

# GET THE RIGHT “WORK-LIFE” BALANCE

*Career Analysts’ Debbie Schultz shares pointers on how to achieve that elusive balance between life and work.*

**M**ore and more people prioritise “balance” as an important personal success factor.

Success it seems is being defined in broader terms than just job success.

From people across all ages and stages, including graduates, many of us simply want to have more control over when we choose to work. This may mean a range of things, from wanting to work fulltime but wanting to be able to “switch off” outside of work, through to a desire to work flex-time or work from home.

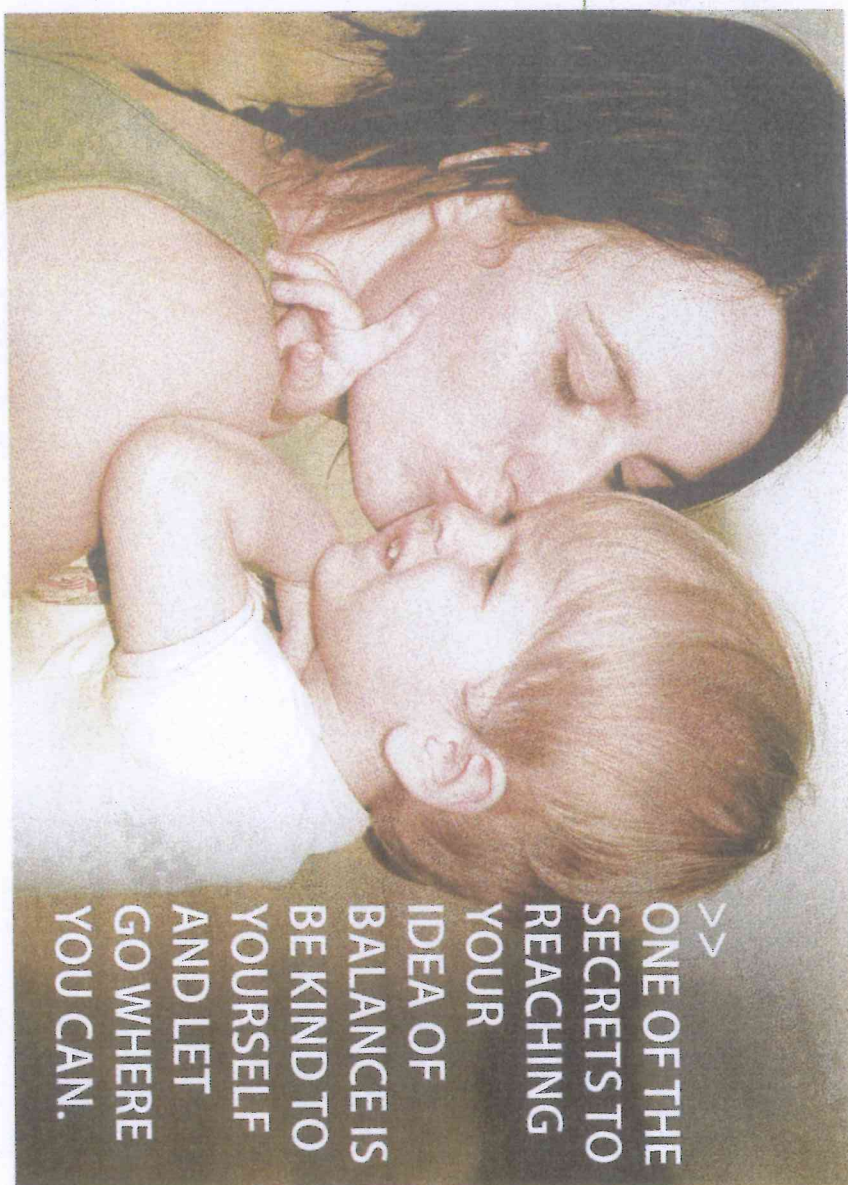
In an article written by Harvard Business Press on establishing flexible work arrangements, demand for increased balance and flexibility is a global trend. This demand is being met by an increasing number of organisations. Many are also realising

that flexibility is often accompanied by a leap in productivity.

Now may be the perfect time for you to consider bringing more balance into your life. Here are some points to consider.

**1]** “Work” and “life” do not need to be opposing forces. If you feel like work is something you are “enduring” until life starts when you walk out the door, then perhaps your search for balance is really a search for a more satisfying career. Assess your current role - does it make the best use of your skills and talents, match your values and truly motivate you?

**2]** What does “balance” actually mean to you? It is different for everyone - define it for yourself. Is it



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being there at critical times for your family? Is it a reduced working week? Define it as accurately as you can, that way you will know when you are getting closer.

**3]** One of the secrets to reaching your idea of balance is be kind to yourself and let go where you can. Sometimes life can feel like a competition to see who has had the most stressful week. Don't buy into it. Ask yourself honestly - am I taking on too much? What can I say “no” to? Find supportive friends and family members to help lighten the load, and then trust them to get it done.

**4]** If you choose to work a reduced working week, don't let guilt rule your life. Guilt is a common emotion among working parents. The pressure to be a “high flyer” at work, raise perfect kids, help in the community, run a marathon and be an amazing spouse can be overwhelming. Ditch the guilt and accept that working part time may mean yes you can have all those things – but perhaps not all at the same time.

**5]** If you are unhappy with your current level of balance, motivate yourself to change by thinking of the cost of staying in a situation that isn't working for you. How are you going to

feel about yourself if you are still in this situation in another two years time?

Finally remember that creating balance is not a one-off event, but an on-going process. The word balance itself implies a need to continually calibrate and adjust constantly in order to maintain a position of steadiness.

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