

The Workaholic's Guide to Maintaining Relationships

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Balancing work and play can be quite the challenge for those of us who prefer the former over the latter. The rush that we get from a job well done is quite inexplicable to those who don't hold the same values.

This gap in ideology often becomes the source of friction between a workaholic and their loved ones. No matter how much satisfaction work brings, workaholics know that relationships are undeniably important in their lives.

However, they aren't always great at getting that point across. For all those situations where work and relationships clash, here's a few pointers to keep in mind.

MAKE YOUR PARTNER FEEL HEARD

Make sure that your partner feels like you have considered their presence in your life when making decisions, such as taking up new responsibilities or a new position at work. Maybe bring up the possibility of such an occurrence beforehand. Take the time to explain the benefits of the opportunity, while also discussing the cons – usually the fact that you'll have even less free time on your hands. Genuinely listen to opinions, and consider any alternatives they may provide. You might not always be right, so inviting another person into the decision can always provide a valid perspective.

DON'T BRING YOUR WORK HOME

I know this isn't easy. Jobs these days are demanding and the concept of finite work hours is a blurred one. Even though you love it, your work is still the source of a lot

of stress in your life. There are times when the need to rant about workplace incidents is almost overwhelming. However, when you're with your loved ones, limit the amount of times you bring up such topics. Don't talk about work-related issues for longer than roughly five to ten percent of the conversation. If you can limit the amount of time you rant about work, your partner will be that much more willing to provide an eager ear and useful advice.

INVOLVE YOUR PARTNER IN YOUR WORK

This one is difficult, but it is also very effective. If you can involve your partner in your projects in some way, make them feel like they've contributed to them, then they will be eager to see their success. Your partner doesn't need to have all the skills you have to take some of the tasks off your hands. We sometimes don't realise that in all our haste to have the work finished we end up doing a lot of jobs alone that could easily be helped along by others. Look for these additional tasks and ask your partner whether they are willing to help out. Introduce them to the people you work with. The more they understand your job, the more likely they are to understand the person

you become when it comes to doing your work.

PLAN YOUR SCHEDULE WELL

Take time out for loved ones just as you manage time for work. Manage your schedule as far ahead as possible, and don't cancel on any pre-scheduled plans due to sudden work unless absolutely necessary. When you're out, make your

partner feel like all your attention is theirs, make them feel important and special. Sometimes we get carried away with the constant worry of maintaining our quality of work, so much so, that when a sudden issue shows up, we feel the need to fix it ourselves as soon as possible. At these times, ask yourself, "Can this situation be handled by someone else who might be available at the moment?" Objectively think

about whether the quality of work would be different enough to warrant cutting short the valuable time you have with your family. Letting someone else take over once in a while won't only help you spend time with your loved ones, but it will also make them feel like a priority in your life and that knowledge is extremely important in maintaining healthy relationships.


PERFECT THE ART OF THE APOLOGY

You're going to need it.

After all is said and done, there is no denying that workaholics are terrible at keeping up with any commitments that aren't work related. Even if you try your best, there are inevitably going to be slip-ups. That's where your knowledge of your loved ones will kick into gear. You know what they like, you know what makes them happy, and you will need to use this information to ensure that they forgive you for your mistakes. Take them to that Italian place they've wanted to go for so long. If you can, buy them that expensive pair of pumps, or that custom PlayStation. Your partner might not be interested in materialistic gifts, and so it is your job to know what else they might like. Take my word for it though, no one can stay mad at a box of assorted chocolates for too long.

At the end of the day, apologies can only take you so far. There isn't really any replacement for actually spending time with your loved ones. Make sure that you try your best to not repeat the blunder that you are apologising for, because there is nothing better than the acceptance you get when your loved ones feel like you have learned from your mistakes. Sometimes you've just got to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Give time to the important things, and make sure you've put your loved ones right on top of that list, because that is where they belong.





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