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## South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

### Get what you give

#### Prioritize to make sure work, family time is in balance

Lisa Schryver, Tribune Media Services

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The delicate equilibrium between work and family is an occupational hazard that affects many workers.

Nanice Ellis, a work/life balance counselor and author of "The Infinite Power of You: 22 Secrets to Discovering Your Power" (Aardvark Global Publishing Company LLC, \$12.95) says gaining balance in your life starts with taking a close look at every aspect of it.

"If you are ready to start creating a life of balance, it is important that you honestly evaluate each area of your life in terms of how much you give and receive," says Ellis. "This takes a non-judgmental approach and the willingness to go out of your current comfort zone. The first thing to do is make a list of all the areas of your life and next to each one, mark a percentage of how much you give in that area and how much you receive."

What you "receive" includes support from others, awards, good feelings, time, energy, money, service, attention and anything else that fills you, Ellis says. For example, in the area of career, you might give 80 percent but only receive 20 percent.

"In some areas of your life it will be obvious to you in terms of what you give and receive, but in others you will have to trust your intuition," she adds. "Once your list is complete, choose the area of life that is the most out of balance, [meaning] you give much more than you receive. This is the area of your life that has been draining you the most [and] by getting this area in balance first, it will naturally give you more energy and you will get the biggest results."

Other experts say work/life balance is simply a matter of changing the way we think about our lives.

"I believe life/work balance is a myth," says Dr. Gaby Cora, a wellness coach and author of "Leading Under Pressure: Maximize Your Health While Building Your Wealth" (Executive Health & Wealth Institute, Inc., \$17). "The secret is to integrate all our needs and wants into one life, of which work composes just one part."

The key is to prioritize your needs and wants, Cora says. Create a schedule of your needs and responsibilities. This should include all your responsibilities for one day, including work, parenting and time for yourself. "We can't be in three places at the same time," she explains. "We will benefit from

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making some rules. For example, being present during our spouse and family's birthday and spending major holidays together."

Time with family is something that easily gets swept under the rug sometimes. But it's important to treat a family gathering with just as much importance as you would a meeting with a client.

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