

## Professional Women in Psychology: Integrating Your Values into a Full Life

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Editor's Note: Drs. DiLillo, Clark Harvey, Hussong, Kamholz, Lloyd-Richardson, and Rivers are highly successful psychologists, with multiple other passions and responsibilities that include their roles as mothers, spouses, adult children, activists, and more. They each are award-winning leaders within their respective fields, and admired role models by colleagues and students. Collectively, they have experience with a wide array of appointments in departments of psychology and psychiatry and in university, hospital, liberal arts, clinical research settings, and government sectors. Over the years, each has navigated transitions through various professional and personal roles. They each note that juggling priorities and navigating transitions are complex and personal, with no "finish line." I am very grateful that each agreed to participate in this chapter by sharing their personal reflections on their multiple roles and priorities.

Given that the majority of graduate students in psychology are women, and society continues to place heightened expectations of perfection on women as compared to men, it is very helpful to hear advice on juggling a multidimensional life from six successful women in psychology. A series of six key questions, with responses to each from all six psychologists, is presented below.

### 1. How Would You Describe Your Current Position?

#### 1.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)

I am a professor of psychology at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. I was hired as an assistant professor at my school 16 years ago and have since worked my way through the tenure and promotion process. Additionally, I recently finished a term as department chair. Prior to my current position, I spent about 6 years as an assistant professor at an academic medical center in a non-tenure track position that was 100 percent extramurally supported. I left my previous position because the political climate was becoming less hospitable to non-physician faculty members.

Although it varies from school to school, most psychology faculty members in institutions like mine spend the majority of their time in activities related to teaching, including classroom teaching, supervision of independent projects, and advising. In my department, faculty members teach three courses per semester, every semester. We do not have TAs or the opportunity to buy out a course with grant funding, although faculty members in part-time administrative roles (e.g., associate dean) receive course reductions. We each have about 20–25 advisees as well. A program of productive scholarship is also typically very important to success as a faculty member at a liberal arts college, although activities that constitute “scholarship” may be more flexible than at a Research I university. For example, at my institution extramural funding is highly encouraged, but not mandatory for promotion and/or tenure. Furthermore, publications in high-quality peer-reviewed journals are emphasized, but other types of publications (e.g., book chapters, monographs) are seen as respectable as well. In addition to teaching and research, liberal arts faculty members are expected to engage in departmental and university service. At my institution, these opportunities range from service on elected committees, to appointments on ad-hoc committees, to participation in admissions events, and advising of student groups on campus. Depending on the particular service activities in which a faculty member is involved, these responsibilities can be quite time-consuming. University-wide, faculty evaluations at my institution are based 60 percent on teaching, 30 percent on scholarship, and 10 percent on service. I believe that this breakdown is fairly typical for liberal arts schools. It is relevant to note that, although faculty evaluations are based on the 60/30/10 formula described above, the actual proportion of time spent engaging in these activities is rarely consistent with this breakdown; it varies from semester to semester and year to year, depending on individual, departmental, and university priorities.

### **1.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)**

I am the Chief Executive Officer of a statewide advocacy organization that represents mental health and substance use disorder clinics that collectively serve over 500,000 clients. I am often asked about what attracted me to a career in advocacy and public policy. I share the story of how I felt “restless” during graduate school. I was never appeased by the thought that I was training to be a “scientist/practitioner”; the idea of having to pick between science, practice, or a combination of both seemed limiting. I wanted to get a PhD so that I would be afforded the platform to do whatever I wanted to do; I just could not figure out what that was. After leaving the Midwest to return to California to complete my internship and postdoctoral training, I reflected on the common thread throughout my research and clinical work: everything I did centered around being a voice for vulnerable communities. That is when I decided to explore careers that would allow me to utilize my training and impact systems and structures that many of my clients interacted with on a daily basis. I moved to the state capitol and worked as a fellow in a Senator’s office. From there, my career in public policy took off

and I was quickly promoted to being a Chief Policy Consultant. I made history as the youngest, first female, and first Black Chief Consultant for the policy committee I led. After 6 years at the capitol, I was recruited to be the lobbyist and Policy and Legislative Affairs Director for the organization I now lead. It has proven to be a perfect way to merge my clinical training, research, policy experience, and passion for advocating for behavioral health agencies and the vulnerable communities they serve. When I am not being CEO or “Dr. Mom” to my two toddlers, I volunteer on community and national boards.

### **1.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)**

I am a tenured professor in a Psychology Department at a research-intensive university; the same department in which I began my academic career in 1997. My responsibilities include research, teaching, and service such as serving on committees in the department and university and working with national organizations like the National Institutes of Health. For seven years, I worked in an administrative position, directing a research center and training program. Over the years, what constitutes my workload and day-to-day activities has changed. When I started this position, I spent most of my time on research and teaching. Post-tenure, my service commitments began to grow as I said yes to more invitations. For example, when I was an assistant professor, before I had children, I probably averaged 60 hours a week in the office during the academic year, taught four classes, and spent probably 40–60 percent of my time on teaching, mentoring, and training activities, 30–40 percent on research, and the remainder on service. In my mid-career years when my children had entered school, I used grant funding to buy-out of some of my teaching commitments and taught one course, directed two research projects, mentored 3–4 graduate students and served as the Director for Undergraduate Studies. I probably averaged 40 hours a week in the office during the academic year and spent 10 percent of my time on teaching, 50 percent on research, and 40 percent on service.

### **1.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

Revising this chapter seven years after its original publication, I’m struck by how much my career has changed, and also by guiding principles that have remained constant.

For many years after I completed my postdoctoral fellowship, I worked exclusively at one academically affiliated VA Healthcare System. Eight years ago, I opened a very small private practice, while maintaining my full-time work at the VA. Over the last several years, my work has shifted so that I now split my time across an academically affiliated VA (half-time) and a small business that includes direct clinical care and consulting/contract work for a variety of groups and causes that are important to me. For lack of a better term, I consider this a hybrid career, comprised of elements I have the luxury of choosing. It’s one I never thought I wanted, but now find incredibly meaningful.

At the VA, I serve as Associate Director for Outpatient Mental Health Services, which is part of the leadership team for a large Mental Health Service that includes over 300 Mental Health employees across three major medical centers and six community-based outpatient clinics. Across these geographic sites, Mental Health includes Inpatient, Residential, and Outpatient Services. My role is primarily administrative, with some time allocated to training. Crucially, when I shifted to half time, I made sure that my scope of responsibilities was explicitly and concretely downsized to match the new schedule. This is critical to avoid doing the same job for half the compensation.

Administrative tasks include a range of activities, from those that are obviously central to patient care and well-being, to mundane details that leave me wondering why I spent over 20 years in school! Most interesting and satisfying are the former, and they include projects such as redesigning services at a small community-based outpatient clinic to maximize efficient and effective care; developing systemized processes to facilitate transitions in care from Inpatient to Outpatient Mental Health Services; and centralizing and overseeing key processes that inform Veterans' evaluations for benefits. Of course, all such projects involve the efforts and collaboration of many people. Working with smart, dedicated professionals is another favorite aspect of my position. In addition to large projects, other administrative responsibilities include overseeing specific programs within Outpatient Mental Health Services (e.g., Suicide Prevention), developing resource requests to procure new (or backfill existing) positions, contributing to decisions about allocation of clinical resources, staff workload, and clinical duties, completing annual employee performance appraisals, serving on hospital committees, and participating in recruitment, interviewing, and hiring of new Mental Health staff.

Although I have opportunities to contribute to psychology training, my academic and training efforts are focused on training psychiatry residents and contributing to the missions of several mental health organizations. I oversee a 4-year cognitive-behavioral training curriculum for psychiatry residents, and provide some limited mentorship for other trainees. I also have served on various committees and governance teams of organizations such as the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies and the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

Within my business, I divide my time across direct patient care, and consulting/contract work. At this point, I consider "consulting" to be any work for a group or organization that is based on the mental health expertise that has been my bread-and-butter for over 20 years (e.g., training in healthy coping for the stressed staff of a large research project, educational programming for a professional mental health organization). I consider "contract work" to be any work for a group or organization that is informed by my behavioral expertise and related skills, but represents a newer application of them (e.g., organizing or communications for an advocacy group). The distinction is mostly in my own mind! But it's useful for me as I consider my level of expertise, the nature of my potential contributions, and the associated fee structure.

