

## Top Tips for Navigating Divided Loyalties

An Informal Collection of Thoughts to provide our members with helpful information they can put to immediate use.

**What specific techniques have helped you to address your own Divided Loyalties in the context of the unique demands of a successful speaking career?**

**What advice would you give someone in the beginning or middle stages of their speaking career?**

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For me, this begins with my own honest definition of success. There are prices to pay and my personal decision has always been that no speaking success will ever trump my success as a wife, mother. To have achieved a level of speaking success defined merely by others, while failing to devote the necessary time and energy to ensure a healthy, happy family, is of little success in reality. That requires balanced thinking, practical planning, priority setting and the ability to be brutally honest with myself about what's really important in overall decision-making.

I have seen young mothers who are literally missing their baby's first steps, their toddlers first soccer game and numerous other important firsts that can never ever be recaptured, all because it might interfere with the perceived success of their speaking career. The question I'd ask is, what is most important at this very moment in time and what will my decision mean 20 years from now? Depending upon that answer, some adapting may have to be done and perhaps even some redefining of that seductive term "success."

Now that my children are older and one lives in Arizona, I built into my marketing strategy a purposeful effort to book as much business as I can in Arizona so that I can add days on to speaking engagements and spend time with my children and grandchildren. That's one of the great controllable aspects of this business--we can define our market and diligently pursue it, wherever that may be. I have also made a conscious decision to add consulting to the speaking so that it enables me to do less travel, penetrate area clients deeper and sleep in my own bed more.

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Navigating Divided Loyalties caught my eye for several reasons. First and foremost, I never really considered dividing loyalties as part of the balance of my life and career. I'm sure that I do, but I really keep family first. It's the reason I wasn't in New Orleans this past summer. My son indicated he and my grandkids were going to be at my house the very days I was supposed to be in New Orleans, no hesitation, family first. I want my grandkids to know that Pappy cares about them and they are a priority. If we always keep the main thing the main thing, it really doesn't feel like we are dividing our loyalties. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his "family?" There have been times I have had to be away when I would rather be home for a game, play or other event. When that happened, I always made my presence known in other ways, with messages, flowers, balloons or signs in the locker room or back stage. When schedules would allow I would fly home, be there and fly back. It's a small

price in the long run. There's no way I want to come to the end of my life and not have my children, spouse and family know who I am.

Quality is a key word when it comes to techniques in handling the demands of our time. There's many a time I've stepped off the plane after an engagement to meet my wife for dinner and a movie before even heading home. When I am home and she or the kids are there, I truly try to be in the present, "be in the now," whether it's watching TV together or being in the same room reading together. I believe quality time is the greatest asset we can give.

I would share with others, regardless of where they are in their careers to embrace and live the principles of life and the business. The ethics of life and our business is what allows us to embrace the principle of "There's no pillow so soft as a clear conscious." It reduces stress in our careers and our family life and truly allows us to be in the present. Another thing that is extremely important is making sure you are a good fit for the audiences you stand before. The platform is truly a privilege, be worthy. When we are in the wrong "space" it has a negative impact on each of us, our audiences, as well as our families and nobody wins.

We are human and the calamities of life we each face are what the audience wants us to share, especially when we come through them successfully.

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**WHEN YOU ARE WITH YOUR FAMILY--REALLY BE WITH YOUR FAMILY 100%.**

It is not always how much time you spend with someone that counts, but the quality of time you spend with them.

I would ask these questions:

- How are you spending the time that you have with your family?
- When you are home, do you give your family your full and undivided attention?
- How are your listening skills? When you are at home, do you talk more or do you listen more?
- How much individual (private) time do you spend with each member of your family?
- How often do you tell each member of your family how important they are to you, what their strengths are, and how they have added joy to your life?
- When you are on the road, what do you do to let each member of the family know that they are important to you?
- Do you know how to just BE with your family? Most of us feel the need to always DO things with and for the family.
- Why are you REALLY on the road so much? Is it REALLY for your family? Do they REALLY need that pool in the back yard or a bigger house or to belong to the Country Club, or is it your EGO driving you for the biggest and the best?
- Would you and they be happier if you provided fewer material things to them, and gave them more of yourself?

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I definitely think family must come first. I waited until my son was in high school to get started, but that is because I didn't plan on being a speaker. If I had young children, I would have a very part time career as a speaker that would work around my husband's schedule. Part time gives the speaker the time to build up their speaking skills while they care for their children's needs. Even teenagers need to have their parents around to give them the time to open up with issues that come up. I think parents need to watch TV with their kids to talk about the issues that are presented. I am a mom and wife first. It does get in the way of some success. Others put their careers first and think that sharing their schedule with their kids gets buy in. Truth be known, their kids will accept anything their parents give as normal and OK, but in the long run they will still resent not having their parents at their games and home when they get home from school. They need to know that they have a support system they can depend on at home for them.

If everyone is doing their own thing, what do the kids have to depend on - themselves? Some independence is good for kids, but it should be done because the kids are ready, not because mom wants to be a speaker and travel all over the country. I know NSA tries to bring the kids together so they can understand the life of their speaking parents, but just because you normalize it doesn't make it good for the kids. Each to his own, but this is my opinion which is what you asked me for.

By the way - I am a Dr. Laura lover. When we choose to be parents we need to accept the lives that we bring into the world as the major responsibility that it is. On the other hand, kids are resilient and will handle just about anything we give them. We want to keep the next generation of therapist's in business don't we. All kids are different so they need their parents to spend time thinking about the best way to parent them - don't you think?

I think parenting can give you great stories and so taking the time to craft stories and get a book written is a great thing to do while the speaker is home based more with young children. Speaking to local groups allows the speaker to try out new material and build confidence.

