

Inspiring  
Dads



# THE WORK LIFE BALANCE TOP 10 TIPS



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\*\*\* Everyone will be different, but these top tips will help you to understand the framework you need to follow to maximise your chances of getting the balance you and your family need!

- Tips 1 -7 lay out the **strategy** you need to get better work life balance.
- Tips 8, 9 & 10 are '**tactical**' tips that will work for everyone.

## How much stress is your work life balance causing you?

- ✘ Missing out on key milestones in your children's lives?
- ✘ Deteriorating relationship with your partner?
- ✘ Struggling to spend quality time with your kids?

You know can't buy time with your kids but spending time with your family is the cornerstone of the type of dad **you** want to be.

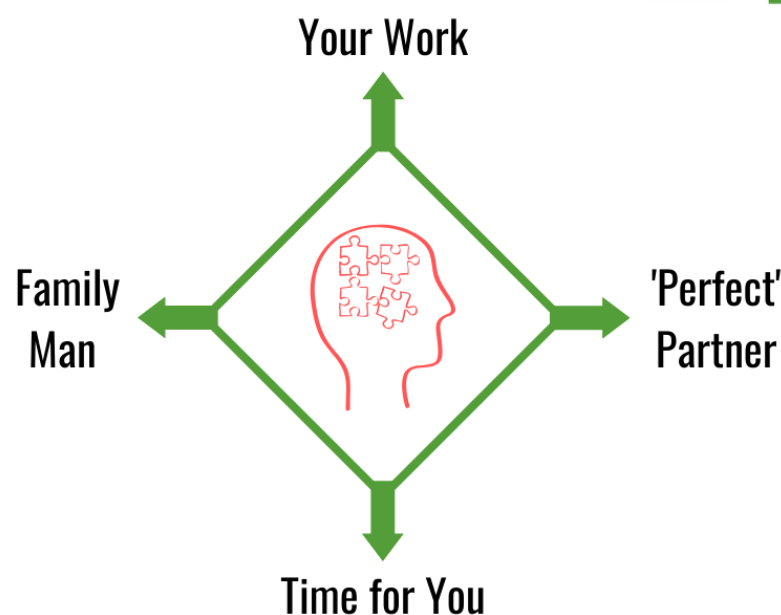
A dad who is there for your family at the moments which matter.

But it's tough to get it right.

You don't want to let anyone down and you're worried you won't look committed or ambitious at work if you seek out flexible working.

But your struggle is causing you stress, effecting your wellbeing and your health. It's not surprising when you have 4 competing pressures in your life...

## Pulled in different directions?



# Your Top 10 Work Life Balance Tips

## 1. Understand what is causing your work life balance pain.

It's important to pay attention to your pressure points. You need to consider...

- When do you feel 'the pain'?
- What is causing you stress? What is happening?
  - a. Pressure from your partner?
  - b. Pressure from your boss or colleagues?
  - c. Deadlines?
  - d. Something the kids say or don't say?
  - e. The pressure you put on yourself?
  - f. You check your emails on your phone?

A great way to understand what your issue is to get in the habit of journaling. Write down how you feel and what is triggering those feelings.

### Great journaling options

Day One  
 A Notebook and Pen (!)  
 One Note  
 Evernote

➤ [Click here to read more about the benefits of journaling](#)

## 2. Understand your Flexible working options and rights

- a. Understand the potential flexibility options – for instance
  - i. Part-time jobs – 4 days, 3 days, 2 days a week.
  - ii. A day or more working from home.
  - iii. Flex start and finish times.
    1. Early in, early home. 7am – 4pm?
    2. Late In, Late home. 10am – 7pm?
  - iv. Job shares.
  - v. Home based working.
  - vi. Compressed hours - 40 hours in 4 days

b. Since 2014 everyone in the UK has had a right to request flexible working. Yes, you absolutely can ask!

- [Click here for a link to the UK Government press release](#)
- [Click here to find out about flexible friendly businesses](#)

c. There are clear rules that Employees and Employers must follow

- [Click here for a link on the rules on requesting flexible working](#)

d. Shared Parental Leave (for new parents in UK)

There are significant and well documented issues with the uptake of SPL but if you are a new parent or plan to be you need to have investigate this

- [Click here for a link to the UK Government content](#)

e. Know your employer's flexible working policy

Talk to HR and understand the formal options – we'll get to talking to your boss in a minute...

### 3. Know your 'Why'.

This is so important – when you're struggling to get your work life balance sorted you need to be crystal clear as to WHY it is so important to get right. This focus will carry you through the tricky times and be a constant source of motivation.

a. Be honest. What do you **really** want?

Make a list about you and your life.

- i. Who do you want to Be?
- ii. What do you want to Do?
- iii. What do you want to Have?

Take that big list and decide your top 5. With this insight >>>

- b. Set your work life balance goal

Describe your perfect work / life situation.

What does your ideal day / week look like?

Look again at the options and ideas in Step 2a. Maybe you need ad hoc flexibility – the ability to work from home when it's Harvest festival day at Nursery.

- c. List out the benefits to those around you when you get it right
  - i. What does this mean for your family?
  - ii. What does it mean for your partner?
  - iii. What does it mean for you?
  - iv. What is the impact on everyone's wellbeing?

➤ [Click here for more inspiration on your "WHY"](#)

#### 4. Build your parent networks

You'll need to build a network of parents who are in the same position as you. These can be inside or outside your current business.