My professional life provides many, varied opportunities to collaborate with interesting, knowledgeable colleagues, including trainees, junior professionals, and

experts in their respective fields. The combination of different types of work and collaborators is engaging and challenging, and allows me to be an expert/teacher in some domains, and a newer learner in others. I once considered a hybrid career to be a chore, or a (problematic) sign that there wasn't a job that would meet all my needs. I now experience it as a luxury of flexibility and freedom, allowing me to shift mindsets and methods of contributing to the community at large, learning from different people and experiences, and enjoying financial stability with creativity and excitement.

Of course, there are challenges. Different types of work (and the continual shifting set that goes with it) can be exhausting. "Swerving" (as Michelle Obama would say) into new areas mid-career can leave me uncomfortable or embarrassed by things I don't yet know. In addition, many opportunities mean that time management is always a challenge, and I'm chronically just a little (or more) behind where I want to be. (My former self judges me harshly on this point. My husband routinely jokes that my epitaph will read, "It's later than I thought." More on this later.)

### **1.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)**

I am a tenured professor of psychology at a masters granting university in the northeast. I was just recently promoted to Full Professor and have been at this university for nearly 12 years, coming here from a non-tenured research faculty position at an academic medical center. I left this position when I was pregnant with my third child (all very close in age) and realized that I wanted a less time-demanding position that offered more financial stability. My institution is a Research I university, with just under 10,000 students enrolled in more than 40 undergraduate and 25 graduate degree programs. Psychology is one of the largest majors on campus, and our department has three graduate masters programs (Clinical, Research, and ABA).

My contractual responsibilities are threefold: teaching and advising, scholarly and professional activities, and service. While a typical teaching load is three courses per semester, course releases are available for grant-funded research and supervision of master's theses, so teaching two courses per semester is more common for research active faculty. I am responsible for providing academic advising to about 35 students each year, in addition to the students that I supervise on their individual research. While there is no documented requirement of grant funding for tenure and promotion, there is a clear expectation that faculty will seek and obtain grant funding. Scholarly and professional activities are wide-ranging, from peer-reviewed publications to books, book chapters, monographs, and presentations. Faculty are expected to contribute service to the department, university, and local community. In my early, pre-tenure years, my time was generally broken down to approximately: 40 percent teaching, 50 percent research, and 10 percent service. Since tenure and promotion, it is worth noting that expectations for service have increased significantly, due in part to increased expectations to take on service roles as one becomes more senior in the department and field of study, but also increased

demands from the university (perhaps due to changes in the financial landscape of many universities, which have led to a corresponding increase in demands on faculty time for service expectations). What was acceptable before is often no longer considered enough service work in the current climate, and yet it's never quite clear how much service is enough to be considered "acceptable." At present, my workload during the academic calendar year is typically 55–60 hours per week. I commonly teach two graduate-level courses per semester, supervise 2–3 graduate students on theses and various research projects, submit 2–3 grant applications per year, and have 3–5 manuscripts being worked on at any one time. I actively collaborate with an international research group in my field of study. While my position is a 9-month contract, scholarship work really continues throughout the summer, as does development of course materials and service work.

### **1.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

For the past 10 years, I have led a leadership consulting and executive coaching private practice. The portfolio of my work has been quite varied based on the needs of an individual client or partnering organization. I have developed and facilitated training modules, written curricula, and helped individual clients align organizational missions, strategies, and processes, enhance their influence across their organizations, lead cross-functional and globally dispersed teams, and navigate change initiatives. My executive coaching clients have ranged from newly appointed managers to seasoned, senior-level executives from diverse sectors including healthcare, entertainment media, government, financial services, manufacturing, non-profit, and higher education. I have also integrated my research and experience in health psychology and neuroscience to support executive coaching and development initiatives designed to enhance resilience and improve workplace climate.

After years of walking alongside leaders and organizations as an external consultant, I became curious about using my consulting skills from within an organization. An opportunity emerged for me to gain the internal perspective I desired when a coaching colleague invited me to join her in the Human Resources division of a highly ranked private university. As a Human Resources leader, my tasks and responsibilities are also quite varied. I have served as the chief architect for strategic initiatives designed to improve engagement and belonging and integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion best practices within the Human Resources function and across my organization. I also lead the university's professional development strategy through the design and delivery of open enrollment and custom leadership development experiences and the provision of organizational development consulting and professional coaching services.

Whether working externally or internally, I frequently draw upon the analytical and clinical skills that my PhD training in psychology afforded. Most importantly, I love that I am able to leverage my competencies in ways that strengthen the

vocational trajectories of my clients and contribute to the health of the organizations in which they serve.

## **2. What are Common Misconceptions About Your Type of Position?**

### **2.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)**

It's not unusual for me to talk with someone who assumes that life as a college professor at a small liberal arts college is not terribly time-consuming or demanding. I've heard more than one graduate student comment, usually in the throes of qualifying exams or the hundredth revision of a manuscript, that someday they want a "cushy" liberal arts job. They seem to imagine that the only responsibilities of a liberal arts faculty member are teaching classes and keeping office hours, and that the rest of our time is "free." In reality, of course, formal classroom teaching is only one of a wide range of responsibilities (some of which I mentioned above) in the academic life of a liberal arts faculty member.

Another misconception I've heard expressed is that faculty positions at liberal arts colleges do not require any particular preparation and are relatively easy to obtain. In my experience, a successful candidate for a job at a liberal arts college has, in addition to a productive program of research involving undergraduates, significant teaching experience with evidence of teaching excellence (e.g., a teaching award). Many search committees also look for formal training (e.g., completion of a certificate program) in college teaching. Most liberal arts faculty I know engaged in very intentional training and sought out specific experiences to prepare them for this type of position. I don't think it would be accurate to view a job at a liberal arts college as an easy "fall back" position or a safe bet.

### **2.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)**

When I worked at the state capitol, some colleagues were curious about why a psychologist would pursue a career in public policy. Most of my peers had a background in law, policy or politics. I think there is a common misconception that psychologists are prepared to only teach, research, or provide clinical services. This is held by those outside and within the field as well. I often explain to colleagues and students that we have sought-after skills that can be utilized to impact and transform systems. Our unique training has equipped us to teach, counsel, supervise, and lead within various sectors.

### **2.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)**

Often when I speak with graduate students about career planning, they offer the unintentional dig, "Oh, I don't want a position like yours. I want to have a life. I want to have a family and to see my children." This response reminds me that we shouldn't make assumptions about what people do outside of the office. Just because all you see

me do is work does not mean that this is all that I do. I think the flexibility of an academic position can be incredible and has many of the same challenges and rewards as running your own business. Once you are clear on what is expected from the university, the rest of your responsibilities are the commitments you make. I value being able to craft a schedule that clears late afternoons to share in my children's activities or summers where we can spend more time together. A second misconception comes when students sometimes fail to see the journey involved in academic (or other) careers. Although some women take on both roles – mother and academic – at the same time, most take on one and then the other. The path to doing both together is often more gradual. Students who judge the position by those established in the role may misperceive the journey. This is akin to the third-year student who declares her graduate career a failure because she isn't achieving at the same level as her mentor, a senior full professor. Well, of course that mentor was not achieving at that level either when he or she was a third-year student. So, my advice is to stay open to possibilities, trust that you will adjust to the circumstances in which you place yourself, and know that you will have more information when you need it.

#### **2.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

Many people assume that there's no flexibility in a VA system, and that a sole business would be extremely flexible but lonely. In the broadest sense, large federal organizations do lack the ability to quickly shift to accommodate individual needs. However, my experience is that this is also quite variable depending on the specific organization, and the type of position within the organization. Different VA facilities have different cultures (including the extent to which they support staff having multidimensional lives), and this influences interpretation and implementation of policies. In addition, the VA has multiple missions – clinical care, research, and teaching. Professionals most heavily involved in direct clinical care may have the least flexibility because patient schedules dictate those of clinicians. There seems to be more obvious flexibility in the research, teaching, and administrative arenas. That said, the issues of who you work with and how hard you work have a huge influence on this, irrespective of your type of position.

Ironically, I experience my business as less flexible than the VA in many ways. Similar to clinical work at the VA, the clinical work in my business is largely dictated by patient schedules. Clinical sessions are more difficult to reschedule than meetings with colleagues. In addition, in the newer contract work that I'm pursuing, I'm typically the person with less experience and/or political capital. That means I'm working around others' schedules. This relative lack of flexibility is offset by not working full-time in this area. As for possible loneliness, I haven't had that problem. I imagine that's partly because my clinical work is small (6–8 hours/week), and partly because my consulting/contract work is highly collaborative.



