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Growing family and a career

Dealing with on-the-job and personal issues no easy assignment

Working moms of all ages have a single common bond among them — balancing work and family. While some mothers make it look effortless, giving each equally important part of your life the attention it deserves takes practice.

Karly Klein, co-founder of New York-based Whisper PR Inc., says the very title "working mom" evokes stress in her. After returning to work when her daughter was 3 months old, Klein reminded herself that guilt should not get in the way of your career.

"A lot of the challenge is coming to terms with the fact that you can't be in two places at one time, and accepting this reality is half the battle," she says. "It is the quality, not the quantity of time that you spend with your child, as well as your work."

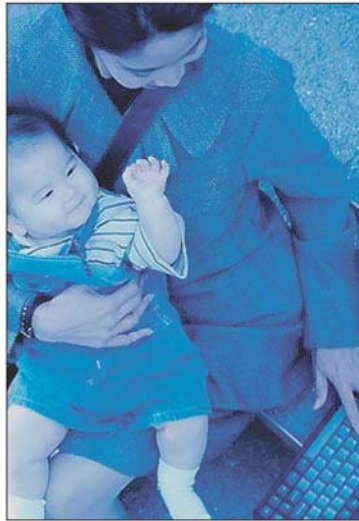
As all moms know, having a child requires a shift in many aspects of your life. That can also include a change in your work routine. Many employers now offer flexible work schedules that include work-from-home days during the week. Taking advantage of this opportunity allowed Klein to spend more time with her daughter while still keeping up with work.

"Things always come up that I need to address while at home," Klein says in regard to the two days a week she works remotely. "To deal with this, I have designated specific times during the day that my office can reach me if necessary — times which work around my daughter's routine."

Is perfection possible?

Often, working moms try to be perfect in all aspects of their lives. But, some experienced moms say that's just not possible.

"I have learned from over 30 years as an executive and raising two daughters and being a wife that, for me, I had to understand that I could not be great at all



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three on the same day," explains Dawn Robertson, former president of Old Navy, a subsidiary of Gap Inc. "Most days, I could accomplish two out of the three jobs, but I learned that it was OK to admit that being great at all three on any one given day was impossible. Once that pressure was off, the balancing became a lot easier."

There's always a certain amount of guilt some moms feel when going back to work after having a baby, but Robertson says you can still be involved in your kids' lives while climbing the career ladder.

"Let your children be aware of what you do," she suggests. "My oldest daughter spent many a Saturday visiting stores with me after ballet and learned a lot about how a store should look and what

sold and what did not sell."

For parents of newborns and infants, Skype.com offers a video feature that allows moms to view their child from a remote location. This trend is particularly useful if you want to check up on your child from the office, and it helps alleviate some of the worry that comes with being away from your little one.

Still, some mothers believe sacrifices have to be made as a working mom. While that's partially true, some say getting rid of that mindset is half the battle.

"No one can make you feel guilty without your consent, so think about why you might feel that way," says Julie Lenzner Kirk, author of "The Parentpreneur Edge: What Parenting Teaches About Building a Successful Business" (Wiley, \$24.95). "For women that have no choice [but to work] for financial reasons, feel confident in that you are doing the right thing for your family. If you do have a choice, and are like me and need to work for your mental sanity, know that you are going to be a better mom by living a fulfilled life."