



# Enterprising Rural Families™

This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact [information@eRuralFamilies.org](mailto:information@eRuralFamilies.org) or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

## TIP OF THE MONTH:

### Dads that Care

- Notice lower intensity emotions in children **versus** being unaware of kids' emotions until they escalate.
- See emotions as an opportunity for intimacy or teaching **versus** seeing negative emotions as toxic and a failure of parenting.
- Validate and empathize with emotions, even if there is misbehavior **versus** trying to change the emotion to a positive one or dismiss the emotion.
- Help their child verbally label all the emotions he or she is feeling **versus** seeing the introspection as a waste of time or dangerous.
- Set limits on misbehavior, or problem solve if there is no misbehavior **versus** exhibit disapproval of the child for having negative emotions.

Fathers play an important role in their children's development. Roland Warren, Director of the National Fatherhood Initiative, says that, "Kids have a hole in their soul the shape of their dads. They have this tremendous desire to connect—it's part of who they are." Kyle Pruett, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, believes "Men are the single greatest untapped resource in the lives of American Children."

Taken from *The importance of fathers* by Rich Batten, Colorado State University.

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## WEAVING FAMILY AND BUSINESS TOGETHER

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We often hear of "balancing" work and family in the workplace. However, it is often not so much a topic of discussion among families engaged in a family business. Even so, the constant demands of keeping the family business healthy and competitive can be a source of stress on families and their relationships and cohesiveness. Those involved in a family business must somehow learn to successfully weave priorities, goals, tasks, and responsibilities of both the family and the business together in order to maintain a sustainable enterprise. Both sides of the equation must receive time, energy, and attention.

### Women and work.

Women of families in business together, whether on the ranch or farm, in a greenhouse business, or in a recreation business, have many reasons to work, either within the business or outside. One of the main reasons is economic necessity. Families often have difficulty living on what is available to one worker in the business and may save on hiring labor and expertise by using the woman's skills and commitment. Or, income from the business may be complemented by income from an outside job.



A woman's decision to work is based on attitudes about working women and, if she is married, her family's feelings about her working outside the home. Such attitudes influence the degree and type of involvement women have, even in a family-held business. Women, more so than men, cycle in and out of the workforce, depending upon the needs of their families. After the birth of a child, women may work part-time. They are more likely than men to adjust their work schedule or leave the workforce in later years to assist aging family members.

Working outside the home can be good for women. If they desire to work outside the home, it can help them to be physically and emotionally healthier. Studies find that work helps increase a woman's self-esteem and gives her a sense of control in her life. Work helps her family economically, thus reducing financial stress.



## Men and work

Traditionally we have had an expectation in our society that men are the providers for their families. Although women experience more work and family conflict, men also experience difficulty in weaving together work and family. For men, excessive work time is the main reason for work and family conflict. Men often are not as involved with their families as they would like to be, because there is a cultural expectation that work comes first.

Being involved with family activities is good for fathers. Studies find fathers who are involved in caring for their children have higher self-esteem and satisfaction in their parental role. These same fathers often feel they have too little time for their careers, and that family responsibilities interfere with their jobs. So dads, too, are trying to balance and weave work and family together.



## Marriage and work

Families have changed since the 1960s, with more wives and mothers working outside of the home or in the business. Women's employment outside of the home generally has a positive rather than a negative effect on marriage.

Women generally take on a "sec-ond shift" when they work outside the home. The first shift is their job at work, and the second shift is their family work. Although men are doing more family work than they have done in the past, women, whether married or cohabiting, still do the majority of household tasks for the family. The key for couples is that they are satisfied with their arrangement of work and household tasks and feel that each spouse's contribution is equitable. Therefore, the family work and household tasks may not be evenly divided between husband and wife, but the workload is perceived as equitable.

Researcher Dr. John Gottman found that married men who do housework were happier and more involved in their marriages. These men were less distressed, less lonely and in better physical and psychological health. Wives gener-ally appreciate husbands' help with household tasks.

## Weaving together a pattern that works for you

It would be ideal if we could choose when and where we work, but that is not the case for most of us. Instead we need to determine how we can best weave our home and work/business responsibilities together so that we are satisfied with our situation.

Following are some exercises that may help you as-sess your work and family responsibilities and make plans for changes if you are not satisfied with your situa-tion. If you are married or have a partner, you may want to complete the exercises individually and then compare notes.

## How many hats do you wear?

One challenge in weaving together work and family is that we have many roles to fulfill or "hats to wear: mother, father, employee, business owner/manager, son, brother, sister, church member, softball coach, youth leader, etc. Sometimes all of these hats can cause us to have role strain. When we have too many hats we have role overload. This is called the "too many hats syndrome."

Our hats can also clash with one another, causing role conflict. For example, you want to attend your daughter's softball game, but you need to work the family business that afternoon. Your role as a parent is conflicting with your role as a business manager or employee. Below you can assess your "hat" situa-tion.

List all of the hats (roles) you wear:

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Do you feel you have too many hats, too few, or just the right number of hats?

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Write down any hats you would like to change:

Add these "hats"

Eliminate these "hats"

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Write down a target date to have this completed:

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Revisit your "hats" on that date to assess your progress.