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In evaluating your "divided loyalties", one needs to ask what is most important to do NOW. One thing to keep in mind is that decisions made today aren't for always. Depending on your financial and personal situation, it may be necessary to cut back at a time when kids are in most need of your attention and search for more local projects. This is what I did that helped me when I was part of the sandwiched generation dealing with nursery school kids by day and nursing home meetings at night. So reassessing priorities and putting things in perspective is important to evaluate which to do. It also depends on what kind of extra support one has to help: either a spouse, parent, caretaker. Personally, I had a spouse that did not travel, so he was willing and able to do what was needed as I went out of town. Of course, I had to make sure, food was bought, clothes were laid out, after school arrangements were made and all the carpooling was done ahead of time so others could fill in while I was away.

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I don't have a perfect business, perfect marriage or perfect children. Neither do I have a perfectly balanced life, where my marriage, children, extended family and business each receive an ideal portion of my time and attention.

I treasure all of my life's primary focal points. Each has its special challenges and rewards. Despite getting married on a Friday the 13th, my marriage just passed the 28-year mark. My two boys have become young men. Since all of us remain close and since we were fortunate that my divided loyalties did not divide us, I'll share some of what worked well. However, I first must make it clear that none of these strategies worked "perfectly" and some days, they didn't seem to work at all!

I started my business in 1993, offering training and consulting in customer service and communication skills. My younger son was 10, my older son, 15.

One of the first decisions I made concerned where to market my services. I chose to stay close to home, for the most part in central Virginia. It worked out that I could teach regularly at a local university and cultivate repeat business, working deep within organizations. One of the ways I achieved this (in addition to what we all know about developing relationships with clients, etc.) was through my fee schedule, which differentiated pricing based on travel distance. Instead of stating that I charged higher fees for traveling to various parts of the country, I kept my fees lower for local clients and made it clear to them that I did this because I wanted to work close to home as much as possible. This received positive responses.

When the wonderful Vickie Sullivan visited NSA-VA, I took advantage of her offer to give individual consulting. This was the best money I'd spent on my business, up to that point. One of her suggestions was to package my services and think beyond simply offering training. I now offer additional services with my proposals, which ultimately results in better outcomes both for my clients and for my business.

Of course, I had to make choices and set priorities. The phrase "setting priorities" has been suggested so often it's begun to sound trite, but I want to focus on just one aspect of prioritizing. When it came to choosing how I would spend time with my husband and sons, I tried to choose ways that would allow us to interact. For example, we love movies, but if you're at a movie, you can't talk. If time was limited, a better choice for us was putt-putt or going out to eat.

I know many parents today are adamant about never missing a ball game. I did miss some basketball, baseball, soccer, football games and tennis matches in exchange for time with my sons when we could talk.

We also love to play board games. Even now, every Christmas and at least once during the summer we all plan days off from work to play games and spend time together.

I encouraged dividing up duties, so that we could all spend more time together. I hired an every-other-week housekeeper for basic housekeeping chores and required that each son take care of his own room and do his own laundry starting at age 10. I shared other duties with my husband. I also made a "not-to-do list" that included such things as ironing, dwelling on "Mother's guilt," and cooking complicated meals, except on special occasions.

I didn't establish specific life goals for my boys, other than instilling values of being honest, open-minded, responsible and caring people. The rest, I believed, was up to them. Approaching it this way has kept me from trying to control aspects of their lives that they must be free to choose. I've known far too many parents who spend time and energy trying to plot out their children's lives and worrying when the "plan" isn't working out according to their design.

In the mid-90s, an elderly relative who lived nearby required help managing his life and home. Until he passed away in 2002, this involved a new division of our lives and time. If I had this situation to deal with again, I would handle several things differently. I eventually did locate and get help from providers of services to seniors, which helped tremendously.

My husband and I, ever since the late '80s, have scheduled at least one week out of town, each year, for just the two of us. It was often difficult to arrange care for the boys, but this was such a vital time of rest, reflection and renewal for us as a couple, it was worth the trouble. Now we travel together more frequently.

I view my business with a long-range perspective. At age 50, I hope to have 20 or more years of work before retirement. I probably set my early business goals at a more modest level than some would be satisfied with. My husband and I each have incomes, so it's much easier for us than for those who are single or sole providers for their families.

Through the ups and downs of raising kids, work has always seemed the easiest part of life. I love my work, but recognize that I don't need to be emotionally attached to it, the way I will always want to be emotionally attached to my family. Therefore, concentrating on family first just made sense to me. A happy family results in reduced stress (though the teen years inevitably bring stress) better health and many good memories.

Our sons are now ages 26 and 21. I think the "talking" strategy worked, because we do all love to talk. We talk to each of them many times each week, discussing everything, including their work, school, love lives, politics and life plans.

The flow of my work has been terrific for family time, because during the summer and December holiday season I typically experience a slowdown.

Unless a person's life is focused on only one realm, loyalties must be divided. On a given day, one aspect will receive more attention than another. Stepping back and looking at the overall picture over a span of days, weeks or even months can reveal where there's a need to adjust. Making adjustments requires flexibility and patience. Do the best you can at each moment and move on.

A friend once remarked that she thought I approached every situation with my family in a business-like way. I chose to accept that as a compliment.

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Divided Loyalties: The Career You Crave or the Family You Love*

I have had a very hard time with this issue, which is how the idea for the book was born, and why I lobbied for a session like this one through our national organization.

For me, family concerns have always been my top priority, and so making time and space to create this business has been problematic. My challenge has been extricating myself from a family who does not need me as much as they would like to think! And, of course, sometimes they do, and it's hard to tell when that is and what I should do about it. Here are a few things I have learned.

First, I determine the handful of Must Dos that enable me to feel successful in each role. Then I'm sure to do them – consistently. Making and following through on agreements with yourself, your family and your clients creates trust, as well as gives you the energy to tackle the rest of your To Do lists. I've also learned to cut myself some slack for not meeting my usual standards for the non-essentials on my list.

