

Juggling Career & Family While Avoiding Burnout: The Challenge of Oncology



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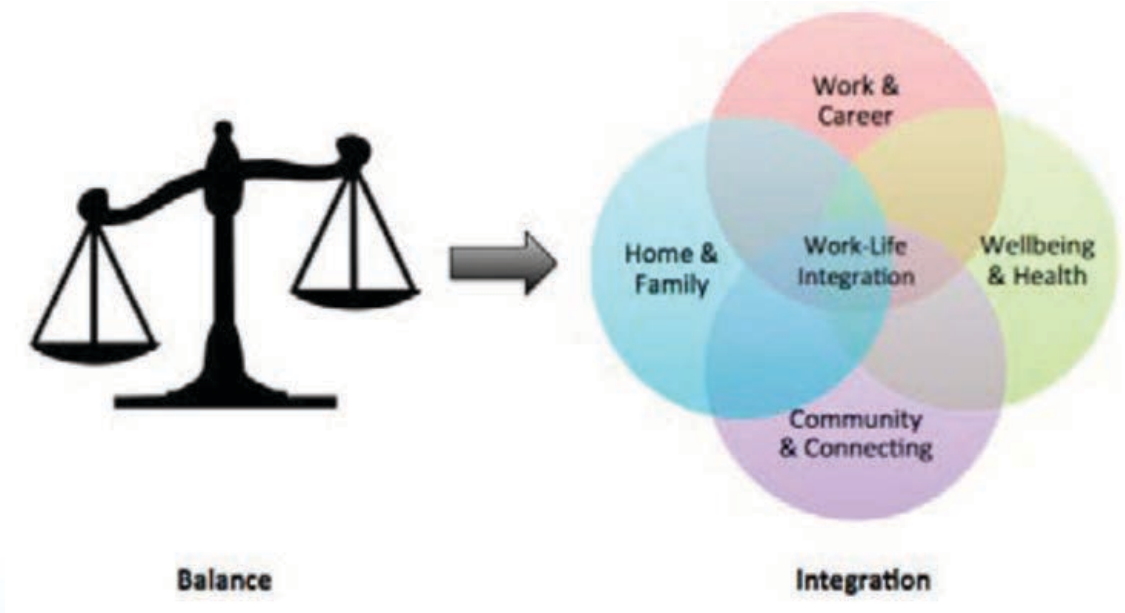
How Do You DO It All?



- Mom
- Wife
- Daughter
- Sister
- Pediatric Oncologist
- Fellowship Director
- Researcher



The Elusive Work-Life Balance



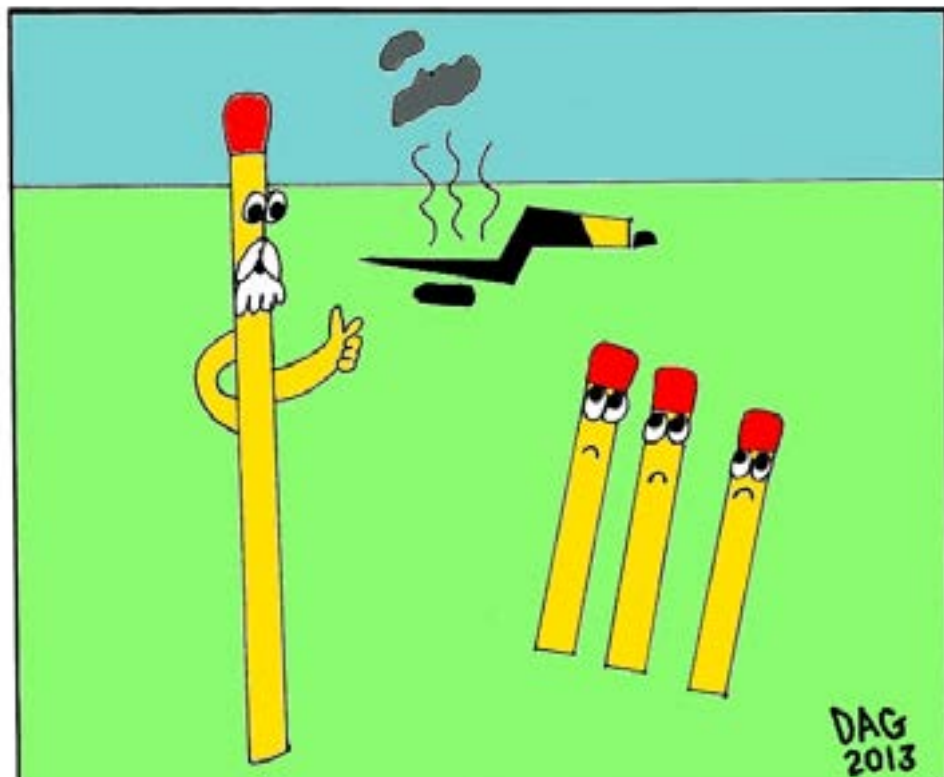
<https://www.facs.org/education/division-of-education/publications/rise/articles/work-life>