- ✓ You'll find out what might be possible for you.
- ✓ Share stories – learn what works and what doesn't work
- ✓ Gain the confidence that what you want is possible.
- ✓ Surround yourself with people who believe what you believe.
- ✓ Confidence, support and encouragement

➤ [Click here to join our Free Facebook support group](#)

## 5. Prepare your benefits case

- a. Benefits for the employer
- b. Benefits for you

➤ [Click here to read more about the benefits of Flexible Working](#)

To be honest your employer might not be that interested in the benefits to your family (step 3), but if you can be very clear to link your work life balance struggles to your mental health wellbeing and your performance it'll go a long way to positioning your request as something that benefits the business, as well you and your family.

## 6. Get ready for the barriers you'll face.

It's a sad truth that despite massive advances in the way society judges gender roles there will be plenty of people who will believe that a man's key role is to be at work providing for your family in a financial way while a woman stays at home and only looks after the children.

- ✘ You'll find men who will consider your desire to be actively involved in your children's lives to be in some way undermining their own narrow view of what masculinity is. They **will** seek to maintain the status quo and portray you as less of a man.
- ✘ Equally you'll find women who feel a man's main role is to provide financially for their family. Confusingly, at the same time, they may also believe that women should have equal opportunities in the work place, without seeing the inherent contradiction.

You need to start thinking about the potential objections that you'll face at work

- a. How well does your role lend itself to flexible working?
- b. What technology options and constraints exist?

- c. What's your boss's potential attitude?
- d. What other arrangements do colleagues have?
  - i. HR might be able to help you here.
- e. How does your seniority help or hinder your request?
- f. How well trusted are you?
- g. What client expectations do you need to factor in?

Plan your objection handling carefully!

It's no different to creating a business case to invest in headcount or technology.

Your job here is understand what sort of push back you might get and plan a counter to it.

## 7. Challenge the status quo

Ready to go?

- ✓ You understand what is causing your work life balance pain.
- ✓ You've researched your options and rights.
- ✓ You know your WHY.
- ✓ You've set a goal.
- ✓ You've networked with other people in your situation.
- ✓ You've documented the benefits.
- ✓ You've planned for the barriers you might face.

It's time to take action and have the conversations required to move you closer to fixing your work life balance.

- ✓ Use the confidence you have when you are negotiating a pay rise
- ✓ You know you'll be an even better employee when you've got this sorted.
- ✓ Remember how many people want this
- ✓ Be hero for your peers, your partner and your kids.

Good Luck!

➤ [Help other guys by telling us what you are doing and why!](#)



## We've done strategy, now it's tactical tips time

### 8. Get organised

- a. Schedule your time
  - i. Time for you, time with your kids, time for with partner
  - ii. Agree to be honest about the time you need.

A friend of mine is in a globally successful band, I asked him how they keep the band together. He said from the start they agreed if someone needed a break then all they had to do was say and they'd take a break. After a very busy time at time of writing they are taking a year off – living separate lives before they meet back in the studio.

- b. Technology can be your enabler
  - i. One Note – taking notes, organising your ideas.
  - ii. Wunderlist - organise your to do list – sync with your calendar.
  - iii. Google calendar - schedule and co-ordinate your diaries.

### 9. Time management

You can't 'create' time, but you can 'make' time by organising yourself to focus on what is important. Very few people can effectively multi task without the quality of output diminishing.

Things that work for me

- a. Creating content is best done in the morning.
- b. I follow a flow principle, I keep going until I feel stale then take a break.
- c. I make end of day commitments - if you have to stop work at a particular time it does wonders for your discipline.

Find a way that works for you, maybe these two work for you?

[Eisenhower Matrix](#), [Eat That Frog](#)

I wrote some content to help you

- [Click here for a blog post "The Importance of Saying No"](#)
- [Click here for a blog post "There's Never Enough Time"](#)

## 10. Be there when you are there – quality not quantity

Sometimes you aren't going to be physically there as much as you would want, so we need to make the time count.

For me I'll sit down and watch the kids favourite tv show – tidy up the kitchen later.

- ✓ Be present.
- ✓ Put the phone away.
- ✓ Set aside time.
- ✓ If you need to work – do it then stop.

I think it's fair to say that mobile phone use is probably the #1 thing that takes us away from the “moment”.

# Summing Up

You want better work life balance, and this document is a roadmap to achieve it.

By going out and getting the work life balance you and your peers want, you will be a trailblazer for a genuine movement towards equal parenting.

For too long women have been the ones who have had to work hard to be treated as equals in the work-place.

**Until working dads seek it out and achieve flexible working their partners will be forced to take lower paid flexible work in order to balance the demands of raising children.**

A lack of well-paid work with genuine flexibility is a barrier to parents returning to the workforce after caring for children.

It's a parenting hattrick...

1. Your flexible working means your partner won't feel as much pressure to be "Supermum"
2. Your children have both parents in their lives.
3. And you get to be the hands-on father figure you want to be.

You have one shot at being a Dad.

You don't want to be the guy who on his LinkedIn work anniversary his wife posted "Congrats, we must catch up some time."

As Freed and Millar say in their superb book:

**Now it's Dad's Turn - Talk about it, agitate for it, just do it.**

[Freed D & Millar J \(2018\) Dad's Don't Babysit. Towards Equal Parenting](#)



## Up For A Challenge?

[Click here to learn more about our next FREE 5 Day Challenge.](#)

*Ian Dinwiddy*