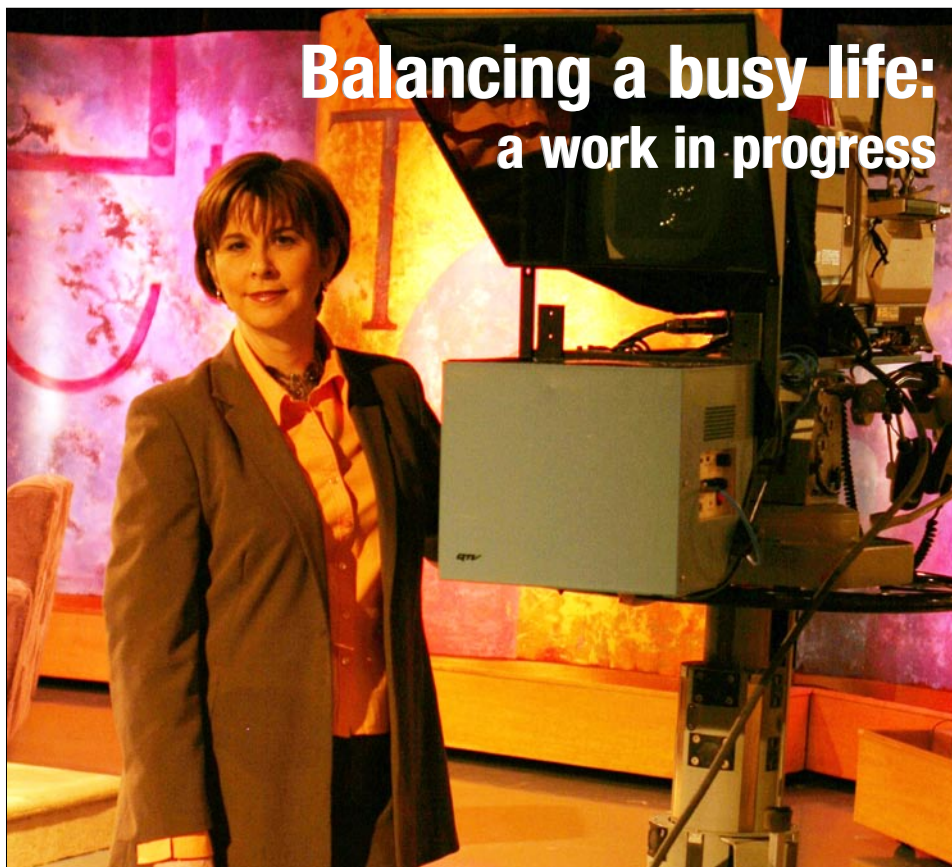


Featured Story

This article was printed in ChristianWeek June 10, 2005



Lorna Dueck
Special to ChristianWeek

Context is everything in evaluating information. So let me put it right up front that when I tell people who work with me and know me well that I've been asked to write an article on "balancing life," they laugh, shake their head or roll their eyes.

My business manager chuckles and says, "You balance in your way quite well for your little world, it's just different."

My husband, who knows me best, smiles and says, "You actually do an amazing job with balancing, but you have worked too hard the last six months."

I think all responses accurately describe how I feel I've been living, so with that context given, here's my take on managing life balance.

1. Forced positive talk: My words and self-talk have a profound effect on my behaviour. If I mutter to myself that I am stressed out and resent a task on my plate, it's not long before I've lost

my joy. If you study what New Testament leaders taught about a mental approach to living out a Kingdom calling, there's overwhelming evidence that we are to choose to set our mind on Christ and to be thankful. Of course, it's not natural; we're being invited to live in a supernatural paradigm and part of a walk of thankfulness begins with an act of obedience.

When I feel an overwhelming stress list wash into my brain, I deliberately begin to audibly tell God things I am thankful for. Sometimes I shout, "Thank you, Jesus!" and sometimes I mutter it, but I try to say it dozens of times a day. It's popped out in elevators, parking lots and always in the car. Brian Stiller once lectured, "Your 'thank you' list must always be longer than your request list or you will never make it in ministry."

This approach makes me happy. I find I'm laughing more than I ever have, smiling and feeling passionate. I'm sticking with it.

2. Determined focus on core mission. I find it remarkable that my job is to communicate with

secular Canadians about Christ. When I'm conscious of balance, all my activities go through that core mission. It's easy for a Bible-bubble to surround me and before I know it I have not actively engaged in conversations with a secular person in days.

Keeping my core mission on a piece of paper by my phone, in my mind and on my goal sheet helps me do that. It means I drop activities or squeeze others in if a secular opportunity arrives. It doesn't matter that it wasn't on the schedule, I am energized that my core mission is being done.

3. Keep family fires burning. Everything stops if they need more fuel.

4. Faith factor. If I can handle what's on my plate in my own strength, I'm out of balance (2 Corinthians 5:7). I've been inspired by author Erwin McManus, especially his book *Seizing Your Divine Moment*. He explains that what required faith to complete yesterday, won't require faith tomorrow, so we should expect that a Hebrews 11 lifestyle will always require us to be pushing the boundaries.

That still means I say no to many opportunities and delete dozens of unsolicited e-mails before opening them, and simply leave some tasks, trusting that God will provide the insight each day requires.

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5. Discipline for your weaknesses. There are many great management tests and tools available to help us figure out how to navigate the pitfalls we create for ourselves while still being able to enjoy our strengths.

Our team at Listen Up is currently operating with the Kolbe model, and it tells me the day I



stop activating my innate strength of “quick start” and focus on my low-scoring quality of “follow through,” our organization will die. Thankfully there are great people with “follow through” on the team too. That’s great for parts of work, but personally, there are issues and tasks that only I can own, and if follow through is part of what’s required for them, I need to get on it.

6. Fun factor. John Piper’s small book, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*, is a challenging look into evaluating life through the lens of the joy of Christ. It means I’m going to stop writing now and go buy some plants for the garden. It means the laptop is not coming home this long weekend and I’m going to have a nap (I am almost

rigid about enjoying my Sabbath rests). It means that I linger on those things that “work His good pleasure” in me.

Life balance for a temperament like mine will always be a work under construction. In the past months I can remember when I’ve gotten sick and run down, had a big stress cry, missed a deadline, forgotten an important appointment and worried over relationships.

But overall, it’s been a great ride and I’m thankful for every overfilled day of it.

Lorna Dueck is president of Media Voice Generation, executive producer for Listen Up TV, a faith commentary writer for the Globe and Mail, a wife, and mom to a 17-year-old and 19-year-old.



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