For example, to feel attentive in the parenting role, I must attend championship games and final performances of the activities in which my children are involved unless absolutely impossible. I do not feel required to attend every game, and certainly not every practice, as is the cultural norm in our area.

To feel successful as a speaker, I must meet the five benchmarks I set for myself monthly. These change depending on what the calendar has in store. While I diligently work toward additional goals, I can't beat the satisfaction of having actually gotten something done, particularly when family concerns are unexpectedly overtaking my time.

I have learned to put things off that I would have otherwise attended to instantly. If I can't afford to expend the emotional energy to deal with an irrational relative, I use caller ID and don't pick up the phone. When the crunch is over, I can face the family matter more rationally, on my own terms.

Whenever possible, I contract out anything that does not have to do with my primary purpose in either the career or home arena. My purpose at home is to be the primary caretaker, not the primary cleaner, so twice monthly we hire a housekeeper. I enjoy conducting interviews, but typing them up is a real drain, so I've hired help in that area. This frees up my time, but more importantly, my energy, to focus on the things which matter the most.

One thing that has been helpful to me is getting my office out of my house. Paradoxically, this creates a physical boundary that allows me to better integrate my work and family lives.

The single best thing I've done is to develop a nurturing mentoring relationship with someone whose opinion I truly respect. She knows the business, understands my values and really cares about me and my success. This relationship has been a lifeline for me in more ways than can be described in this short contribution. In fact, many of the Tips I've related here are a direct result of our conversations. I cannot say enough positive things about developing a high level, personal/professional relationship with a woman whose success you seek to emulate.

I suggest holding periodic meetings to discuss with family members your goals and expectations, and listen carefully to theirs. Seek to create an environment in which everyone feels that at the very least, their top concerns have been heard, and that every effort will be made to attend them. The act of making agreements and keeping them goes far to instill a sense of security which will remain through those times when you are physically absent.

Use NSA to get educated early about the various income streams available, all of which fall under the umbrella of the professional speaking business. Make some assessments of how pursuit of each interacts with your family life. Look at shifting your home and caregiving responsibilities to match your business strategy. Look at shifting your business strategy to match the needs you must meet at home.

Finally, if you are the primary caregiver and your career is not yet at the level you had projected when you began, take stock in what you have accomplished, instead of what you have yet to do. Much success comes from having taken incremental steps in the direction of your dreams.

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Family is first. Prioritize! You will never regret putting your husband and children above your speaking career. Money will be spent but the memories and special times will last forever.

Have an NSA file of "for now" and "Later". Be realistic.

Write while at home.

Speak as much as you can for Civic groups, churches, etc. without traveling too far. The way to get better is to practice.....

Take your family with you when convenient. Negotiate fees to include trips for the family.

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I think that instead of the word balance, we should use the word cohesiveness. In balance, it connotes spending equal parts of time on each aspect of your life. While cohesiveness speaks much more loudly to YOUR own values and bringing it all in line with them.

I think that is HUGE!!

I also think that "forget perfect" needs to be thrown in, because many women are still expecting nirvana and will never ever find it, as we will never be perfect. Instead we need to be going after enjoying the process, being true to our own values and being realistic with what we expect for our lives.

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Strategies for living life with renewed spirits and lighter hearts*

When I first started my business 15 years ago, I was torn between being the perfect mom and building my career. So I helped my children understand that our sacrifices and inconveniences (some minor, some major) as a family ( like mom being unavailable to drive the carpool and dad filling in at certain functions) would pay off for all of us in the future. My travel to do keynotes and workshops - and the income they generated - enabled our family to do things we probably would not have been able to do. So everyone sacrificed somewhat and everyone shared in the benefits and rewards of Mom's 'job.'

Over the years our kids (now grown and with kids of their own) saw firsthand that a woman, wife and mother could create a successful business from scratch through hard work and determination. And she

could create her own success while still raising a family. Hard work and disappointments, as well as rewards, were all part of the picture. Many of my friends who couldn't understand my drive to succeed in our earlier years as we raised our families are now in the 'empty nest' arena and trying to figure out what to do with the rest of their lives. And many of them want to come and work for me! Our daughter is now in the MBA program at Tulane and will get her MBA in Entrepreneurship. So some examples must have made a lasting impression!

Don't feel guilty and don't try to do it all. Even now, with the kids grown and gone, I just announced to my husband this week that "the kitchen is closed until further notice". We are both professionals who work hard and there are only so many hours in the day. At the moment I am overwhelmed with programs and deadlines and travel - all of which are a lot more rewarding than cooking a pot roast! He was surprised, but understanding. Eating out, or bringing dinner home, gives us more time together.

Even though you can work around the clock and never get it all done, make sure to make time for family, friends and a life outside this profession. Otherwise it can take all your time and energy, whether you are working hard to get started or working hard because you're doing well. Balance is important. We talk a lot about it from the platform, so we need to make sure we incorporate it into our own lives.

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First, I don't consider them "divided loyalties". They are Concurrent Loyalties. They do not conflict nor require me to choose between them.

People waste so much time talking about "life balance" when there is no such thing. There are eight primary areas in one's life: Mind, Body, Spirit, Friends, Family, Career, Finances and Emotions. Each must be attended to or it will start interfering with all the others.

The only way to address all those Concurrent needs is one at a time, but not one ALL the time.

When I traveled 120 times a year and my son was very young, I called home everyday. I still call Paula every day but back then, I'd call sometimes and ONLY ask to speak to Jimmy. This gave him the message that he was as important to me as my wife was. He'd ask, "do you want to talk to Mom now?" I'd say, "No, I called this time just to speak with you. I will talk with her later."

