautiful." And indeed they were. Within reach of where we were sitting there were thousands of shells smaller than the size of your fingernail but with colors as big as a sunset.

The next day, when it came time to recap meeting highlights, Mike's was not directly related to our business. "My highlight" Mike said, "was the shells. I never imagined there could be so many beautiful things right under my feet. I could have stayed in that one spot for hours just digging a little deeper to find what other gems I would discover. It was magical."

Almost every single day of your life is filled with moments that are magical gems, if you are looking for them. These are the moments worth smiling about, worth dwelling on, worth celebrating, either quietly or celebrating loudly.

But too often we miss those moments when they are happening. You know that hug that you occasionally give or get in the morning. That can be a special moment, a happy moment. It can be a motivation for your whole day, if you are really there, if you really feel it. Appreciate, in that moment, all that relationship brings to you.

By dwelling a bit on those moments, when they occur, you can capture that magic and add it to your life.

But if you are not there, if your mind is thinking, "What do I have to do when I get to work" or "get to school" or wherever you are headed...you've missed the magic because...you've missed the moment.

If you miss the magic in the moments, then you miss the magic in your whole life.

Life is a constant series of "right nows". The past was now, just a second ago. The future will be now, by the time you finish reading this sentence. If you don't make the most of **now**, neither your past nor future will have the magic you want it to.

One of the world's most beautiful sunset drives is on U.S. 1 in the Florida Keys from the beginning of Channel Two bridge to the end of Channel Five bridge.

Each dusk brings a changing vista of clouds, water, islands, boats, birds - all shimmering back on each other, and on you. And the colors, both brilliant and subtle, seem to capture nature at its most vibrant.

If you stop your car and step out, every sense is engaged. The smell of the sea lures you. You taste the salt on the winds sigh. The gulls call. The warmth

me an opportunity to set goals related to personal, rather than professional, achievement. And doing my weight training or running when everyone else is still sleeping eliminates any guilt I might feel about taking time away from my family to do something for myself. It also gives me the good health I need to take care of my family and to do my best for Turner.

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Quotes from Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"If you let yourself be absorbed completely, if you surrender completely to the moments as they pass, you live more richly those moments."

"One can get just as much exultation in losing oneself in a little thing as in a big thing. It is nice to think how one can be recklessly lost in a daisy."

Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001) was an American aviator and writer. She accompanied her husband, Charles Lindbergh, on many of his flights and was also the first female licensed glider pilot in the United States. Her books include North to the Orient, Listen! the Wind, and Gift from the Sea.

of the breeze envelops. You at once feel so alive, yet so at rest.

This engagement of all of your senses is magical.

There will be a sunset in your world today that is magical in its own way, if you engage it the way a Keys' sunset would engage you. If you open your senses and mind and emotions to the moment when it occurs.

Today you will have a child or customer or friend try to ask you a question. You may have someone to give you a kiss hello when you get home tonight. In each one of those encounters focus on fully being there.

To be answering thoughtfully, or to be listening fully or to be kissing well. Really be with that person of the moment who is trying to connect with you. Like watching a sunset, bring all of your senses into focus in that moment. Doing so can make that conversation, that simple encounter, that kiss magical.

Since you don't know in advance when the magic moments will occur, you need to be in focus on every moment.

When your mind is wandering somewhere else while someone important is trying to engage you, or a bit of beauty offers itself up to the corner of your eye...stop yourself, and say, "Whoa, I'm missing my life here." Then focus on the magic the moment may bring you.

That full focus on the "now" is the key way you create great moments for yourself and all the people around you. And how you create days filled with great moments, and months and years and a lifetime of wonderful achievement and enjoyment.

Open your mind, your emotions and all your senses wide to the magic of now.

Don't just glimpse it. Don't still be half engrossed in that meeting you just left, or drifting ahead to that other meeting you have tomorrow.

Instead, really absorb the joy that surrounds you NOW, WHILE IT IS HAPPENING. Dig a little deeper, dwell a little longer; listen a little harder to what and who is in front of you now.

The magic is there. Don't miss it. It will present itself every day.

Enjoy the moment. Enjoy your life.

Jim Bird, Publisher

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