

Juggle struggle

What seemed like an impossible job for the world, even a few decades ago, is now the reality for many women. The modern superwoman starts her day at 7AM sharp -- some even earlier-- drops the kids to school, faces that meeting at work, calls during lunch to remind her mother-in-law about her medicines, works on any assignments till 6PM, and then comes home to cook dinner. Finding the perfect balance between work and family life- or the juggle struggle as you may call it- is a dangerous journey with a never-ending task list. So, how do they do it? The secret lies in extraordinary organising skills and keeping their cool at all times.

STOP FEELING GUILTY

"Working after marriage becomes difficult mainly because of the social stigma related to women working outside. In-laws are often not very supportive of their daughter-in-law's career goals. Whatever people say, you need to stop feeling guilty," explains Parvin, who teaches at a college. "Remind yourself that your work goals will not only benefit you, but also inspire your kids to reach for the stars. They'd be proud to have a supermom like you!"

So, don't feel guilty for putting in extra hours right before that big promotion, and definitely don't feel guilty for not checking your emails while at a family dinner during weekends. A successful career mom must be able to come to terms with her shortcomings, and focus on immediate priorities.

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Perfect balance is a myth, just don't stress out trying to meet unrealistic goals.

ORGANISE MORE

Without excellent organising skills, you'll often find yourself in a rut! Make a calendar marking important dates for home and at work. From meetings to bill deadlines to the birthday party your child needs to attend, having everything at one place will make tracking events easier. Set aside an hour during weekends to plan for the entire week. You could opt for Google calendar so that you can add things instantly on the go and sync them with your partner's. Alternatively, opt for the old-fashioned planners to avoid rushing things. For example, pack lunches, decide on breakfast, pick

out clothes the night before so that you don't wake up in a frenzy. Try to avoid multitasking since that might just make you even more inefficient.

GET HELP

Whether it's at work or at home, don't be afraid to ask for help. Talk to your supervisor regarding flexible work hours and sick days. Ask a co-worker to cover for you in a meeting so that you can go watch your kids perform at school. Every superhero needs sidekicks, and you are no different! Handing someone a bit of your workload will make it much easier for you to focus on your priorities.

"I had a reliable helper from my village when my kids were growing up. She would pick them up from school and cook for them. At night, we'd also have someone come to clean the house and do the dishes," explains Khadija, a government official. "Relatives are a great source of support, but even they can be busy sometimes. So, having paid help is necessary. Of course, for quality service, you have to be generous with salaries, and also provide other facilities and bonuses."

MAKE TIME FOR YOUR KIDS

Kids grow up fast, and before you know it, they are moving to a whole different continent to chase their dreams. While you don't want to miss any moment in your child's life, trying to make it to every big moment might be too much for the working mother. But, don't despair! Thanks to technology,

you can stay connected, even when you're away from them.

"I'd always make it a point to call my kids during lunch break. They'd just come back from school, and a phone call would assure me that they've had lunch, and also let them know that I'm thinking about them," says Tanzina, a banker at a private bank.

Making time for your kids is crucial for nurturing your family dynamics, and allow everyone to bond. Arrange weekend activities or make it a point that the whole family must have dinner together. While you are together, avoid talking about work. Instead, focus on your kids' interests such as friends, classes, and hobbies. This will let them know that they can come and talk to you about anything anytime.

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR PARTNER

Trying to juggle multiple roles can take a toll on your partner as well. With the massive workload, you tend to forget to focus on your partner and nurture your relationship. This can lead to you two drifting apart. Monthly dates or weekend getaways where you focus solely on each other are perfect ways to bring back the spark. If you two are too busy for that, then at least set aside ten minutes at the end of the day to just talk to each other. Communication is key in any relationship and if your partner has your back, you'll be much more confident tackling whatever comes your way!

By Adiba Mahbub Proma

To the one closest to my heart

'They' say that nothing good in life comes easy, but 'they' are not always right. You are one of the best parts of mine, and having you with me has been a breeze. From diapers to saris, we have been at each other's throats, and I wouldn't possibly have it any other way. Now that you're married and are with your baggage (husband), I have a few emotional things to say to you.

My very first memory of you would probably be our very first trip to the zoo; we just saw the lion and you tried to roar like it, another one would be on my 5th birthday I guess, when you were eyeing the cake and couldn't wait to devour it. Let's not even forget about our very first trip to Cox's Bazar, and the endless 'katti-bhabs'. Bottom line, you are a part of every fond memory I have of my childhood.

I remember all the nights we pretended to go to sleep just so my parents would let me stay the night at your place. The times we would just want to talk about school and boys, but Arfa wanted to play with us, and you could never say no. The phone conversations we had when your Dad was posted at Jessore. Even the distance or growing up could not tear us apart.

The late-night walks to the Nirjhor Bridge, the long conversations about life, Azwad singing countless Atif Aslam songs, and you not letting me go to bed at night, are all the little things that I will take with me from our early adulthood. In short, we both know too much about each other, and it would be of great risk to ever end our friendship, if you get my drift...

You have been my number one for the longest time, as I have been yours. The insults, the weird laughs, and the

endless sleepovers, are my favourite part of 'us.' You have been my one true companion throughout the years, for the last two decades. How many people can say that at the age of 22? We have our dads to thank for this.

While we were preparing for the wedding, my brain didn't register the fact that after all the events, you would be gone, starting your new life, busy with family and in-laws. All the excitement sort of went away when you were sitting dolled up, waiting for the kazi, I never imagined that I would cry as much as I did when Abbu asked you to say Alhamdhuillillah.

I didn't cry because I would lose you, I know that was never going to happen, I cried because things weren't going to be the same ever again. Your life wouldn't be all fun and games, that I wasn't going to see you every weekend, and that I am not going to be the one you depend on anymore. I also cried because we are all growing up so fast, soon enough it would be me in your place.

Saying goodbye to you was the saddest and the hardest thing so far, but I wasn't saying goodbye to you at all, it was our childhood. I was so stupid to wish for time to go at full speed, because now, I so badly pray to go back to 2015, when we were both skinny and life was fun.

I am so grateful that I can call you my best friend, my soul mate in so many cases. A little sad that I have to share what's mine, but I'm deciding to be the bigger person, and therefore, allow your husband to take a bigger piece of your heart.

By Qazi Mustabshara Tabir

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