When I was home, I'd drop by his school on occasion and join him for lunch. We'd sit at the little two foot table with all his friends and sip our milk through straws. When the meal was done I'd leave so he could go to the playground with his buddies. I only did this two or three times over the years but it made a powerful impression.

On one occasion I did a sleep-over with him. Instead of sleeping downstairs with Paula, I joined him in a sleeping bag in his room. We stayed up late, told stories, and "camped out" in his room. It was great fun.

When I called home, Paula and I would talk about lots of things besides business. I once took a tape player with me and did a continuing narrative of my road trip through the Colorado Rockies, speaking directly to Paula as I drove. She loved the recording.

I also incorporated "savoring" into my travels. I didn't just want to see the sights, I wanted to savor them! So I made time to explore my destinations, even without having to stay an extra day. I jogged the local parks and beaches. I hiked the mountains, visited the IMAX show of the region, bought a book about the area, and bought photo booklets to show where I had been.

We travel far too much to not take the time to see our destinations. I've driven from Fairbanks to Anchorage, Alaska, jogged the Hawaiian mountain roads, kayaked the beaches and bays of St. Thomas, explored the Arizona desert, ridden a scooter with Jim Tunney in Grand Cayman, jogged the beach in Acapulco, bungee jumped in New Zealand, climbed Ayers Rock in the Aussie outback, strolled Sydney Harbor, took a bus ride through London, toured the canals of Amsterdam, helicoptered the French

Riviera, climbed the Statue of Liberty, tanned on Miami Beach, explored the Alamo, toured the White House and much much more. All in conjunction with speaking engagements.

Paula has gone on many trips with me and to ALL the NSA annual events for 28 years. My NSA family is also hers now. I used to take Jimmy with me to NSA and on some speaking trips for our annual Father-Son trip. I booked one speech in Belgium and then he and I skied the Alps afterwards. On another we explored San Francisco for two days. One trip took us to San Antonio and at age nine, HE planned the trip. I guided him with questions but he laid out the plans and the schedule, even the budget. It really built his confidence too.

When you know that you intend to address all your needs and neglect none, you will find opportunities all around you.

They are not Divided Loyalties, they are Concurrent.

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Putting family and kid's sporting events in my calendar well in advance so that when I am asked to do a date that conflicts with an important family date, I can decline. I am not saying that I always turn down dates when there is a conflict. However, I do with some. For example this past fall my oldest was quarterback for his high school football team and I turned down two dates on Fridays and in an other case was able to do a Friday date and get home in time. On this particular date, well after the time was agreed to, the meeting planner wanted to move my session to a later time in the day. I would normally say an absolute yes to be service oriented. However, since when I took the date, I did it with the understanding that I could catch my flight to be home in time for the game, I had permission when they wanted to move the date to point out my constraint. In other words because the family event was on my calendar, when the meeting planner called, I pointed out the constraint I had. Later when she asked me for flexibility, it made my position a lot easier when I was able to remind her of the constraint I already mentioned. As it turned out, we moved my session one-hour later and I rushed a bit to make it to the airport.

The second thing is a simple technology solution. I use a Treo 300 phone which is a Palm device, cell phone and email tool. I have my business line forwarded to this cell phone. Obviously this is helpful when I travel. However, when at events with my family, I am available to my customers. The great thing about the speaking business is that customers and bureaus often just need simple pieces of information like: Can you take a keynote and do a three-hour session with the same topic? Can you call this meeting planner, she wants to talk with you... I can take the call serve them expediently and still be investing time with my family.

I find that meeting planners and bureaus really appreciate immediate access and I don't find that intrusive when I take a business call at family events. There are times when I will let my voice mail take a message. However, most of the time it is easy to take a call, serve the customer, and get back to little league baseball practice. My wife Jill and I are also business partners. A year ago with the kids getting older, she decided to take over the marketing function of our business. She has the same Treo phone with the same setup which allows her the same flexibility.

One of the most important pieces of advice I wish I would have received when I started in this business 11 years ago, was: It's a journey, take your time. Financial success does not come in this business overnight for most of us. If your family is going to rely on the speaking business as your sole means of financial income and you want to see them the first couple of years, then be prepared to pace yourself and be strategic. What do I mean by strategic:

Don't just attend NSA functions; be very serious about strategically understanding the business via what you learn at NSA. In other words link up with some people who will give you truth. For example, get in a master mind group of other people that have similar values and are struggling with the same balance issues as you.

Run your business like a business and invest in the things you need. But be careful, don't invest in stuff you need in three years. Invest in the stuff that you need now to go to the next level or two. For example don't spend \$5,000 on a demo video that has the type of 2-camera shoot and editing that you think you will need to have in five years (you may not even need that). Invest in a single-camera shoot and basic editing for \$1,000 or \$2,000 so you can stay off the road a couple more days and finish that book or product video or spend time with your family.

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As with any great endeavor, the first step in managing "Divided Loyalties" is communication. For example, my profession forces me into very long hours and trips. Prior to taking this position, I sat down with my spouse and communicated what I perceived to be the requirements of the job. She in turn told me what her requirements for a husband and a father were. As we discussed things, it became clear that we needed to strike a balance between work and home. So, each week we set aside time for us to go out as a family, and as a husband / wife team. Additionally, I communicate when I absolutely need to perform my mission / passion (work-wise), and I get the time I need. As a last resort, I've created a "Commander in Chief-Home Division" card for my spouse. If she ever feels that I've neglected to take care of things at home for too long, our agreement says she can drop this card on me and I have to stop what I'm doing, thus giving her my absolute attention until she tells me otherwise. It's a great tool (used judiciously, of course) as it reminds me what is really important: Family.