Stressors

- Lack of role model
 - Need for sponsors & mentors
- Role Strain
 - Managing & fulfilling competing & fluctuating roles
 - Professional vs Family Roles





You have only one life boys. So take it slow and don't burn out like Danny



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Burnout

- Demands exceeding resources
- Maslach's 3 components
 1. Emotional Exhaustion
 2. Depersonalization
 3. Reduced Personal Accomplishment
- ↓ Motivation & Empathy → Suboptimal delivery of care
- With time: job dissatisfaction, guilt, lower self esteem, ↓ personal accomplishment



Fish JD, et al. PBC. 2018;65:e27244





Maslach's Burnout Inventory

- Exhausted, tired & physically run down
- Annoyed or irritated towards coworkers
- Cynical & negative toward work
- A sense of being overwhelmed & lose temper
- Have difficulty sleeping
- Experience difficulty thinking logically & making decisions
- Feel unable to relax & concentrate (at home and/or work)



Prevalence of Burnout in Pediatric Oncology

- 38% reported high levels of burnout
- 72% at least moderate levels of burnout
- Individual factors:
 - Personality Traits (empathy)
 - Emotions (doubt, guilt, sense of responsibility)
 - Professional characteristics (high motivation)



Fish JD, et al. PBC. 2018;65:e27244



Burnout: Risk Factors?

- **Demographics**

- Younger vs midcareer
- Single
- Female
- Responsibility for dependents

- **Workplace**

- Demanding workloads & hours
- Challenging working conditions
 - Lack of management support & not feeling like part of a cohesive team
- Lack of recognition & lack of role clarity
- Electronic medical records
- Managing patient suffering



Fish JD, et al. PBC. 2018;65:e27244



Distressing Pediatric Oncology Experiences

- Witnessing emotional distress or physical suffering
- Breaking bad news
- Managing wishes & demands of parents
- Inability to control symptoms or cure patients
- Death of a child patient



Fish JD, et al. PBC. 2018;65:e27244



Death in Pediatric Oncology



- Cancer = Strong & meaningful relationships
- Death in childhood contradicts order of nature.
- Childhood cancer is leading cause of non-accidental death
- Prolonged, complex grief reactions
 - Sense of responsibility & guilt
 - Unmet professional goals & expectation, helplessness
 - Dual process of grieving for BOTH patient & family

Fish JD, et al. PBC. 2018;65:e27244





Compassion Fatigue

- Emotional state with negative psychological & physical consequences
- Emanates from acute or prolonged caregiving of people stricken by intense trauma, suffering or misfortune
- Affects caregivers ability to provide services
 - Emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually & intellectually
 - Lack of energy, ↓ output, ↓ performance
 - Unresponsiveness, apathy, callousness
 - Appetite changes & sleep disturbances

Zajac LM et al, *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*. 2016; 21 (4) 446-453.