### **2.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)**

When I moved to my current position, I was told by a few in administration that my eight years in the academic medical center and the work that I had done there counted for very little on the road to tenure. They were right. It was at that time that I realized that medical schools and universities may not always speak the same language. Each of these institutions thinks “the grass is always greener on the other side.” Medical school staff may envision university professors as teaching an occasional class and then having hours on end to discuss theory or research problems and design with students eager to learn and engage. What they don’t consider is the amount of time it takes to teach a large course, or advise 35 students (yes, that’s right – advising 35 students on their course selection, career considerations, and how to get along with dorm roommates!). University faculty, on the other hand, imagine medical school-based research psychologists as devoting all of their time to the creative and exciting process of writing grant applications, and fail to consider the near daily struggle to maintain soft-money funding, and balancing clinical caseloads with research responsibilities. Truth be told, there is much more to both, with neither position being easily completed in a standard 50-hour work week.

### **2.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

As opposed to having misconceptions, individuals who learn that I am a leadership consultant and executive coach often respond with curiosity and additional questions. Of course, there are some who hear the word “consultant” and immediately think of the stereotype of hourly billing or high-dollar retainers for “cushy” work. The concept of “executive coaching” tends to be even more elusive because of the more recently popularized role of “life coach.” Thankfully, questions regarding my work are often entry points to conversations in which I can more fully describe my vocation. At some point in the dialogue, I usually refer to my training in clinical psychology and how my work has allowed me to integrate my understanding of individual differences and systems thinking in service of leadership and organization development as opposed to clinical problems. The intrigue often deepens when I add that I am also able to use my psychological assessment training in service of normative, lifespan developmental, and vocational issues and that my therapeutic and counseling skills provided a helpful foundation for my training and credentialing as a coach (although the work is distinctly different). If there are any misconceptions, they most often center around the hard work, diligence, and full range of relational, technical, and business management skills that are needed to successfully lead a consulting practice.

### 3. How Did Motherhood Impact Your Job, If At All?

#### 3.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)

My son is now 14 and was born after I had been in my current position for two years. Because of my previous faculty position, I was considered for tenure and promotion early. As a consequence, I was tenured at the end of my third year, and was promoted the following year. (At the time, promotion and tenure were not linked at my institution, which is quite unusual.) Although I would have preferred to be a bit more established in my position before having a child, I was also very aware of the risks and potential complications I could encounter if I waited significantly longer (I was in my mid-30s at the time). I knew that the timing of my pregnancy could be stressful in relation to the tenure and promotion process, but I don't think that there ever is an ideal or particularly low-stress (ha!) time to have a child.

I do not think that the transition to motherhood substantially changed the quality or amount of work I accomplished, but it did require me to restructure my work habits. As a true morning person, I learned to make good use of the early hours while my son was sleeping to answer emails, prepare for class, and write. I intentionally left work a bit earlier, but learned how to be more efficient while I was physically at the office. I've also become more intentional about my institutional service commitments, choosing to serve on committees that do not routinely meet during evening hours. Additionally, I am very fortunate to have several colleagues across campus who are also trying to juggle academic life with parenthood. Through the years, we have provided social support to one another and have come up with creative ways to resolve some tricky parenting challenges. For example, on some unexpected snow days when elementary schools were closed, but our college was open, we took turns supervising kids in an empty classroom so that none of us needed to cancel class. This group of colleagues certainly enhances my work-related quality of life, which in turn helps me maximize my effectiveness and productivity.

#### 3.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)

I have two sons ages 2 and 4. Unlike the plans I made to prepare for my education and career, I have never been one to dream about or plan my future personal life. I always believed that things would fall into place when they were supposed to. I remember when my husband proposed to me, my first words were "I thought I told you my plan wasn't set yet?" Of course, moments later I was full of excitement, but my first response illustrates how I have always put "career first." After eight years of marriage, we still laugh about my initial response to the engagement. What I did not anticipate was the difficulty we would face when I was finally ready to explore starting a family.

After two years of fertility treatments and the loss of one of my twins, we were blessed with our first son. Almost two years later, we welcomed our second son. Both

of my pregnancies were high-risk, but my work pace did not decrease. I remember confessing to an older woman in my family that I was nervous about how I was going to handle a high-powered career and also be a mom. Her response was interesting, “Well, it depends what kind of mother you plan to be. You can be the type that moves forward as if nothing happened, or you can be the type that talks about her kids all the time.” This response told me a lot about her, the expectations of working mothers in her generation, and the perception that being transparent about your motherhood/career journey was perceived as a weakness by some.

The benefit of being established in our careers was that we were financially prepared for the costs of raising children. However, the cost of being a “Supermom” began to surface after having my second child. Although I did not change anything about my work pace after having my first son, and in some ways I think I was trying to live up to the bad advice I received from a family member, I realized that I needed to reprioritize everything once I had two children. I had to become skilled at graciously declining invitations to serve on boards, speaking opportunities, etc. It was time to pay it forward. I began sharing opportunities with mentees and colleagues who were establishing their professional careers. It was also time to focus inward. I realized that I needed to get better at asking for and receiving help. I hired a nanny to assist with my second child, I let friends and family cook meals for me during my maternity leave, and started working from home on Fridays. I continued my leadership positions, but sometimes brought my baby with me to meetings. I decided to be transparent about my challenges with “balancing it all” as a mother and career woman, and as a result, numerous women and men began to reach out to me echoing similar struggles. It was liberating to share the realities, the successes, and moments of challenge being a working mom.

All in all, I challenge the sayings “lean in” and “achieve balance.” Balance is illusive – we all have times of great productivity when we lean in to complete a task, but it is important to build in a break to rejuvenate yourself too. Earlier this year, I was diagnosed with pre-cancerous cells that, in combination with my family history, indicate that I may develop an invasive breast cancer during my lifetime. I will continue to work, mother, and enjoy my life. I know that the lessons I have learned – working hard, reprioritizing and leaning on others – will now be tested more than ever. I hope breast cancer does not ensue, but if it does, I look forward to announcing that I beat it while working, mothering, and advocating for vulnerable populations.

### **3.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)**

More than one graduate student has complimented me on the seemingly impeccable timing of my entry into motherhood *vis-à-vis* my career trajectory. But like many career development stories, things are not always what they seem. Three years into my tenure-track position, my husband and I decided that we were ready to have children. It took another three and a team of endocrinologists before those children emerged, one year after I was granted tenure. I now have twin girls – who turned 16 the year in which I’m authoring this essay. The three years in between our decision to

have children and our having children were challenging, but I am thankful for them. They are a reminder to be open to the opportunities around me and to hold in check my strivings for control over things that I do not control. I have to credit one of my students for summing this up when we talk on this subject. She writes about academic motherhood, “you can’t plan for it and there really is no ‘perfect time’ to have kids, but your job and lifestyle will allow for it whenever it happens.”

### **3.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

I have one child, who is 12 years old. We welcomed her to our family when I was at the VA full-time and in the “acting” version of my current VA role. I accepted the permanent position when she was six months old. The transition to motherhood while also transitioning to the new professional role was a little tricky. My administrative position was far more public than my previous one. The rookie mistakes that I made at the office (partly due to learning the ropes, partly due to sleep deprivation) were more noticeable and frankly embarrassing than they might have been under different circumstances. In addition, as a new mother, it’s challenging to be questioning yourself on both the work and home front simultaneously.

On the positive side, I felt lucky to be navigating an enormous transition at home under what felt like very safe circumstances at work. I had been with this VA for over eight years, and was a known entity. Although the challenges of my promotion were certainly present, in general I didn’t feel like I had to prove myself. My colleagues and supervisors knew me well, and could readily contextualize bags under my eyes or word-finding difficulties. The VA in which I work is a family-friendly one, which also contributed to my feeling broadly supported. I was (and remain) grateful for that, and also for not being brand new to my career or this particular workplace when I became a parent. Although it can obviously be more difficult to start a family in your 30s or 40s, I felt the professional benefit of having done so. (An important note on this: I did not postpone having a family to focus on my career. It was a happy coincidence that I was in a more established place professionally when I wanted to start my family.)

In terms of my business, it is no coincidence that I started it when my daughter was around four years old. When she was younger than that, I wanted my work life to be as circumscribed and predictable as possible. Being at the VA full time (with no outside venture) fit that goal perfectly. But as my daughter got a little older (and she understood more and was, frankly, awake and interactive for longer each day), I felt comfortable being away from her a couple of evenings each week. My business expanded further when my daughter was about eight years old. As she’s gotten older and has more independent activities herself (and isn’t interested in spending as much time with me!) I’m more comfortable with less-predictable hours and a varied schedule that includes periodic weekend work and travel. She is also now old enough to understand how I value and juggle multiple priorities.

