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Monthly, News & Updates September 2024

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Publisher's Memo

Finding A Work-Life Summertime Balance

Running a business and having a young family is always challenging, but it's especially so during the summertime. I don't want to be working at 6:00 p.m. when it's 90 degrees out and the kids want to go swimming! It's not about being done early on a regular basis, the summer is simply more challenging because there is less routine than during the school year.



The summer is filled with vacation time, pool parties, family trips and various other outdoor activities that take away from our regular schedules. The longer days (of sunlight) create the ideal setting for quality time with our loved ones.

My plan this year is to start working very early in the morning to get a few hours in before anyone is awake. On most days, I can complete all of my tasks and be done by around 3:00 p.m. – but it only happens if I'm working by 6:00 a.m. each day. This year our youngest doesn't want to go to camp, which creates an additional challenge to managing my time. I'm very lucky to be able to work from home when I want to (though I prefer going to the office because I am more efficient), I'm very thankful for that. I'm also thankful to have a wife whose schedule is flexible. All that being said, it's still very challenging.

There are things we can do to help manage our summer.

- Define Priorities

This applies to work and home. At work, look at the big picture and push any projects that can wait for the colder months. Prioritize what needs to be done between June and September and get those done. When doing this, be fair to yourself, do not bite off more than you can chew because it will end up backfiring and you will not have balance.

At home, lay out a calendar that includes your vacations, parties and any other important activities. Once again, just like with work, do not over commit! You don't have to attend every activity, pick those most important to you.

A good example of prioritizing for me is golf. Outside of my family, playing golf is my favorite activity and living where I do the summer months are when I have to get my rounds of golf in. I could play a ton of golf if I wanted to, both on my own (or with friends) and also work related outings. If I committed to doing everything, it would be too much and interfere with what needs to be done in the office and spending time with my family. I tend

to play very early in the morning once or twice a week to minimize it interfering with other things.

- **Set Boundaries and Keep to Them**

The biggest part of this is simple, establish what your working hours are and what hours are for enjoying the summer. Working from home makes this definitely more challenging, at least it does for me! One way to help enforce this is to turn off all devices related to work (home computer/laptop and phone). I have a hard time with this one because even if I'm supposed to be done at 5:00 p.m., if I didn't accomplish everything work related, I will want to keep working until it's done.

- **Time Management**

Everything we are discussing here is related to time management in some form or fashion. We do it year-round, but the summer is an especially important time to have daily and weekly goals, use To – Do lists and schedule specific time blocks for specific activities (I have an hour blocked out later today to clean up the garage!). One thing to consider when doing time management is to schedule things for times of the day when you are most efficient at that activity. Golf and the gym are obvious ones for me, if I schedule time at the gym for late afternoon I would never get there, it's something I have to do in the morning.

- **Embrace a Remote/Work from Home Set Up**

As I mentioned earlier, I am much more efficient working at my office, but during the summer I have embraced working from home for most of the day. Being home allows me to easily mix in family time during my workday.

- **Do Your Best to Truly Unplug**

Even if you're doing a lot of things to have balance during the summer, it's very important that you are taking time to truly unplug from your devices and computers, they keep us emotionally tethered to our work life. Turn them off or put your phone in a different area of your home while you are relaxing. Allowing yourself to disconnect at times will make you more effective and efficient in what you are doing both at home and in the office, and it will also improve your well-being.

- **Continue to Practice Self Care**

This is very big in our culture and society today, everywhere we look the experts are urging us to practice selfcare. They aren't wrong! Despite it being the summertime and routines being less predictable, we have to maintain things for our selfcare – do things that bring you joy, relaxation and reduce stress. Exercising, outdoor time (walks, hikes, etc), meditation, leisure activities, golf, reading a book outside – the list is endless! Allowing yourself time to do these things will make you better at your job, a better husband/wife/partner and a better parent.

- **Make the Most of Your Weekends**

Weekdays will definitely be spent juggling things, do your best to not work on weekends and spend time with your loved ones and doing the things you enjoy during the warmer weather. Take some day trips or mini-vacations as well if time and budget allow, they help us relax. It should go without saying, but disconnecting from work devices will help a lot with this!

- **Be in the Moment**

This one is the most important in my opinion. When you're enjoying a summer activity or spending time with your family, fully disconnect from work and be 100% in the moment. When you're working during the summer, focus on that and give all of your attention and intent to work tasks so you can finish quicker and spend time doing something fun. If you have trouble with this, try the "W.I.N" system – which means, "What's Important Now". It's simple, just take a moment and ask yourself what's the most important thing I need to do right now. If you're at work, take care of work tasks. If you're on family time, focus on family. If you're on the golf course, focus on the next shot.

Finding balance in life is not about perfection and I think society puts too much pressure on us these days to be perfect so it's easy to fall into that trap. Finding balance is making internal choices about what's important to you and then executing on those priorities. Embrace the journey and be kind to yourself, you'll find that things will be better both at work and at home, and you will be happier for it!

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Quote of the month

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

Recipe of the Month

Sweet and Spicy Chicken and Cashew Fried Rice

Ingredients

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large egg, beaten
2 boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
Kosher salt
1 cup shredded carrots
1 tablespoon Asian sweet chili sauce
1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon soy sauce
3 cups cold cooked long grain white rice
1 to 1 1/2 teaspoon Asian chili oil
2 tablespoons roasted salted cashews

Recipe

Heat a large nonstick skillet or wok over high heat and then swirl in 1 tablespoon of the oil. When the oil begins to smoke, add the egg and swirl the skillet to make a flat egg pancake that's only half set, about 10 seconds; scoop out onto a plate.

Add the chicken to the skillet, sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring constantly, until golden brown and just cooked through, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add the remaining tablespoon oil, then add the carrots, sweet chili sauce, ginger, soy sauce and 1/4 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring constantly, until the carrots are crisp-tender, 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the rice, stirring to break up any clumps, and spread it out in the skillet. Cook until heated through, about 3 minutes. Return the egg, chicken and any juices to the skillet and cook, stirring and breaking up the egg, to mix it in thoroughly, about 1 minute. Season with additional salt if needed. Stir in the chili oil, sprinkle with the cashews and serve.

Industry Calendar

September 18 – 20, 2024

Federation of European National Collection Associations

Annual Congress

Warsaw, Poland

www.fenca.org

October 21 – 24, 2024

National Creditors Bar Association

NCBA Connect

New Orleans, LA

www.creditorsbar.org

November 6 – 7, 2024

Commercial Law League of America

Eastern Region Conference

New York, NY

www.clla.org

November 6 - 8, 2024

Commercial Collection Agencies of America

Annual Conference

Delray Beach, FL

www.commercialcollectionagenciesofamerican.com

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