Advice for novice to moderate speakers...lots! It depends on what you need to know (specifics). Again, relating to the theme of your missive, I advise three things;

Communicate: Whether it is with family, friends, or your intended audience, communication is the primary means of your success. Be sure you know what you want to convey, and then figure out the best means of doing so. If you understand the effect you want, understand the cause you need to foster.

Educate: Clearly, a part of the communication process involves educating both yourself and others. Make sure you become a semi/full expert on your topics (builds credibility) and leverage that to help educate those you wish to influence. Check out Sun Tzu for more (know thyself; preparing to engage on the field, et al).

Follow-through: Everything I've told you is useless if you choose not to follow through with some type of action. The best laid plans of mice and (wo)men are like tears in the rain if one does not take action to make things happen. Choose a course of action, communicate that to others, ensure you give them the right education, then follow through to get your desired result.

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I have developed a good support system. When my daughter was very young my mom covered for me. I also had a great carpool/school group. When I was out of town and Pete was working, Annie would go home with one of the carpool moms and stay there until Pete picked her up. She stayed so often with some Phillipino friends she picked up all their customs and could speak a little tagalog.(a sure sign I was on the road too much)

I have a great master mind group that is very supportive and gives me straight from the hip advice. And Karyn Buxman and I have agreed to fill in for one another should we be unable to show for family reasons.. The plan would be for the fill in to speak/get the check/bring it home/and give it to the person who had originally booked the engagement and was counting on the income.

I have learned to get all family events on the calendar way ahead of time. I bugged the schools in April for next falls calendar. I marked out teacher conferences/school plays/proms, etc. I never missed

anything big - - but it often cost financially. (In the early years I turned down \$1000 to be at my 4 year old's dance recital. Pete's response was "this better be one hell of a dance."

My parents lived with us for almost a decade. Early on they helped us. That totally flip-flopped as we knew it would. Very tough to manage. My office manager, MJ, was my biggest help then - along with a nurses aide we hired. Before they became too infirmed, I used frequent flier miles to send them to army reunions, fun trips, etc. I took Mom with me if I was working somewhere she had a friend or relative. A little give back that made it easier.

I also started taking Annie on a girl trip once a year when I was speaking.(this started when she told her teacher that I didn't have a job - - I just traveled) She's a college sophomore now and we are determined to do "girl trips" forever. You have to find the fun when and where you can.

I used to take July off - it was the slowest month anyway. And I take off three weeks around the holidays.

My advice is to let go of pre-conceived ideas of what will make you a good spouse/parent/daughter, etc. Ya gotta do what ya gotta do. I don't need to be rich or famous - but I do want sufficient income for college/retirement etc. And I want to be well known enough to get good work.

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- Play your own game. Nido, Joe Charbonneau & others told me that I'm going to have to measure success by something other than what other speakers do. It was important to really look at what you are trying to achieve.
- Karen Cortell Reisman told me that I could do this business, even with a family. Those words of inspiration really helped.
- Kate Larson talks about how your business has to crawl when your kids are crawling & run when they can. My tends to sprint and then tumble like a toddler:-)

My tips:

Stop the guilt. We could be working full time jobs and commuting for hours with kids who never see us. Instead, we sometimes travel and most of us work out of our homes. □This gives us an incredible opportunity to be flexible and supportive. Yes, we're busy at times but we also can take off and schedule our time. Flexibility and control of my schedule were not an option when I practiced law.

Stay fit. You are going to have to take care of yourself before you can begin to do all the things required with a family.

To stay sane, you must give up perfection and settle for the best you can do at the time.

Work with clients who have your same values about family. It is surprising how often this makes a difference when you or they have a conflict. I recently moved a plane trip to have lunch with my son. It was his birthday. We had his birthday party on the weekend after I returned, but being there at school for lunch meant a ton to him.

Understand why you are in this career. My husband told me that he didn't put me through law school by delivering pizzas to be a stay-at-home mom. This is the profession I'm supposed to do and it helps to remember that from time to time.

Learn to ask for and accept help *and* make sure that you have a GREAT support system. My family lives in town. We also have neighbors and friends that can help in a crunch. You can't do this or any other job if you are worried about the care your family members are receiving.

Wherever possible, use a system. When I travel, lunches are prepared except for sandwiches. Coffee is measured out for hubby and clothes are pre-selected. Notes are written about upcoming events. It helps that other person when the partner is gone.

When we change time zones I leave my watch on my family's time. It helps me remember what they are doing and when.

My husband and I try to follow the three night rule. We don't stay out of town for more than two nights and only three when it prevents another trip down the road. The exception? NSA and, when possible, we bring the entire family for a vacation.

Call, call, call. It is rare that the problem or situation can't be handled over the phone. It bothers you sometimes that you can't be there, but if they can talk to you, it really helps.

There is never a good time or a perfect way to manage all these personal things. Do the best you can. Make some hard choices that will help your family and make the decisions that you can live with 10 years from now.

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- I block out Tues and Thur from 12-2:00 and my wife and I take the time to go out to long and relaxing lunches (she's a night person and I'm a morning person -- lunchtime ensures we're both awake and have the quality energy and brains to be fully present for each other). These are boulders -- the rocks, pebbles and sand seems to work around this just fine.
- I don't do collaborative work with colleagues in the evening or weekends. It's serious family and relaxing time - the boundary is simply set.
- I commit to things I love to do -- like racquetball -- twice a week with buddy's so that it takes a priority. It's kinda my "guys night out" (5-7:00pm)
- Because I'm a sole proprietor, I have a lot of challenges in making a business work. I have to stop every now and then to list the advantages... and take advantage of them. Don't tell anyone, but I love my 20 minute naps in the afternoon (bet you can't to that in the corporate world...).
- It's taken me sometime to allow myself to do this, but I start my day with calming music and yoga each morning (again, since I work from home, this is what would be my "commute" time if I were an employee).
- Occasionally, I just allow myself to spoil me -- take off a little early, give myself a day-off, goof off for a little while (heck, for a type A personality, that's stretching it ;)

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Fortunately, Jim and I work together. We have built our speaking company together, including seminars, speaking engagements, and product. Therefore, "divided loyalties" does not refer to our relationship.