“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

Dr. Naomi Rachel Remen



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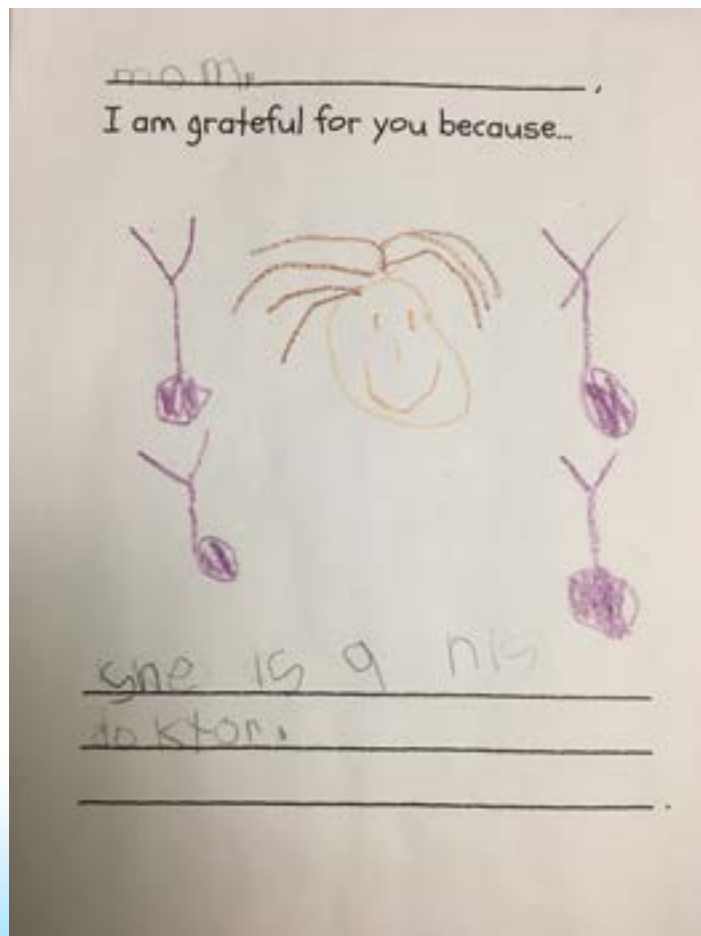
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Explaining Work

- Daily experiences difficult for friends, family & public to relate to
- “My Mom is a pediatric hematologist-oncologist so she is always late.”
- “Mom, are you going to another funeral?”



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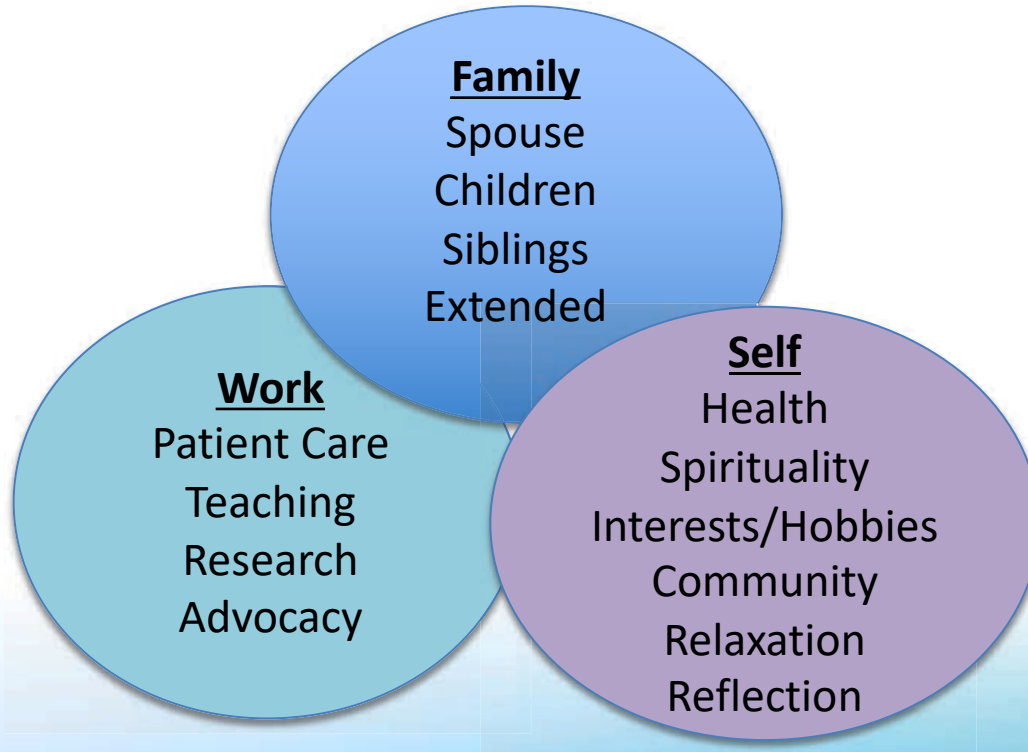
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3 Commitments



