Nowadays, it's not easy to be a working mum, especially in Hong Kong where work is usually demanding. Intense competition for places for playgroup onwards makes our life as a parent even more difficult. As a working mum, how to balance life between your career and family is therefore very critical.

Our worries/threats as a working mum

During the daytime, working mums stay at the office and we have to rely on helpers/other family members to take care of our kids. Even if we are in the office, we worry and sometimes, feel guilty because of the following:

- A working mum has to devote more than others to overcome the perception by our boss/colleagues, that a working mum is not as productive and dedicated as others.

- Suffer from peer pressure that other mums are doing better, as a full time mum can spend much more time with their kids. They are more close to the child’s life, at school and their other activities. However, it is doubted whether quantity of time counts over quality.

- As working mums are away from home, people around (including your parents/in laws/helpers) are staying close with your children and thus, influencing them in different ways. Are we really comfortable with such a set-up and are the kids being shaped in a way that we want?

- We often question “Should I quit my job and stay with the kids as a full time mum?”

Tips/Recommendations

Our children grow up so fast and it’s important to form a balance between your work and personal life in order to provide an environment with lots of love and care for your children. Below are some recommendations for working mums.

- Remember that “Motherhood” as always is your most important job. This is true for all mums, though time allocation might not be in proportion to the level of importance. With that in mind, you should treasure time while you are with your children.

- Pursue the career that you truly enjoy only. With a career that you are passionate about, you will be effective and able to find a balance.

- Support from your partner, the Daddy is crucial. Parenthood is a joint responsibility. Frank communication with your partner is important, especially when you are under stress.

- Join your friends for well planned activities. Create quality time while you are off from work. Set rules for yourselves to avoid reading mail, and taking calls while you are with your children.

- Be frank with your in-laws/parents/helpers and communicate in advance what you expect their roles to be in your family. Do not expect or ask
them to take up your role. You might assign a few roles to them and you should set clear guidelines and instructions on how to execute those roles. Even though they are here to help you out, remember that the parents are the ultimate responsible party, not them.

- Stay connected with your children. Have 5 minute phone conversations with them, 2-3 times a day to understand how they are doing during the day.

- Plan exciting weekend activities (picnics, outdoor activities, short trips). These activities can help bond you better with your children. Your children will then look forward to the times they are with you.

- Don’t forget to create time for yourself with your husband and friends. Reward yourself by having nice meals or shopping once in a while. We deserve to have a good quality life due to being a diligent working mum.

Takeaway

Although you are not always at home and you devote a lot of time to your career, you must be the Best Mum for your Kids. No one can replace you to be their #1 friend and mum. Our kids grow so fast and it’s critical to find the right balance, hope the above can help.

Writer: Michelle Yam
Charlotte Chan (Lower Purple)