

# MORE LIFE PLEASE?

## TOP 10 TIPS TO LIVE YOUR LIFE WELL

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These days, with lots of demands and constantly changing environments, professional life is tough for many people. Many apparently successful and thriving managers and professionals are overworked, under pressure and highly stressed.

It is not uncommon to find busy corporate performers, leaders and executives giving 100% of themselves to their career, while feeling a gnawing sadness that their private and family life is not all that it could be. While their focus, strength and energy are channelled into their professional life, their private life slowly atrophies, like an unused muscle.

As they struggle to cope with professional demands that are coming at them from every angle, it becomes ever harder to juggle the increasing demands at home, and they are doing it with ever less energy, resources and joy. At worst, they suffer unhealthy lifestyles and broken relationships.

Does this sound familiar to you? If so, you may say that it is simply the price of career progress. But it doesn't have to be. With the right approach, instead of exhaustion and domestic friction because of stress and work overload, you can get more of the good things in life. Not more in material terms, but more joy, more satisfaction,

more meaning, more love and more success – however you define it – at home, as well as at work.

It is not about curtailing your career. On the contrary, it is about maintaining your ambitions and continuing to achieve professionally, while at the same time creating the treasured moments for yourself and your family that build the strong foundations of your life. Here are ten tips on how you can get 'More Life':

### **1** Unlock the passion in your family life

Instead of thinking of the family as a place of duty, where dinners are served and homework is done, start thinking of your family as a place that provides comfort, relief, laughter and relaxation after the stresses of difficult days. Take a deep look inside yourself and your family to discover what is there, where the passion is and where it has gone. Think back to some times as a family where you truly felt that passion together. What was it that made that time so special? When was the last time you had that feeling? All successful families need to understand what is important and unique to them as part of the pursuit of passion.

### **2** Develop an inspiring family mission statement

Having understood what makes you and your family tick and what makes you unique as a family, write it down. Ask all family members to contribute and summarize your ideal vision of your family. This will give you all clarity on what it really means to be part of a loving, supportive family unit, and the fundamental connection you have to each other.

### **3** Light the fire

The next step is to make your family one of your most important projects. Incorporate your individual passions into family life. If you have a passion for cooking, for example, get your spouse and children involved in planning and preparing a meal once a week. Encourage your children to share the things that they love doing, and make space for it in your time together. Also, share your passion for your work. If your family understands what you find fulfilling about your work, the greater the chance that they will offer you support when you need it.



## 4 Introduce effective family meetings

These get-togethers, ideally held weekly at the same time, will enable you and your loved ones to avoid stress and friction by planning chores efficiently. Equally importantly, they will help all family members to agree and commit to shared leisure activities, which can create so many great moments and magical memories.

## 5 Build trust

Creating a supportive and trustworthy environment in a family takes building through respectfully sharing and protecting each other's vulnerabilities. It won't show up when family members all eat separately at different times. It won't show up behind closed doors with music blaring and computers and TVs in kids' rooms.

## 6 Schedule Family Nights and Date Nights

Time together as a family is an important way to express passion and build trust. Put it in your agenda, and make sure you show up for it. Ensure that some nights during the week, it is just your family

and no one else. Equally importantly, make a conscious effort to plan quality time with your spouse or partner. Stress the need for one on one time, or set a regular 'date night', where you are not allowed to talk about work and children.

## 7 Give structured support to family members

And receive support back from them. This informs each other's attitudes and behaviours, making you all emotionally stronger through meaningful, constructive feedback, and building an unbreakable bond between you.

## 8 Front load and delegate

It is more beneficial to plan up front, expect the worst, plan for the best, and be as ready as possible for all of life's challenges. This is 'frontloading' and it means doing things on a daily basis rather than only when a crisis hits. Next, develop the skill to delegate everything that doesn't have to be completed by you – such as the cleaning or the gardening. This saves you time, and helps you stay focused on the most critical and valuable tasks.

## 9 Always be (imperfectly) authentic

So many of our interactions with others are based on fear, with our defences high and our authenticity low. As we become a family, life often becomes even harder. Don't hide, but be your true self. Show your weaknesses, and capitalize on your strengths. Screw up royally, and then find a solution to make it right. Show who you are by living the values you hold dear. Use your head and your heart together and you will never go wrong.

## 10 Look after Number One!

First, take care of yourself – including diet, exercise, sleep and 'me time'. This isn't selfishness. When we are listening to the emergency procedures on a plane, we are told to put our own oxygen masks on before putting them on our children. Taking care of ourselves first is so critical it could save the lives of the people we love most. As partners and as parents we can only be what we need to be in our families when we love and take care of ourselves.

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