



Heart & Hustle

FINDING HARMONY AS A WORKING PARENT



Judy Chow

Principal Client Partner, Adobe

In what ways has being a leader at work made you a better mom?

Creative thinking on the fly: The other day, my daughter was adamant about her play kitchen pink cup, which her brother wanted because his sister had it in her hand and they were both fighting for it. I looked outside, noticed it was sunny, and said, “you know what else is pink...bubbles!” and grabbed a pink and yellow bubble wand. Pink cup forgotten. Both my daughter and son were giggling for 30 minutes playing with their own bubble wands outside. I know this cannot always work but, occasionally, #bubblesFTW

Overcoming adversity/failure: I first started my daughter’s potty training journey when she was 20 months old because of MY timing. I had 3 weeks before returning back to work from my leave (with my son) and thought this would be the best time to train her. The first two days were promising. However, day 3 is when both my daughter and I fell apart. By 11AM that day, I was cleaning feces and covered in feces. My daughter was in tears, shaking her head, and wanted nothing to do with the potty. I realized I was pushing it too far to force her to be ready on my schedule. I could have continued to grin and bear it for another 2 weeks but seeing how unhappy she was made me realize I’d rather spend our remaining days enjoying our time together. We could start again when she was ready.

In what ways has being a mom made you a better leader at work?

Time management & prioritization: Before becoming a parent, my way of dealing with more work would be to say yes and stay late to finish it. Now, I am much more judicious of my time and it has brought me a greater sense of purpose and focus at work. Rather than doing 20 things, I ask myself at least two questions before saying yes:

- Does this work align with my goals and/or vision?
- Am I the right person to do this?

The second question has become more important because what I found is that, sometimes, by me doing the work, I was encouraging a potential broken process to continue for the sake of getting it done. This was not sustainable and the right answer could be addressing the larger issue of why the problem exists and what team should take ownership for it.



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Michelle Lee

Area Director, Client Success, Meltwater

What is your best advice for other working parents?

After my first kid I always felt guilty. Guilty that my kid was sent home from school and I had to reschedule a call, that I had to miss a meeting for a doctors appointment, that I got stuck in traffic from drop off. What I want every working parent to know is it will be ok. For my second kid, I communicate my available working hours to my team and leadership. I also want working moms to feel more comfortable with everyone knowing you are only human. Kids get sick. If they have to sit on your lap during a call it is usually welcomed! As long as your focus remains the business at hand, I have found most of my teams are able to stay on topic. Remembering every day won't be perfect is really how you move through parenthood and life.

How has your company created an inclusive culture for working parents?

Meltwater has been amazing at ensuring working parents feel supported in numerous ways. Partnering with Josie for our Sales Leaders to have a vision and planning when coming back from leave, a community of parents to speak to and ask questions, flexibility when needed for the kids schedules, and overall just an understanding that meetings may have a surprise little guest, but that doesn't take away from the business at hand.

How has being a working parent made you a better leader at work / how has being a leader at work made you a better parent?

When coming back from maternity leave, I reflected a lot on how to ensure I maintain creating a great childhood for my kids and a career that I am proud to tell them about one day. In my reflection I wanted to bring the context of my purpose to both my work and my family. Why I wish to be successful to my children and to me team are really the purpose that propels me each and every day. At work I try to help my team understand their purpose further through communication, 1:1 coaching, and career conversations. While at home, even if they are young we talk a lot about family values, shared goals, faith, and communication.



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Madeline Clark
Area Director, Meltwater

What is your best advice for other working parents?

"Don't drop the glass balls" in your life. During life you will be juggling a number of different priorities, and some of those will be "rubber balls" and some will be "glass balls". There are some balls you can drop that will bounce back up, but the things that are truly important need to be protected and prioritized.

Additionally, find the resources you have in your life and utilize them to get balance. My husband and my parents are incredible blessings I have access to use as resources, but after my first baby I often felt guilty about not spending every minute I wasn't working with my baby. Finding balance across work, being a parent, but also filling your own personal cup is extremely important. Often I find that the personal aspect is the first one people stop focusing on when things get busy, but when your personal cup isn't filled it can hurt the other aspects of your life most dramatically.

How has your company created an inclusive culture for working parents?

My company has created an inclusive culture by creating a community where there are easily accessible places to connect and speak with other parents. My direct reports, my colleagues and my manager all are understanding and supportive that my schedule might look a little bit different, and that makes a world of difference allowing me to show up at 100% without stressing about how others perceive me.

How has being a working parent made you a better leader at work / how has being a leader at work made you a better parent?

Being a parent helps me bring so much to my daily life in work, I don't sweat the small stuff, I am able to empathize and see the best in others, and because I am choosing to work instead of being at home with my kids it gives me great purpose in caring about the effort I put in. Being a leader at work allows me to set a great example for my children. It shows them different options they have available for them in their future, and as a woman in leadership with two small girls I hope it broadens their world view as they grow up.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

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