### **3.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)**

Looking back, I can see a clear correspondence between my children's arrival and my career decisions. I was a junior faculty member at an academic medical center when I became pregnant with my oldest. I am extremely lucky to have had healthy pregnancies that allowed me to accomplish a great deal at work. Indeed, I found myself working on preparing a career development award up until the final hours of my first pregnancy. Receipt of that award allowed me 5 years to devote to this research agenda, and it was during this time that I also had my second child (16 months after my first). Upon finding out that I was pregnant with my third, I realized that, while I enjoyed my work setting and cared for my colleagues, I found it hard personally to divide my attention between the care I wanted to give my young children while also devoting the necessary and significant amount of time my work demanded (not to forget the 2-hour daily commute which ate into my work and family time). These issues became the catalyst for my searching for a meaningful, satisfying academic career that would not deprive me of the time I wanted to spend caring for my young children. I began applying for area Psychology department-based positions and accepted my current position while I was on maternity leave with my third child. It's been 10 years since the first edition of this chapter was written, and my children are now 17, 15, and 13 years old. Holy cow, how did this happen?! They aren't babies anymore, but they still need and want me to be involved in their busy teenage lives. No matter how busy my hours can get with my current position, I am continually grateful that it affords me the flexibility I need and desire to be active in my kids' lives. I am mindful of how much I work at home around my children, because I want them to see me aspiring to juggle career with my family life and my own personal goals. But I also hope to set an example for them of how their mother can also be a competent professional helping to educate and improve people's lives.

### **3.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

Immediately after having my first child, my family relocated because of my spouse's work. We were ushered into a welcoming community, and I was quickly recruited to become an adjunct professor at one of the local colleges in the area. In light of the transition and my love for teaching and training, I thought the part-time position would be a great fit and accepted the offer. After the first semester, I was invited to become a full-time visiting professor and later accepted a tenure-track position. I knew that I wanted to shift my career toward organizational psychology and consulting, but I recognized that the professorship provided a platform to establish greater credibility in the community, network and build relationships that would be crucial to building a practice, and have greater autonomy over my schedule than a traditional 9 to 5 role. In order to align my academic efforts with my future goals, I elected to teach organizational psychology courses and manage my department's

outward facing co-op and internship programs. Eventually, I connected with others who were involved in leadership development and coaching initiatives at a neighboring university medical center and was invited to train and serve in their leadership coaching cadre. I had my second child 2 years later, and it became clear that I would no longer be able to juggle mothering two small children while managing my academic responsibilities and a growing consulting and coaching practice. After a period of soul searching and discernment, I decided to take a leap of faith and leave the professorship behind – despite the financial uncertainty and risk that this change would impose. Thanks to a remarkably interesting series of events, I found myself interviewing to become an adjunct coach with one of the most respected and consistently ranked global leadership education organizations in the world within a few months of my formal departure.

The breakthrough opportunity that I had been seeking had finally emerged and also offered the flexibility I needed at that time to fulfill my chief priority, which was serving my family. My children are now 11 and 15, and their increasing maturity has afforded the opportunity to take on additional roles and challenges. My goals and priorities are still the same, however. I want to be present for my children and to model authenticity and the ongoing pursuit of a meaningful and fulfilling life.

I witnessed an important mentoring conversation about work and family between a wise and gregarious banking executive and a somewhat younger group of professional women. She reassured her audience in the face of questions regarding “balance,” by stating “you can have it all, just not all at the same time.” While there might be some who would disagree, I appreciated the perspective. Once we identify and gain clarity on our “anchors” – those values, beliefs, and imperatives that ground us and serve as guideposts – we can clarify our paths, choices, and the timing of when we elect to pursue particular goals. That said, we must embrace even this idea with self-compassion and acknowledge the inherent uncertainty of life.

#### **4. Many Women in Graduate School Wonder What Type of Position Will Offer Them the Best Experience for Both Their Work and Personal Lives. What Aspects of Your Position Facilitate a Satisfying Experience of Work and Personal Life?**

##### **4.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)**

The aspect of my job that helps me effectively manage responsibilities at both work and home is the control I have over my activities and day-to-day schedule. This control allows me some flexibility in terms of scheduling classes so that I can make it to my son’s soccer game, take him to a doctor’s appointment, or chaperone the occasional field trip. I work as many hours and as intensely as I did when I was employed at an academic medical center, but the increased autonomy and flexibility I currently have translate into less stress and an overall higher quality of life. I also have significant flexibility during the summer months. While faculty members at my institution are on 9-month contracts, most of the psychology faculty spends

a significant amount of time in the office during summer months on research activities that are difficult to accomplish during the school year when classes are in session. However, the summer atmosphere is quite relaxed, and the absence of teaching responsibilities enhances flexibility, which in turn facilitates my ability to manage both work and home responsibilities.

An additional factor that greatly facilitated my transition to motherhood was my institution's generous maternity leave policy. As a rule, new mothers are granted a one-semester paid maternity leave during which they are free from all regular faculty responsibilities, including teaching, advising, and service activities. Research activities are a little trickier to manage given that it may not be feasible or desirable to truly hit the pause button on a program of research for an entire semester. I had the good fortune of giving birth to my son at the beginning of the summer and took maternity leave the following fall. As a result, I was able to spend about 7 months at home with him before returning to work full-time. It's notable that both departmental and institutional support for this policy are quite strong; I was assured that I was in fact expected to take maternity leave. In my experience and observation this type of maternity leave policy eases the adjustment to parenthood and ultimately enhances productivity upon return to full-time work.

While I have benefited enormously from the flexibility and autonomy in my job, it is not without challenges. The professional life of a faculty member at a liberal arts college is not confined to the classroom, and it is important to be actively involved in multiple aspects of the campus community. Consequently, many work-related activities take place outside the confines of a typical 9 to 5 workday. For example, faculty members at my institution frequently participate in evening faculty meetings, admissions events, departmental activities, and functions related to student organizations across campus. This assortment of activities can complicate childcare arrangements and may make it challenging to plan for quality time at home.

Another issue that poses a challenge is the fact that many aspects of academic work have no clearly defined end or limits. Of course, this can be said of many other types of work (including stay-at-home parenting) as well. While certain activities do terminate when a semester ends, most (research, course development, advising, committee work ...) are ongoing. As a result, the work can easily expand to fill whatever time I allow. This characteristic of academic work, combined with the fact that technology makes me highly accessible to students at almost any hour of the day, can make it more difficult than I would like to keep some degree of separation between work and family life. I consistently strive to set reasonable limits for myself at work (and at home) to avoid burnout while maintaining both my productivity and my sanity.

#### **4.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)**

When you dream about your future, dream big and do not compromise. Women can do so much, and if you have the opportunity to shatter the glass ceiling, and this is what you dream of, then do it. I do not mean to sound simplistic or naive about the real life

dilemmas many women face, but I have watched many short-change their professional dreams out of fear that they would not be able to swing work and motherhood.

While our country lags behind others in providing appropriate paid leave to mothers and fathers, I encourage every mother to take full advantage of the leave afforded you by your employer. If there is room to negotiate, do it. I remember having a boss who changed the medical policy in our handbook, because he needed extra medical coverage for a procedure. When I became pregnant, I went to him, reminded him of how flexible he was with his own medical needs and asked him to revise the maternity leave policy, and he did. I also negotiated professional development days so that I would not have to use my paid time off to cover my time volunteering at board meetings (many of which I brought my infant to). Last, I requested to be able to work from home one day a week.

In sum, if you do not advocate for yourself, who will? If there is flexibility to negotiate for your future personal needs up front, then build this into your job offer. Although we are “super women” we also have families who rely upon us. You cannot turn time back so the more you can do to create a work schedule and culture that will afford enough flexibility that you can attend to multiple aspects of your identity, the better.

#### 4.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)

In the introduction to *Mama PhD*, you will find the following veracious words written by Elrana Evans and Caroline Grant (2008):

Balance, as every working mother knows, is not a static state, perfectly still like an old-fashioned scale. The dancer in arabesque or the yogi in vrksasana are both perfectly balanced, every muscle aware or engaged. Their bodies are vibrantly alive as they continually assess and shift their poses, working and changing to hold a position that gives the illusion of stillness. This version of balance, this constant, alert, focused negotiation, is the lifelong process of mothers in the academy, and everywhere – working out as we go along how to be whole people.

Their words strike a chord with me. On the whole, across the semesters, contexts, pauses, and challenges, I enjoy my experience of a life that includes both an academic career and a family with children. My own personal definition of balance then is that enjoyment.