*Lucky Jain, MD, MBA
Emory University*



True Grit & Resilience

Grit is passion and perseverance
for very long term goals.

Grit is having stamina.

Grit is sticking with your future,
day-in, day-out.

Not just for the week,
not just for the month,
but for years.

And working really hard
to make that future a reality.

Grit is living life like it's a marathon,
not a sprint.

-Dr. Angela Lee Duckworth

Resilience is the ability to get back up
when you have been knocked down.

It allows you to come back fighting
stronger after a loss.

It is the optimism to continue
even during tough times
when everyone else gives up.

Personality Traits:

Self-directedness, cooperativeness,
harm avoidance & persistence



“When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience.”

- *Jaeda DeWalt*







- **Minimize Scheduled Obligation**
 - Be present for yourself & your family

- **Schedule Free Time**

- Find guilt-free time for yourself everyday
 - Exercise, hobby, baking
- Mindful awareness
- Improves energy level, self esteem & health
- Better You = Better Mom & Better Doctor



Cultivate Self-Worth

- Perfection is the enemy of good
 - Avoid negative self-talk
- Allow yourself to get your needs met & look for good in yourself
- Acknowledge bad habits that hold you back
- Know that you are the one who is limiting your own self-worth!



Fitch, S. Remedy for Burnout. 2014.





- Choice is powerful
- What do you choose?
 - Happy, success, peace
 - To share talents & enthusiasm for life & career
 - the person you want to be!





Strategies

- Set priorities & goals
- Get rid of resentment
- Realign expectations with reality
 - May not fit social norms
 - Do not need to be perfect in every sphere
- Role cycling
- Hire help!



Robinson GE. Stresses on women physicians: Consequences & coping techniques. *Anxiety and Depression*. 2003; 17:180-189.

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How To Develop Resilience

- Self-awareness
 - Aware of own expectations & behaviors
- Reflection
 - Good parts of day & learn from negative factors
- Control
 - Even if small parts (route to drive, lunch)
- 10-minute breather
- Connect with friends/family



Fitch, S. Remedy for Burnout. 2014.



Practice Gratitude

- Do not be picky: appreciate everything
- Find gratitude in your challenges
- Practice mindfulness
- Keep a gratitude journal
- Volunteer
- Express yourself
- Spend time with loved ones
- Improve your happiness in other areas of your life



My Children & My Patients: Who is Most Important?

Mother ↔ Empathy ↔ Doctor

Treasure each moment

Keep perspective





Gratitude wakes us up to the
goodness and beauty in life.
But we have to choose it.

Tamara Levitt



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Foster Support

Build layer of support around you

- At work & in community
- Support systems online



“Encourage, lift & strengthen one another. For the positive energy spread to one will be felt by us all. For we are connected, one and all” – Deborah Day



3 Questions to Ask About Your Job

1. Is it joyful?
2. Do I have the right skillset?
3. Does it matter? Is it meaningful?

— *Lucky Jain, MD, MBA, Emory University*





a serious fun camp



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If we do not allow ourselves to experience joy and love, we will definitely miss out on filling our reservoir with what we need whenhard things happen.”

-Dr. Brene Brown





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Well-Being is not simply the absence of burnout
– It is the presence of JOY!



THANK YOU!!!



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Supportive Care Makes Excellent Cancer Care Possible

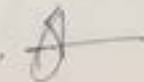
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Anyone can slay a dragon, he told me,
but try waking up every morning
& loving the world
all over again.



that's what takes a Real hero.

"Real Hero"

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