

## HOW TO MAKE THE FAMILY BAR MORE FAMILY ORIENTED

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From a Parent's Point of View – The Daily Balancing Act

If you are a practicing divorce lawyer and have a child/children, you know the delicate balance necessary to manage and prioritize throughout each day.

Here are some things I know for sure that are necessary so a practicing family lawyer can also be family oriented:

1. Surround yourself with top notch and loyal co-workers, assistants and staff. There is no substitute for teamwork or the feeling of genuine respect and admiration for those you work with every working day.
2. With regard to caregivers/babysitters, be sure to have a small list of those you can trust to help care for your child when you are in a bind. If your child/children wakes up in the middle of the night with a fever and you know you have to argue a motion in just a few hours, make sure you have a list of your "go to" people.
3. Prioritize monthly, weekly and daily tasks. Sometimes you will need to do this hourly or even by the minute. Keep maintaining and shuffling your "to do list".
4. Vacation. We all have a lot of work to do and a ton of personal commitments, but there is no prize to those who do not vacation. I always have a vacation on my calendar. It is what gets me through the pang of guilt that haunts me when I am in evening meetings during the week. To know that I will have catch-up time and a quality block of time with my family is priceless.
5. Say no. Really. It is okay. If there is something asked of you and you cannot do it 100%, just say no.
6. Say yes to lunch meetings. I love lunch meetings. They are generally an hour or less and do not take away from your own family time. When you are in charge of a meeting consider planning lunch meetings.
7. Ask for ready-holds. Often times, the Court requires us to appear at 9:00 a.m. and we all know that it really means that we will not be reached until 9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. or beyond. Call and ask for a ready-hold so your mornings are not so hairy and frantic and all you did was stress. . . . just to get to the Court to sit around and wait and wait and wait.
8. Do work at bedtime hours. Take work home every night. Throughout the day, make a pile of what you can work on while at home.
9. Not all meetings need to last an hour. Say what you need to say. If that happens in 30 minutes, it is okay to end the meeting so everyone can go about his or her day.
10. Combine work and play. Bring your family along with you to work retreats or outings. It is a wonderful way to combine your two worlds.

This is a tough and demanding practice, but one that I love. We work very hard so it is necessary to play hard in order to maintain our sanity. We must remind ourselves daily to stop and smell the roses and to enjoy life and our families and friends while managing the pressures of this practice. It is a very difficult balance, but certainly one that it is worthwhile and manageable.