It DOES, however, refer to our 3 children, and now 12 grandchildren ages 3-16, and the other wonderful relationships we have with extended family and friends.

Tips: Children and grandchildren need your presence, and your input at all ages! Viewing this as a privilege, not a responsibility is key. Modeling priorities, values, problem solving, and career satisfaction is not an option, but an inevitability.

We included our children in our seminars through a summer series for children and teens. They created their own material, and became excellent presenters at our seminars, every summer for years. We included our children (and now our grandchildren) in product development and fulfillment. We included our children (and now our grandchildren) in understanding business principles, hiring/training techniques, and financial planning and monitoring.

Beginning stages of your speaking career:

1. Be clear on purpose, plan of action, and process for business plan.
2. Get total buy-in and understanding from key family members.
3. Don't give up 'day job', and thus jeopardize family lifestyle till speaking career is sound.
4. Establish rewards for benchmark achievements that include the whole family.
5. Involve family as much as possible in planning.

Middle stages of your speaking career:

1. Give regular feedback to family members of 'where this career' is in relationship to plan.
2. Remember to celebrate together.
3. Include family in as many of the activities---i.e. speaking engagements/trave as possible.

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I invest 1/3 of my time in earning, 1/3 in learning, and 1/3 in serving. So, I do a ton of dates each year (140), I take off 60 days a year for holiday, I attend all my kids games etc, I'm on the board or chair of numerous organizations including all three of my Alma Maters, plus I serve as campaign chair for several fundraising deals. How is this possible?

- It's all about attitude & purpose.
- I work when I work & I play when I play.
- I live "in the moment".
- I don't think of them as "divided loyalties" but rather as "intentional congruence". So everything hooks to everything else.
- For example my kids have been with me to 39 countries, heard me speak many times.
- My charitable work feeds my business and my business creates income which feeds my charitable work.
- So, one lives a balanced life when one has a congruent life, when one's goals are congruent with one's values, when one is spiritually, mentally, socially, economically, familialy, and physically balanced.

Some practical ideas --

- I have a toll free number at my home and my office so my family can access both anytime anywhere -
- I dedicate all my books to family members to better engage them in my world --
- I prepare and deliver an object lesson at least once a week with my children -- when they were young I did that every night -- now I do it weekly in person or by e-mail or phone for those in college.

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- Three months out, my husband and I start scheduling time on our calendar for family. Blocks of a minimum of three days per month of prime uninterrupted time to be with our selves, baby-sit grandchildren or family gatherings.

- Since we often work on weekends we take Mondays and declare them as Sacred Monday's and do no business work. We monitor messages but only answer emergencies.
- If you think you must devote 150% of your time in growing your business, think again. I found over the years that when I try to push a rope up hill is when I am least productive. When I think I have too much to do and can't leave the office is when I need to take a time out in my hammock. It is amazing what miracles happen when you get your 'busy-self' out of the way for 20-30 minutes.
- You are welcome to visit my website for a highly relevant story called 'Slow Down... You're Going too Fast'.

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I think everyone has to look at their individual situation and make those deliberate choices (carefully). I was fortunate for the first few years of my children's life that my mother lived with us and it was a perfect, beautiful process and relationship. But she died when the kids were 6 and 8. My schedule was very full in those days and it forced us to look at my income versus my husband's. If he left his job, he could do freelance work as an accountant and business manager from home and when I was home, it gave him some time to fully focus on what he needed to as well. I know that everyone isn't fortunate to have that kind of flexibility. But given my income in those days, we couldn't pass it up. Looking back, some of the kids fondest memories with their dad was during his Mr. Mom days. They did like to see mom come home to cook, however.

One of my best decisions was to have my office in my home where, when I was in town, the kids could work at their "desks" in my office. I even let them help me with work chores fitting their age. When in the needs were at the moment. Many beautiful memories were made in that office.

There were times, when speaking to state or national conferences, during the summer or on weekends, I took the family with me. Once when speaking in Salt Lake City and Denver, a week apart, I contracted with the clients to pay my expenses in my fee packages. This allowed me and the family to drive on a cross country vacation that is our favorite of all time. It cost us little more than if I had taken both trips separately and the clients paid no more. It was a three week vacation that our kids (now grown) vow they will take with their kids some day.

I home schooled my son for a couple of years in middle school and high school. With almost each trip, I took him with me. But beforehand, he had to study about the place we would go. He had assignments, research, papers to write, etc. about the city/state. He also got to see first hand what I did, meet a lot of interesting people, help me with my products at the back of the room, and actually got an appreciation for how my information helped people. It even helped him understand why my work was so important, and why I had been gone a lot while he was growing up. It even encouraged his flair for theater, performance and what makes live theater work. As an adult, he travels the east coast doing light productions for venues where Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez, LeAnn Rimes, etc. perform and is technical director for a local stage production. He is my right brained artist who married an incredible civil engineer to balance him. My daughter, passionate about righting wrongs, is in law school married to an amazing guy who is in medical school. I give that information as hope to those who have younger children. If the priorities are right, kids truly feel loved, respected and appreciated, they will turn out fine.

Almost every time I returned home, I brought the kids a souvenir from the places I had been. They would research it and tell me things I didn't even know. Finally, they decided they should research it for me before I went so I would have more information about the audience. This way they felt they were helping me in my work---and they were.

