

4 WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES TO CREATE TODAY

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Whether you work from home or go into an office or job site every day, it's a challenge to strike a balance between work and home. Balance is important because when work begins to monopolize your day, your relationship suffers. You avoid this by being intentional about creating healthy boundaries between our work life and home life. Here are four ideas to help set healthy boundaries.

1. Incorporate buffer time.

For many people, this could be during your commute. Use the drive home to mentally shift out of work mode. Listen to your favorite music or a podcast and leave work in the rearview. If you transitioned to working from home in the last year, you may miss that time. Try ending your workday with a walk around the block or a snack on the back porch to decompress and signal to yourself that it's time to shift into your "home" mindset.

2. Designate work-free times or spaces.

This is especially important if you work from home. The physical meshing of home and work can lead to lots of mental overlap as well. You might find yourself feeling like you're never really done working. This can also happen if your job requires you to be available outside of normal working hours. If possible, set aside times or spaces that are sacred – no work allowed. Maybe it's at the dinner table, maybe it's all-day Sunday, maybe it's during the bedtime routine. Choose something that works for you and your family and stick with it.

3. Jot it down, and let it go.

Sure, we can say it's "work-free time," but sometimes it's just hard to turn off your brain about work stuff. Maybe you're ruminating on a tricky issue, or you just randomly thought of a great idea for the project you're working on. Try jotting down what's keeping you preoccupied related to work. The simple act of making a note (*paper or digital*) can be both a physical and mental way of setting it aside for the time being.

4. Understand the value of being fully present.

Which is more valuable: three hours with your spouse in which you're preoccupied with work, or 30 minutes where you're fully present with them? The answer is obvious. But maybe you've got a big deadline coming up or the team is short-staffed, so you need to help out. That doesn't mean your relationship has to lose out. Dedicating even a small amount of time during which you're fully engaged can be more meaningful than hours of your attention being elsewhere.

These are just a few simple ways to help you navigate the balance between work and home. It can be a complicated dance, and the steps will probably change throughout your life. By setting boundaries like these, you're better able to prioritize our marriage and stay connected to our spouse, creating a strong, reliable foundation for success in the other areas of our life, including work!