I believe that academic positions are highly flexible and compatible with parenthood for many, although not all, individuals. True, there are really many versions of the academic position, and I have been fortunate to work in a supportive environment. When I left my twin four-month-olds at home to go back to work regularly, I decided that there must be a reason for doing so, and I set out to define what that reason was for me. In the academy, I've often been able to create the job that would hold my interest, a job that I would like most of the time and even love some of the time. This is a key ingredient to me in juggling the responsibilities of the *Mama PhD* life.



In my opinion, many of the challenges that academic mothers face are common to working mothers everywhere and simply revolve around not having enough hours in the day for managing the lab and the household, writing the manuscript and the grocery list, and consulting the statistician and the babysitter. I am certainly more likely to be late on deadlines than I was pre-kid, but I care less. Other challenges that await the academic mother may differ from pre-tenure to post-tenure status. The pre-tenure academic job holds performance to an external standard, requires a certain level of productivity, and provides the challenge of doing many things for the first time and at the same time. These factors mean that pre-tenure positions often feel less flexible and perhaps more overwhelming than post-tenure positions. Then there is perhaps the more demanding part of the job, defining and meeting our own standards and figuring out how to deal with external feedback when those standards clash with those of the academy. This second part of the job does not change post-tenure for most of us and indeed begins far before that first tenure-track position.

But I'd be remiss if I didn't address one of the core challenges of an academic position – the unending and seemingly limitless bounds of the work an academician does. When am I done writing the talk, preparing the course, advising the student? How many talks, courses, and students do I take on? Because it can be difficult to know exactly when we are done, it is vital that we work hard to avoid over-committing at work or at home. This relates to one of the most important skills to master as academic mothers; that is, saying “No.” I often hear from my junior colleagues that they believe that they cannot say no to requests to contribute to their departments or fields because they fear for their tenure. I am not sure that this fear is always well-placed and I strongly encourage women to check out that belief with senior colleagues before they pile on the commitments. But again, learning to set those boundaries, to un-commit to commitments that turned out to be something else, and to leave work aside to play are all challenges for any working mother, and perhaps even more so for the academic mother.

#### **4.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

This is the million dollar question, and I don't believe there is an easy or one-size-fits-all answer. I would argue that it's incumbent on each of us to identify our own values and priorities, and to try to act in ways that are consistent with those. We need to be our own barometers.

The guiding force of values and values-based behaviors has received lots of attention over the last two decades, highlighted by the work of visionaries in acceptance- and mindfulness-based approaches to mental health, such as Marsha Linehan, Steve Hayes, Liz Roemer, Sue Orsillo, and others. The importance of values in job and career choices is an important application of these ideas (e.g., Yu & Wright, 2015), and several work-related values exercises have been developed, accordingly (e.g., [https://media.capella.edu/CourseMedia/CPLU1100\\_CPL5100/WorkValuesCardSort/wrapper.asp](https://media.capella.edu/CourseMedia/CPLU1100_CPL5100/WorkValuesCardSort/wrapper.asp)). My dear friend and colleague, Dr. Risa

Weisberg, and I have also spoken on the topic at various conferences (e.g., Kamholz et al., 2016; Weisberg et al., 2016), and it would be hard to overstate her influence on my thinking here. Although I can't offer an easy or universal answer to this question, I can highlight the ways in which certain values have influenced my own choices at different times (as I've alluded to previously), as well as their dynamic nature.

Just some of the professional values relevant to my choices (and my satisfaction with those choices) are: the importance of doing "good," autonomy, influence, enjoyable relationships, financial stability, clear boundaries between my work and personal life, and status. Throughout my career, I have placed a premium on being able to "do good," have meaningful autonomy over my work while also enjoying relationships with colleagues, and maximizing financial stability. (I have a remarkably low threshold for fiscal risk.) In the earlier years of my career (from finishing postdoc until my daughter was about 5 years old), it was also very important to me to have influence within an organization, have clear (rigid?) boundaries between work and personal time, and to have a certain amount of professional clout or status. My then-full-time VA leadership role matched those priorities extremely well.

As I became more senior in my traditional psychology career and my daughter got older, my priorities shifted. Now mid-career and feeling like I've "proven myself," status is no longer a significant consideration. As I mentioned elsewhere, I'm also more comfortable with more permeable boundaries across work and personal domains. Although consistent across my career, my perspective of doing "good" broadened considerably as the landscapes of politics and social justice shifted dramatically leading up to the 2016 elections and beyond. Perhaps more accurately, my understanding of reality shifted, and I wanted to take action on a larger scale. Similarly, although my value on influence remains, its focus has broadened and become less self-referential. In addition, as I achieved a certain amount of mastery in my work, I sought new and exciting challenges. Expanding my professional life to include my own business has allowed me to have the best of many worlds, continuing meaningful work at the VA while exploring exciting new ventures in areas that matter to me.

Of course, all choices have consequences, and it's important to understand them as you make decisions. I have made values-based choices that "cost" me professionally. For example, my ascent through academic promotion was significantly slowed by both my professional focus (e.g., shifting from soft-money research to a hard-money position as early as possible for many reasons, including financial security) and personal priorities (e.g., how much time I wanted to spend with my family). I became an associate professor long after many of my peers were promoted to full professor (an academic rank that I will never achieve). I have also made values-based choices that "cost" me personally. For example, spending hundreds of hours on political work that took me away from family, friends, sleep, good nutrition, and exercise!

Values-based choices are complicated, deeply personal, and change over time. We can't achieve a perfect state, but we can work towards what matters to us.

#### 4.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)

I find it important to allow myself freedom and flexibility and to not put too much emphasis on “balancing” work and personal demands. “Balance” assumes that we ultimately have more control over our environments than we may actually have. To that end, my current position allows me great flexibility. Aside from my being expected to teach my assigned courses and hold regular office hours, nearly half of what I do can be accomplished on my own schedule, and in my home office if I choose. As long as I plan accordingly, I can build in daily morning exercise and time for chores on our farm, transport kids to various activities in the evenings, and any other demands that may arise. Of course, the downside to this arrangement is that work demands may always feel like they are lurking and needing attention. Technology makes it all too easy to access and engage in work, making it nearly impossible to set clear boundaries between “work” and “home.” Here are a few things that I find helpful in sorting out how to keep my internal compass aimed in the right direction:

**What are your core values? How do these define the expectations you have of yourself?**

This isn't a single conversation to have with yourself, but one that (hopefully) continually occurs over the course of your life, serving as a touchstone for how you choose to live your life and focus your efforts, attentions, and behaviors. It's not surprising to me that many of us writing in this chapter echo similar sentiments.

**Be careful about saying yes to requests.** It's easy enough to think of what you might gain from accepting a request, but it's also worth considering what you are potentially losing or giving up by committing to the request. When you're a junior faculty member, it's often expected that you'll be available and willing to participate in anything offered to you. But, as you become more established, I would encourage you to thoughtfully consider each request and how it fits in with your professional and personal values, and what you (potentially) need to give up in order to fit in this new demand on your time.

**To-do lists are helpful, but don't expect to complete them.** If there's one thing I learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, you could literally work around the clock and still not meet all of the expectations placed on you. Meetings can easily take place 12–14 hours of each day, with room for little else. It's so easy to feel pressured to fit more into your schedule, but my experience is that this usually backfires and leads to feeling stressed or burned out.

**Carefully choose your partner . . . and your collaborators.** It goes without saying that juggling motherhood, work demands, and personal interests requires a caring, considerate partner. Remember that you are a team. Don't underestimate how much you can help each other with the day running smoother and being more enjoyable! Consistent with this, choose collaborators who you enjoy spending time with, who are like-minded with respect to work habits, and who appreciate the competing demands on your time as clinician, scientist, parent, etc.

#### **4.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

As described in a previous response, having control and autonomy over my schedule informed several of my career choices after having children. Serving as a professor and independent consultant allowed me to carve out time that I needed during traditional business hours to run errands, volunteer at my children's school, work from home when needed, and care for my children when they were sick. A consequence of these choices was that I often found myself at my desk at night working late to meet deadlines and finish tasks that could have been completed earlier if I had kept regular business hours. Despite the late nights, having the additional control and flexibility reduced my stress and allowed me to be present in ways that were meaningful to me. I also believe in delegating the things that are either not important to me, I am not good at, or that are simply not efficient uses of my time. I happily order take out and family meal packages, hire sitters, and engage housekeeping services when possible.

It is important to acknowledge that these options are not always affordable or otherwise feasible for some, but need often creates amazing opportunities for novel solutions and partnership. I had a friend with a full-time nanny that she wanted to retain. After my friend's son entered preschool, she began to have trouble offering the number of hours her nanny desired. I had been searching for a reliable sitter but only needed a few hours of care per week. Our quite different circumstances created the perfect opportunity for us to share a nanny. The caregiver was fully engaged and satisfied through this partnership, and we were both relieved.