Because of my level of income, my husband was able to build us a home in the mountains of North Carolina as a summer retreat. Each summer we lived there and all of us helped finish it. Now it is the kids favorite place to go and take their friends for a get away. We once talked about selling it, and my daughter went ballistic. Her exact words were. "There is no way you can sell our childhood!" We continue to make beautiful memories there.

Keep your priorities straight. It would have been a hard decision had my husband not decided to stay home with the kids. I would have had to cut my client load to only those locally or perhaps take a training job. But my family was and is the most important things in my life, and I would have compromised my dreams for them, had that been a requirement. Once my son was very ill with the flu when I had to leave for about three days. It was the only time I almost canceled because of my family. But my husband insisted he would be extra nurturing. It still stands out in my mind as one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. I called every two hours to talk to my son. He was fine when I returned. We spent an entire day together, just the two of us. I may have even made a couple of guilt purchases. =) But the time was certainly the most enjoyed, by both of us. It also gave us a chance to talk about our life style. I asked him to make a list of all the things, the times, the enrichment to his life that my work brought to us as a family. It helped him remember that I wasn't doing this just because I wanted to leave him.

Appreciate the moment and live in the moment. Those moments are your lifetime. Enjoy the journey, whether on a plane, looking at the amazing sunsets out the window, looking into the faces of an expectant audience, listening to your children laugh, or just holding hands with your spouse on the deck swing.

From my humor workshop, I insist that audiences keep a Laugh Log(tm) and a Family Funny Book(tm). This keeps a record of all the humorous times during a day for all the family members or people at work. My daughter was the daily scribe for our Family Funny Book. This record was also kept for me while I was gone so I could catch up on all the fun when I returned. I also kept a record to put in the book on my return. It is one of our most prized possessions now. It's as good as a photo album.

If you don't consider your speaking career a "calling," then reexamine why you're doing it. Obviously, we have to make money to support ourselves and our families, but if you don't passionately believe in your information and its transformation possibilities for your audiences, it will be harder to overcome the tough times of a speaking career--whether business is slow or whether you're exhausted from the pace.

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I moved my operation in to my home Jan 1st; when my 7 year old gets home from school on the (hopefully) 2 days/week I'm home, I get to see him for a few hours. It also helps Diane as I can do a load of laundry or be here to let in a repair person

I call every night around 7 pm as day winds down for son and wife. If I'm late for a dinner on the road, so be it. Most mornings I in call around 7 am to check in on their dreams; its silly, but it make a connection

I leave small gifts and notes for my son for him to discover in his sock drawer or elsewhere. I have not done as good a job with Diane; though I will steal a bill from her in basket and pay it. While the money all comes ultimately from the same pot, sometimes removing a worry or a task goes a long way to say "I love you."

We are booking vacations at least 3 months in advance and in one case 6 months in advance. Otherwise, we over pay and over stress. I must NOT take work with me (beyond a cell phone, blackberry and a note book to check in for an hour/day)

My staff does NOT come visit me at my home. We meet offsite (lunch) or at their location. I work from my home but my “office” is offsite (actually, I have several offices for law, real estate and one for securities – my consulting and speaking feed to or from each of these)

I’m turning down any travel where I’m away over 7 days. I hope soon to turn down anything over 4 nights where wife or child or both don’t join me.

Am I a pain? Yes. Its almost as if the more I am a pain the more the market thinks I’m worth.

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Offer a very significant discount to clients who will locate their engagements near where you live so that you don’t have to leave your family more than necessary. Whenever you begin to feel resentful about this, increase your fee and increase the discount.

Schedule a LOT of vacation time with your family to compensate for being away so much during the year. For example, as December is a light period for my business, I often take the entire month off to travel with my family.

Along with this, treat time you have scheduled for your family as a client date.

In the beginning, make sure your spouse has a clear understanding of the requirements of your work. Your spouse will be virtually a single parent when you are away, and will likely need friends, neighbors and relatives for the things you won’t be able to do when you are traveling.

Don’t get into a “feast and famine” cycle when you are home selling like crazy because you don’t have clients – followed by a glut of client work because you were selling like crazy. Create as smooth a work load as you can. You might even consider pricing higher for dates that will take you above a level that you are comfortable with (say, 10 dates a month).

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I am very clear that my business goal is to have a fulfilling, fun and stress-free job. I want the Mark Leblanc goal of “the right speaker in front of the right audience with the right message”. I am not going to kill myself to try to make a million dollars.

I got into therapy a few years ago. Not because I had a major crisis in my life but because I was thirty eight years old and felt I should be better at some things in life (husband, father, etc.). As a result, I made major changes in my life that have had a very positive impact on my family.

We hold weekly family meetings with our kids. The philosophy is that our kids may not get their way but they always get their say. These meetings help us to address achievements as well as problems within the family and also help us to plan out our week. This is very important with both parents working and the kids involved in multiple extracurricular activities.

My wife and I have always shared household responsibilities. Since she works out of the home, I am the primary cook. She does laundry and helps the kids with homework. I do the yard work and heavy lifting! We hired someone to clean our house since neither of us wanted to spend 4 hours per week cleaning. This has made a huge difference in giving us more time with the family.

I will be taking my kids to the NSA Youth Leadership Conference at the convention this year. They are both very excited about it. This allows us to combine work and family in a very fun and unique way.

We have family nights twice each month when we do something fun together as a family. This usually involves going out to dinner and a movie or ordering pizza and playing games at home. The purpose is to have fun together.

My wife and I were in a study group a few years ago where we read the book "The Five love Languages". This had a dramatic effect on how we interact with each other. It has improved our marriage significantly.

When my wife travels, I block off the dates and will not take work during those times.

I only do free programs for groups in which I am personally involved (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, church) or if it is a specific targeted marketing effort.

My wife and I belong to a small group in our church with four other couples. All of us have children of the same age. We meet every other week to study a book, the bible or some other personal and spiritual growth material. Twice each year, we go camping and skiing together. In addition, we have parties, movie nights and outings with this group (including kids). These are our closest friends and we have made our relationship a priority.