**Spilling over: family to work and work to family**

Have you ever gone to work in the morning and had difficulty getting started because you are thinking about things at home, such as your son needing to get a school project done, or when you can take your mother to her doctor appointment? Have you gone home in the evening and been grumpy with your spouse or partner because of something that happened at work? This is called spillover. We have spillover at times from home to work and from work to home. It takes time for us to adjust our "hats" between the two worlds in which we live. If we have severe issues happening at work or at home they can easily spill over, causing us to be less effective in our roles.



This phenomenon becomes much more of an issue when household members are immersed in a family business and the day-to-day stresses of keeping it going. It is compounded again when more than one family member is actively involved in the business. When Dad and Mom and children are all involved, the business can become dominating to the point that little time or attention is given to individual or family needs, relationships, or goals.

Simple day-to-day adjustments between home and work need to be attended to. Try to mentally take off the “work” hat and put on the family “hat” when the day is done. Find ways to interact and pursue family activities outside of business responsibilities. Do you need to take off the “work” hat earlier in the day than you have been doing? Another idea is to literally change from your work clothes to different clothes in order to move from your work role to your family role. How do *you* handle the transitions?

**How are you balancing and weaving?**

This next exercise will help you determine how well you are managing work and family. Circle the number that best describes you. If you are not married or in a relationship, skip the questions that do not apply.

**1 = Never    2 = Sometimes    3 = Frequently    4 = Almost Always**

***Job Satisfaction***

<i>Overall, I enjoy my job/involvement in the business</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Most of the time I enjoy going to work</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I am satisfied with my work schedule</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>My work schedule works well for my family</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Having a paycheck helps me feel good about who I am</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I am satisfied with the number of hours that I work</i>	1	2	3	4

***Relationship Satisfaction***

<i>My spouse/partner and I have time to relax together</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>My marriage/relationship is stronger because of my job/involvement in the business</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I have energy after work to do things with my spouse/partner</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>My work/involvement in the business allows me to have an identity outside of my relationship with my partner/spouse</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I find enough time to see friends when I am not at work/involved in the business</i>	1	2	3	4

***Parenting Satisfaction***

<i>My job/involvement in the business helps me to have a better relationship with my children</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I usually have the energy to be a good parent when I get or am home</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I believe that my children are proud of me as a worker/member of the business</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Working helps me to set a good example for my children</i>	1	2	3	4

***Satisfaction with Family Activities***

<i>I am usually able to get my household chores done</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I have the energy to do the work around the house</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I have found ways to complete my household tasks even though I am working/involved in the business</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>I am satisfied with how my spouse/partner and I split our household tasks</i>	1	2	3	4

Now total your score: Lower scores mean that you are experiencing conflict and spillover between work or business and the family. If this is the case for you, go to the next section and work on a plan to better weave your work or business involvement and family life together. If you have a spouse or partner, you may want to complete this section together.

**What are the major problems that you are currently experiencing?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of time with family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of time for friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of time for work/business involvement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of time for self



**What resources do you have that might help?**

Personal (e.g. your satisfaction with your place of employment or involvement in the family business) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/business (e.g. an employer or business which allows a flexible schedule) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (e.g. family members who take turns preparing dinner) \_\_\_\_\_

Community (e.g. a family physician with evening office hours) \_\_\_\_\_

**Steps to take to change your current situation:**

Step 1: Identify the change you want to make: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas to make the change: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: Select the idea you like the best: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4: Decide how you will use the resources listed above: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Implement change. By what date would you like to accomplish this goal?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Revisit your situation on this date to see if you have accomplished the goal or need to revise the plan.

## Take a Break

One idea to help you weave your work and family responsibilities is to make time for breaks during the day. Take short breaks that can help you relax and get reenergized to complete the tasks you need to do.

First, think of some 5-minute "joy or relaxation breaks." For ex-ample, you might leave your desk and walk down the hall to say hello to a co-worker. At home you might stop do-ing family work and sit down for five minutes to read the paper. In the business, you might stop work for a moment to chat with one of the other family members or workers about something unrelated to the business. Make a list of these joy/relaxation breaks and set a goal for yourself to try at least one break each day for the next week. Next, think of 30-minute joy/relaxation breaks. This might include taking a walk, having coffee with a friend, enjoy-ing the sunshine by sitting outside or reading a book. Make a list of 30-minute joy/relaxation breaks and set a goal to try them.

## Summary

Weaving together work and family lives is especially neces-sary for those involved in family businesses. There is no "one way" that it works for everyone. Each family and family member must evaluate what is right for them and what pattern of weaving provides the mosaic and strength to give them a strong and sustainable family **and** business.

Weaving work and family is stressful. Take care of your-self by monitoring your diet, getting exercise, and staying away from fast foods and junk food. Remember to ask family and friends for help. Finding a formula that works for your situation is the key.

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Adapted from Montana State University Montguide *Weaving Together Family and Work* by Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, MSU Extension Service Family and Human Development Specialist.



*Don't become a confused "loner" learn how to "weave" your business and family together.*

### THERE IS NO "ONE WAY" OR "RIGHT WAY" TO BALANCE WORK AND FAMILY

But keep these points in mind:

- Balance the use of your 'work hat' with your 'family hat'
- Plan a time schedule of work duties versus family duties
- Identify conflicts
- Implement change when necessary
- Take breaks as needed
- Monitor your diet, exercise, and relaxation time
- Take time to enjoy the family and friends without ANY work involvement!



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