At times, simply acknowledging or asking for help can be a barrier to greater satisfaction. The "superwoman complex" and false and misleading images that "strong" women can "do it all" should be deconstructed. I would encourage readers to honestly assess their circumstances and unique needs and to then draw upon their resources to create the support structures that they uniquely need, without apology or guilt.

### **5. You are all Extraordinarily Successful at What You Do. What Guidance Have You Relied On to Find Ways to Engage in the Dynamic Art of Juggling Many Roles?**

#### **5.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)**

There are a few things I try to keep in mind as I attempt to juggle my responsibilities and roles at work and at home.

First, I rely heavily on planning, organization, and the maintenance of a schedule. For example, I have learned that I can be particularly productive during the early morning hours when I am the only one awake, and I regularly use this time to make progress on preparations for class, writing projects, etc. I also maintain a master calendar in the kitchen with commitments for both work and home

(including “appointments” for fun activities with my family) so that I can keep the time frames for various goals and activities in mind from day to day. This strategy helps me prioritize so that I can use my time most efficiently.

Second, I have to frequently remind myself that, in spite of all the efforts I make to plan effectively and control my schedule, many things happen (often at the last minute) that I cannot even pretend to control . . . my son gets sick, a critical meeting is called, the carpool cancels, etc. In my experience, many of these changes result in work–child care conflicts that require significant flexibility, not to mention a sense of humor. Although it certainly did not address all the complications that arose from unanticipated changes, when my son was younger, I did try to plan ahead by keeping some toys and snacks at my office. I also maintained a list of students who expressed an interest in babysitting in the event that my son unexpectedly needed to spend an hour or two with me at work.

Third, I think it’s important to discover what helps you manage stress most effectively, whether it’s yoga, meditation, or making time to read something other than journal articles. For me, both regular physical activity and active solicitation of social support are key. In particular, I find it helpful to maintain a system of social support involving friends both from within and beyond academia. I have found that having a range of supportive people in my network facilitates creative problem solving, reciprocal logistic support, and the ability to look at potential stressors from a different, often humorous, angle. Whatever your preferred stress management strategies, don’t forget to implement them.

Finally, I often remember what a good friend once told me. She said that it isn’t really fair to compare yourself now to the “you” you were before having kids in terms of energy, efficiency, productivity, priorities, etc. I use this sentiment as a reminder to strive for realistic expectations of myself both as an academic and as a parent. Could I supervise yet another research project? Sure. Could I spend even more time prepping a lecture? Very likely. Could I produce a handmade Darth Vader costume for my son? Probably. But there isn’t enough time in the day to do it all, or to do it all perfectly. It’s a matter of discovering what is meaningful and reinforcing for you, what is consistent with your values and work ethic, and what works best for your family. I see that process as a challenging, constantly evolving, and very worthwhile journey.

## **5.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)**

The concept of balance is overrated in my opinion. The way we have been socialized to believe that there is some magical state that we must reach where all is in order and harmony is achievable is unrealistic, limiting for many, and can be more damaging than helpful. It was during a leadership retreat that I heard the words that helped me drop the guilt for being lopsided in my priorities, and better understand that having so-called balance between my social, personal, spiritual, and professional aspects of my life could look different.

The speaker shared a study of some of the most successful people in the nation. It showed that not one of them had equal amounts of energy focused on these four

aspects of life. Instead, there were times when these individuals had a task that required almost all of their energy. They poured energy into a task – skipping sleep sometimes to complete it. Importantly, what they all also had in common was some sort of pre-planned hiatus or sabbatical built in. This looked different for each person, but it served as a respite and time of recharge to look forward to. In essence, there should be no guilt about burning the candle on both ends to complete a project, but there should be time planned to reconnect with yourself and with your family and celebrate your hard work.

Over the years, I have picked up a few tips that serve as guiding principles for my professional and personal life. Someone once challenged me to articulate my mission statement for my career. A mission statement is a reflection of one's values and passions. I encourage this activity as it can help one think about the purpose and meaning behind their professional pursuits.

**Passion is a critical element.** Once you have determined what your mission statement is, let your passion guide your decisions. If you do not believe fully in something, or you are not energized by it, it will either eventually fail, or you will become complacent and ineffective.

**Seek out mentorship and support.** Who you choose as a mentor is a critical decision. First, they must want to mentor you, must be invested in your personal mission and willing to keep you accountable to it. It is important to discriminate who you share your dreams with – not everyone needs to know them – some things should be kept close to your heart until they mature and only shared with those who believe in your dreams and are willing to push you further than you thought you could go. And, always have someone in your mentorship circle who is older and wiser, and younger and smarter.

**Your career is a team sport.** No one arrives where they are at by themselves. Community is critical in helping you advance in your career. Once you have gained some success, remember to develop protégés and cultivate your replacement. Pay it forward – success should be shared.

**Be careful how you use your power.** Power comes in many forms, and is not eternal. As such, understand your power, the political ramifications of it, and use it wisely. Your influence can build a person up or tear them down completely and you never know when you might need that person's help.

**Handle mistakes gracefully.** Remember that mistakes are a part of life – it is how you recover that says the most about you.

**Engage in self-care.** While balance is illusive at best, self-care is not. It is a critical aspect of being successful, and it is oftentimes the most difficult thing for professional women to integrate into their lives. I was listening to a motivational speaker during a board retreat years ago. She created a “Self-care bill of rights.” I still have the note card on my desk today which reads:

- You have the right to say no

- You have the right to prioritize your mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
- You have the right to make decisions about your time without guilt
- You have the right to adequate sleep
- You have the right to define success for yourself
- You have the right to serve your community in a way that makes you come alive

### 5.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)

I believe all the sage advice I have to offer has already been said. Nonetheless, here are my thoughts on home–work balance. This balance is a striving, rather than a state of being. When we judge it relative to a set of “oughts,” rather than our internal standards, we are bound to feel failure. When we assess it within the moment, rather than over the long haul, we are bound to feel failure. When we focus on our downfalls, rather than our successes, we are bound to feel failure. And when we attribute our life challenges repeatedly to the pressure of “achieving balance,” rather than the many other sources of challenge present in our lives, we are bound to feel failure.

So what is my advice? Define your own standards for performance and criteria for judging how you are doing. Think about striving toward balance as a process over time, rather than something to achieve in each day, week, or month. Celebrate your successes, no matter how small the party. And then, there is the wisdom of the otters . . .

Two quotes posted on the walls of the Otter House at the High Desert Museum in Bend Oregon await you outside the cage of Thomas, the river otter. I never thought of myself as identifying with otters before, but after reading these quotes, I see that Thomas gets it. Attributed to Ed Park, the first quote is simply, “If an otter can’t have fun doing something, it simply won’t do it.” As much as possible, work and teach on topics you care about, with people you like being around. Have fun doing your job as much as possible. Do the same thing at home. There is time for this. Not all the day, all the time, but there is indeed time for this.

The other quote is attributed to G. Maxwell and reads “Otters are extremely bad at doing nothing . . . they are either asleep or entirely absorbed in play or other activity.” As contemporary psychologists, we recognize the element of mindfulness in this attitude. Be where you are as much as possible, and be absorbed in it. Know when you are working and when you are mothering.

Despite these brave sayings, I do often find myself caught up in the struggle of finding time to make it all work. I look up from packing sandwiches for school the next day as I simultaneously review therapy tapes for clinical supervision at 10pm on a Tuesday night. For this reason, posted in my living room are two Brian Andreas prints that partner to comfort me. The first speaks to my sometimes unrealistic standards for parenthood, and reads “She asked me if I had kids & when I did she said make sure you teach them what’s right. & I said how will I know? & she nodded

& said, good point, just don't teach them any obvious wrong then." The other speaks to the time pressures we all feel, and reads "Everything changed the day she figured out there was exactly enough time for the important things in her life."

For me, family is first. But I remain devoted to my job. Right now, in this part of my career, they feed one another. It is a constant struggle, though, to remember why I do what I do and to make sure that I am making choices and rewarding myself according to the values and standards that I set for myself. Having a partner who gets it and lives it right along with me is the key to making this work for me.

#### **5.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

For me, guidance can be divided into philosophical approaches and practical strategies. Philosophically, I try to focus on my values as much as possible (within the parameters of reality, like financial responsibilities, priorities of the people and institutions for whom I work, etc.). I have addressed that philosophy earlier in this chapter, so I'll address more practical issues here.