Since my wife works full time, we agreed to split meal responsibilities. She is responsible for breakfast and I use that time to do my daily devotional and exercise. I do dinner while she finishes her work day and commutes home.

Every week our family watches Fear Factor and American Idol together. It's goofy but we have lots of fun.

This year, I am outsourcing some of my administrative duties. For instance, I purchased online banking and it has saved me a lot of time I used to spend on writing checks, mailing payments and entering information in Quicken.

A number of years ago, my wife and I decided to stop putting our children in before/after care at school. We made the commitment to be with them before and after school.

I rarely stay at an out-of-town program location longer than 2 days even if I could do some sightseeing. I try to get in and out quickly as possible without neglecting the client. This gives me more time at home. Once in a while, I will have an opportunity to turn a good trip into a family vacation.

Engage in constant communication with your spouse and family. Continually discuss responsibilities, problems and challenges of divided loyalties so that you create an atmosphere of openness. This will allow you to catch problems before they get out of control.

Consider having weekly family meetings. During these meetings, offer compliments to each other, discuss financial concerns and allow everyone to bring up family "issues". Children feel included when they are a part of the planning process. Remember that the children may not "get their way" but they will always "get their say".

Plan family nights 2-3 times each month where your entire family does something together. By focusing on the family, you give it the importance it deserves.

Schedule date nights with your spouse. Put them in the calendar and stick to them. We all need romantic time to keep the relationship alive.

Make sure you schedule time to focus on your physical, spiritual, mental and social well being. When we neglect one, the others suffer. Exercise regularly. Engage in spiritual and mental activities. Socialize with friends.

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The first important thing about this is: Place tangible, measurable limits on the number of days you travel a month, and the number of presentations booked per month. As long as these are nebulous, the best of intentions are sabotaged by individual circumstances. Placing limits in advance takes subjectivity out of this so you don't have to face this dilemma and decision every single time. Adjust these limits to the time of year and the needs of your kids versus career. For example, during the summers when my boys were growing up, I limited travel to five days a month. When a book comes out, there is a window of opportunity and you must support it in first six weeks. Therefore, we established a pattern for that short window of necessity. We lived in Hawaii at that time. I'd go to the mainland for two weeks and be home for two weeks, and then compensate and be home a lot after that six week window. My boys were fine with this because the situation was tangible and had a limit, and they understood it was a temporary situation. It worked well because established a fair trade of being home and being away.

This business can be seductive. How do you know when you're doing well? When the phone rings and people want you to speak to their organization. Having preset tangible limits removes the tug out of the decision. If they call, I have clarity, instead agonizing or being swept up in the seductiveness of being wanted. It's a way to say no which is not debatable. This method takes the emotion off the table. My best advice is to establish multiple streams of revenue, so your income and business and career are not dependant upon jumping on plane. I really mean this: If you are a Speaker only, most of your income is dependent upon you going out of town to speak. Diversify your business because A: It's smart. You are then building equity, an income not tied to exclusively to your individual, in-person efforts. It's your intellectual capital that's been created. B: It's generating multiple streams of income. When you are on vacation with your kids, you can still be creating income. You can still define yourself as a successful business person. This takes away dependence on calendar dates booked. You have some autonomy, you've taken control – you are driving instead of deriving.

Finally, I'd like to share this brief story with you. When I was a struggling, single mother of two young sons, a very wise coach and owner of the Podium Speakers Bureau, Sandra Schriff, literally grabbed me by the shoulders and looked me in the eyes and said, "Put this dilemma behind you once and for all. Take a stand. You will never regret putting your kids first. You will regret putting your business first." My kids are almost grown, and you know what? She was absolutely right. I realize that in today's world, it is politically correct to say that this is an individual choice. I'm willing to take a stand on this one. As a mother, you will never regret putting your kids first.

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Keep a detailed schedule not just of work items but of life items as well. Like attending your kids, or now grandkid's events. Like taking classes or seeing friends. And make those commitments just as important as your professional ones. We are creating our lives day by day and it can easily feel like life is pushing us around. But it won't if you know when to say yes and when to say no. Remember, from my point of view, success is not just completion, but also success is deletion and creation... ultimately the creation of the life you want.

Travel is more than time consuming. It throws everything at home off, your family, your communication, your relationships and it's exhausting. That's what drove me to writing. It allows me to be home and still reach an international audience through *The Joy of Success* which is now available in Chinese. On the other hand, when I go to do my next seminar in Kingsport TN I will connect to people I could never share with unless I went there. And I will love every minute of it... until I get home late and have to reenter.

I would say keep a journal of your daily successes... successes with family and health, successes with learning and sharing through writing and speaking, successes with modeling the information you teach. Then when obstacles confront you... which I've had plenty of lately... you can look back over your

successes and get your balance and direction newly. Be sure to define success for yourself now that you're leading your life.

My suggestion... success is completion, that is finishing and acknowledging yourself for doing the things that are on course for you, given your goals and values. Success is deletion, that is knowing when to say NO. NO is probably the most powerful balancing tool you have, if you use it. Choose about everything and you'll have time for it all... little by little. And success is creation... the creation of your dreams and plans and goals and values, your new ideas and suggestions and methods and discoveries. It's our ability as creators that truly makes a difference each and every day.

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Start a work-swap tradition with a new or old friend.

My NSA-Michigan colleague, Cheri S. Najor of Kreativ Energie, gifted me with a work-swap on a cold day in December. We sorted and filed papers in my office for four hours—a job I put off as long as possible. Along with a lunch of homemade soup, this was my best Christmas gift in 2003! I'll be helping her clean out closets next month for the move to her new house. And then we'll plan my next project.