**Find a great partner.** Perhaps the single most important factor in my ability to juggle many roles is the fact that I have a great partner at home. Science backs me up on this, indicating that a supportive spouse has positive effects on a person's willingness to pursue opportunities and career success (Jakubiak & Fenney, 2016; Valcour & Ladge, 2008). This seems particularly relevant for women married to men, given that women's careers and professional goals are traditionally seen as secondary to their husband's careers and potentially to domestic work as well.

In addition to the joys of a good relationship, sharing responsibilities, dividing up tasks, and playing to each other's strengths is critical. When I feel guilty because my daughter is sick and I need to be at an important meeting, my husband gently reminds me that our daughter has two parents and that nothing dictates I have to be the one who is home. (With that said, I make sure he's not always the one who is home with her!) In addition, as I've embarked on new challenges and shifted the focus of my work, my husband has not only been encouraging and supportive, he has adjusted his own schedule to ensure that he is available to our daughter during evenings or weekends, if I am not. I also appreciate that he is as quick as I am to roll his eyes if someone applauds his equal responsibility in household tasks or childcare. We are a team, and we both work to elevate the other and be as flexible as possible to fulfill our many roles (and have fun along the way).

**Choose your colleagues carefully.** Most of my career choices have been determined not by what I would be doing, but by who my colleagues would be. The people you work with (both at the organizational level and at the level of daily interactions) are critical in determining your level of career satisfaction and the extent to which you can juggle multiple roles and demands. This is true whether or not you have children, as other family responsibilities, interests, life events, and even national events will affect your priorities and how you juggle your roles. Carefully evaluating the culture of an organization, and the perspectives of the colleagues and supervisors with whom



you work directly, is critical to assessing how challenging it may be to honor your values and juggle your priorities.

**Work hard.** Organizations and supervisors (at least good ones) reward employees who work hard and contribute to the mission(s). They are more inclined to be flexible and accommodate requests for flexibility if you work hard, are a team player, and have a good attitude. Make yourself valuable, and you'll have more people willing to support your priorities and help you juggle. As one example – I recently requested a month of leave from my VA position to work full-time on a political project. The Director of Mental Health agreed to the request on the spot, explicitly noting the value I bring to the organization and his belief that it is smart for the organization to be flexible in return. Of course, this is also a credit to this Director's own values and strengths as a leader.

My goal as a supervisor is to help others live by their values and successfully juggle their roles as well. To my mind, this is simply the right thing to do. From a business perspective, it's also the smart thing to do – happy employees are productive employees.

**Buy time.** When I was a psychology intern, I took public transportation to the clinic where I worked because there was no parking there. I later learned that the site training director (a mother of young twins) drove and paid the high Boston parking rates every day (saving more than an hour each day, but spending hundreds of dollars each month on parking). When I asked her about it, she told me that she had more money than time. That will not always be the case. But when it is, use it to your advantage.

I pay for things that save me time – I drop clothes off to get pressed rather than ironing (though this is win-win, as I'm exceptionally bad at ironing), I pay someone to clean my home, etc. When I have free time, I want to spend it on things that are important to me (and working as I do has afforded me the luxury of spending money to gain flexibility).

**Don't be a hero.** This is the corollary to buying time. You can't do everything. Share tasks with your partner. Once you can afford it, outsource things you can (like cleaning the house).

**Watch everyone.** They will all have something to teach you . . . how to implement empirically supported treatments in the most palatable and effective manner, how to find the critical mistaken assumption in a research study, how to manage staff, how to lead a meeting, how to motivate people, how to juggle different roles (or how not to do some of these things).

**Collaborate.** Whether at the office or at home, collaboration typically leads to the best (and most efficient) ideas. It also increases your productivity across the board, making you more valuable, and your supervisors/organizations more likely to accommodate your needs.

### **5.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)**

Career success requires hard work, combined with passion. The work that we've chosen to pursue is born out of a need to help make a difference in people's lives. Whether this work involves writing a book or a research grant, teaching classes, working with clients, supervising trainees, or advocating for mental health, passion is key to the success of these activities. But, how do we find our own "ideal" balance? How do we realistically make this happen on a daily basis? A weekly basis? This is where carefully aligning our actions with our values is critical. As others in this chapter have also referenced, regularly reminding ourselves of our core values and assessing our thoughts and actions for how they match up will help us stay grounded and true to our own ideals.

Career success also requires the ability to handle frustration and failure. Many of us have heard this advice with respect to rejection of scholarly articles or research grants. But have you considered your ability to handle frustration and failure with respect to balancing career and family? Life has a way of twisting and turning, whether related to career or family. Learn to trust yourself and to listen to what feels right when it comes to making decisions involving your career, your family, and your own passions. Don't be afraid to change course when you feel you're heading in the wrong direction, as you'll often find that some doors may close, but many others will open for you. Trust your instincts!

### **5.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

When considering this question regarding the "dynamic art of juggling," I think it is important to acknowledge my complete rejection of the construct of work-life balance from the start. I prefer to lean more heavily on the concepts of resilience and sustainability. Informed by Tony Schwartz's integrative work on energy management, Kate Rademacher's writings on rest and sabbath, and numerous neuro-leadership researchers, my approach to sustainability is grounded in the continuum of activities across the many domains of my life. I have made it a practice to notice how I am experiencing different aspects of my work, avocational interests, and personal life in order to increase the intentionality of selecting those activities that are going to help maintain my energy and vigor, while also being conscious of those activities that deplete my energy. With this deliberate focus, I can better regulate my thoughts and actively cope with more challenging or difficult situations. To put it simply, there are aspects of my work that are incredibly energizing while some are draining. Similarly, I find that some aspects of my personal and family life are energizing, and others are draining. If I were to try to balance the hours spent focused on both areas without a deeper understanding of self and experience, I would likely feel very out of sorts and quite "imbalanced."

While not perfect, this overall strategy informs choices about time off, vacation, sabbatical experiences, and perhaps most importantly, my daily choices. With

conscious awareness, I have crafted a “menu” of self-care practices and habits that I have found to be helpful. I then experiment with and deploy options from my “menu” based on my circumstances, tasks, and to-dos on a given day. For example, one simple best practice for me is to ensure that meetings are adequately spaced in order to allow for reflection, renewal, and appropriate planning for any needed follow up tasks between appointments. If I cannot achieve the desired spacing due to constraints outside of my control, I build recovery time into my schedule that allows me to decompress and complete necessary follow-up tasks. If I can successfully deploy this practice, I am often able to end my workday with a sense of calm and move on to my more family-focused “second shift” with greater resolve. Although this one strategy may sound like a small thing, sometimes the additive benefits of seemingly small gestures or behaviors can have a big impact on overall well-being and sustainability.

While I may always be a planner at heart and rely on my analytical skills to come up with efficient routines and approaches to managing responsibilities, I have learned through experience that these approaches are not fail-safe and can even lead to distress or “performance guilt” in some instances. Learning to integrate thinking and planning with more emergent approaches that incorporate elements of mindfulness has enabled greater adaptability and agility in the face of the all-too-common “curveballs” and uncertainties of work and family life.

## **6. What Should Early Career Women Ask About, and Look Out For, When Searching For Their First Job?**

### **6.1 Dr. DiLillo (Liberal Arts College)**

I would suggest looking for an environment where a healthy commitment to work and other activities is modeled. Because most interviews last a couple of days, you might get a sense of the general atmosphere by listening to what current employees talk about during some of the less-formal interactions. For example, does anyone mention family, hobbies, volunteer work, or children? Is information about activities outside of work volunteered? Additionally, if I were applying to a college or university, I would seek out the institution’s faculty handbook (which can frequently be found online) to investigate the family leave and other relevant policies. I might also investigate whether there are institution-affiliated childcare facilities on campus. Finally, if you receive a job offer, I would be certain to assertively negotiate. Women are often hesitant to ask for a higher starting salary, more start-up funds, or something else that could impact their future success. Do not hesitate to seek out advice from a trusted mentor about this process if you need it. You only have one opportunity to negotiate for these important resources; don’t miss it!

### **6.2 Dr. Clark Harvey (Behavioral Health Advocacy Organization)**

The job hunt after graduate school can be a difficult exercise for many. After years of following a script for success outlined by educational institutions, students are

thrown to the professional world, and expected to figure out how to navigate the transition. No matter how many mentors you have, or how clear cut you believe your path to professional success will be, the change from student to full-time professional is something no one takes an academic course in. This is because there is no syllabus or script for your path. Everyone's journey is different, and you must learn to navigate it for yourself. Many will turn to their mentors in specific settings eager to learn about their career path and seek to emulate it. While mentorship and being inspired by others can be helpful, I challenge students to be open and flexible as they think about their future.

When you land that first job, there are a few items I suggest women consider. First, where you start is important. Too many women are reticent to ask for more during job negotiations. This can be a higher salary, additional benefits or time off. Here are some suggested questions to consider asking:

- Ask if there are policies around professional development activities. For example, if you are serving on a board that requires you to be present for meetings during the week, or if you plan to take time to study for a licensure examination, request time outside of your allotted vacation time to participate in these activities.
- If you are thinking about starting a family, make sure to ask about policies around maternity leave and childcare credits/allowances.
- Inquire about opportunities to advance. If you are going to continue to grow, then understanding the potential for advancement within a workplace is critical.
- Also, inquire about opportunities for mentorship from other women at the organization. Remember, no one gets where they are at alone. Having professionals who have navigated the path ahead of you will help you get a sense of what is possible within the workplace.

### **6.3 Dr. Hussong (Research Intensive University)**

Often, students making the transition of applying from undergraduate to graduate school have to change their criteria for selecting programs from university rankings to person–environment fit. In my experience, those individuals who are most satisfied with their graduate training are the ones who chose their institution because it offered what they wanted, rather than what someone else wanted or because of the reputation of the institution. This is harder than it seems, of course, because you first have to know what you want. What type of environment best fits you?

The same challenge presents itself in looking for the first job. Knowing how important it is for you to work in a women- or family-friendly environment, relative to other criteria for job selection, is a personal decision. Your goal is to optimize the fit between what you want and the opportunities and demands of the work environment. That said, there are a variety of guides that help women think about what is important to consider in identifying work settings that are women- and/or

family-friendly. Without reviewing those here, let me highlight just a few questions you might ask to make this assessment:

- Do you see women in positions of authority in the department (tenured full professors, area heads, chairs, deans)? Are there supportive role models?
- What is the history of women getting tenure in the department? Is that any different for women who are also mothers?
- Are there a lot of demands on your time at night or that require travel that are non-negotiable or that would negatively impact you if you chose not to attend?
- Do any of the faculty members ever bring their children into work for a few hours in a pinch? How do other faculty members respond when that happens?
- What are maternity and paternity leave policies? Is there an option to delay the tenure clock because of maternity leave or extended family leave?
- Is there a women's faculty center on campus to support the development of female faculty?

And where do you get the information? Read the personnel documents that lay out employment policies (e.g., leave, sick time). Talk to women and men in the workplace (students, staff, and faculty). When possible, talk to people who have left this work site to see if any of these issues was part of the reason. You may not always get reliable and valid reports, but I would suspect that the reports would be as good as you might expect to get on most topics you might ask about the worksite.

#### **6.4 Dr. Kamholz (Hybrid – Academically Affiliated VA Plus Small Business)**

As it was explained to me by a colleague years ago, the degrees of freedom that most strongly influence job searches are typically location, job type/duties, and salary. I would tweak that model to subdivide one variable (that is, dividing job type/duties into structure and content), and add one more factor – the people with whom one works. For a first job, most people will have to prioritize one factor. The very lucky individual enjoys two out of three. It's up to each of us to decide what's most important to us.

Beyond the basics (mentioned above), I think a key aspect of any job are the people you work with (including opportunities for mentorship). Related to this is the tenor of the organization. Do people talk about their lives outside of work? Have friendships with each other? What is the leadership like (at all levels)? Do they have outside interests, families, hobbies? Those personal and interpersonal characteristics will be mirrored in the organization and in your own position.

Finally, remember that your starting point in an organization will significantly influence the trajectory of your position (and, potentially, career) in terms of both responsibilities and salary. Regarding salary in particular, that cuts both ways – if you start out underpaid, that is likely to continue (or you'll spend a lot of energy catching up). If you start out at a very high salary, you'll end up building a life based on that income (e.g., mortgage), and it may be very difficult later to pursue opportunities that pay less.

Across all variables, it is important to ascertain what will be expected of you and what is valued in the system, to best evaluate your likelihood for happiness and success in the position. Be sure to understand opportunities for advancement and salary structure, and don't apologize for wanting appropriate compensation for your efforts.

While sorting through everyone's advice, remember there's no easy ticket. Whether you want to cultivate a multidimensional life, or you want to focus on only one aspect of things and get on the fastest track, you will have to work hard, be flexible, and collaborate if you want to succeed (however you choose to define success).

### **6.5 Dr. Lloyd-Richardson (Masters Granting University)**

Responses by my co-authors provide many helpful suggestions and questions to ask when searching for that first job. I wish I'd had access to all of this in my early career days! My advice comes from a slightly different angle, and pushes you to consider from the beginning how to ensure that your "ideal" includes time for you to explore your personal passions and be your authentic self. During my postdoc years, I noticed that my friends who had not pursued advanced degrees had thriving personal lives, replete with healthy non-work-related interests (i.e., "hobbies"). My friends pursuing advanced studies, on the other hand, had for so many years given their time, energy, and "down time" over to their studies, their profession. Perhaps necessary at the time, at a certain point, I found myself asking "Is this all there is?" When is a good time to pursue these other interests that add to the richness of life? There's no better time than the present, I would assert. So when you find yourself looking for that first job, ask questions not only about the work environment, responsibilities, etc. . . . but ask about what people do for fun. Do they have time for creative outlets or non-work interests? Can they tell you about some great venues around town for music or outdoor recreation? Or do they let you know that there's little time outside of work? I think that part of being a successful psychologist is being a happy, healthy, balanced individual.

A primary reason that I chose the position I am in now was for the "quality of life" – what does this mean? The flexibility the job offered, the ability to have more time available in the summers, to pursue passions that sometimes diverge and sometimes overlap with my academic career. When I received my tenure and promotion, I expanded our farm and got my horses. I'd tested the waters and decided that I could indeed build the full, well-rounded lifestyle that I was aspiring to. Over the years, we've expanded to include goats, chickens, and a miniature donkey. Everyone in the family rides, some of us competitively. This has led to a separate line of clinical research involving animal-assisted interventions and my certification as an equine-facilitated therapist. What began as an effort to create a well-rounded lifestyle for myself and my family has also led to very rewarding professional service and a new line of intriguing research.

As others have commented, this is a matter of goodness of fit with a particular position, at a particular time in your life. Women – and men – will obviously want to consider whether that position will allow them the flexibility to enjoy their families, personal time, etc. . . . It's also important to be realistic about the amount of work that will need to be completed in order to earn a desired salary. I think it's important to consider ALL of the options available to you, whether clinical, academic, or administrative. The perspectives offered here in this article are diverse and honest. I hope they will help to raise questions and flag concerns as you consider your next career steps.

### **6.6 Dr. Rivers (Leadership Consulting and Executive Coaching Private Practice)**

It is never too early or too late to begin to practice Stephen Covey's second habit, "Begin with the End in Mind." Former tech CEO Shellye Archambeau illustrates this point in her book *Unapologetically Ambitious* (2020), noting that people often "take opportunities they [find] right in front of them, instead of strategizing to create their own options." With these insights in mind, I challenge you to envision your career trajectory and imagine the long-term opportunities that you want to create for your future. Having some understanding of where one ultimately wants to land and thinking strategically before one begins to review job postings and announcements are crucial precursors to a successful search. Therefore, engaging in a season of deep reflection regarding one's life vision and sense of purpose and vocational calling is a perfect first step of preparation.

Begin with the following questions: What impact do you want to make and what populations do you feel called to serve through your work? Reflecting on prior educational and professional experiences can also be crucial to this mindfully strategic approach. What tasks or roles have you found to be life-giving? What aspects of your training and work have you found to be draining? In addition to helping identify longer-term career objectives, the answers that emerge from your reflection can help you gain insight on focus areas or specializations that provide meaning and fulfillment and nuances regarding how or in what settings you prefer to work. Similarly, thinking about values that inform lifestyle choices like where you want to live (e.g., city vs. rural, population size and diversity, cultural affordances of a community) or proximity to family, friends, and loved ones are also important.

Once these broader variables are identified, I recommend that you pay close attention to the culture of the institutions you are vetting. If growth and development are a priority, select organizations that provide support for promotion and advancement and have a demonstrated history of investing in their people. Prioritize conversations with potential peers and colleagues to get a sense of how institutional values are really operationalized. Stated views and values are not always reflected in practice. Finally, invoke your mindfulness skills and notice how you feel during the interview process and on in-person visits. Moving from tracking the analytical score

card of a position or institution to one's experience of community and connection (or the lack thereof) can also serve as a crucial measure of fit.

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