

WORKING WOMEN By Courtney Dwyer

Finding balance between family and career an elusive goal

On a typical workday for Erin Rooker, her alarm goes off at 4 a.m. The marketing specialist with Turner Construction Co. gets up to exercise and spend time with her 2-year-old daughter before she heads to the office at 7 a.m. She's home by 4:30 p.m. and puts her daughter to bed by 7 p.m.

Rooker and her husband then meal prep for the next day and relax a bit before lights are out at 9 p.m. This is the schedule Rooker and her husband use to keep everyone in their house happy. "Yes, women can have it all, depending on what your definition of 'all' is," says Rooker.

Finding the perfect balance between family and career is an elusive goal for women in all professions. In the fast-paced, super-volatile world of commercial real estate, finding balance can be racked with multiple challenges. Women in this industry have the added challenge of being in a notable gender minority. Many of the women of CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) San Diego, the city's largest organization dedicated to the advancement of women in commercial real

estate, have successfully faced the balance issue head on, while being in the minority that do so.

"You have to give yourself a break and realize the part of balancing the two is being okay with not being 100 percent in one world or the other at all times," says Katie Yee, a mother of two and the regional director of marketing at Fuscoe Engineering. "This means that you can't stare longingly at the moms that dedicate all their time to PTA, room-mom, and classroom volunteer and you also can't beat yourself up about not being able to chair every professional board and attend every industry event like a lot of the full-time career women."

Now, with her oldest daughter in kindergarten, Yee works five days a week, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. "This schedule has been great for both me and for Fuscoe," she says. Yee believes you can't be afraid to make yourself a priority when it comes to finding a job that fits you and your family. "Ask your employer about their policies or feelings on a flexible schedule, work sharing, or working from home."

Tiffany English, a principal for Ware Malcomb's San Diego office, is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the office. When she leaves work each day, she's a wife and a mom. English drives her kids to their afterschool activities, makes dinner, helps with homework and only gets about six hours of sleep each night.

"I put my family first and I don't make excuses about it, I think men and women should be able to put their family first and still be successful," says English. "With technology allowing us to be productive anywhere and anytime, life is easier to manage. Be confident in who you are and what is important to you."

Susan Steele, a senior manager with Deloitte Tax LLP, often travels to meet with regional clients. However, when she's home, her days vary based on family, work and community commitments. Steele and her husband made the decision after their second child was born that her husband would stay home with the kids and Steele would work full-time. "I am truly fortunate that the career path I chose allows



Women can have it all, depending on what your definition of 'all' is, says Erin Rooker, working mother of a 2-year-old.



You can't be afraid to make yourself a priority when it comes to finding a job that fits you and your family, says Katie Yee, the regional director of marketing at Fuscoe Engineering.



'I put my family first and I don't make excuses about it, I think men and women should be able to put their family first and still be successful,' says Tiffany English, a principal for Ware Malcomb in San Diego.



'My family is more important to me than anything else. If my choices made them miserable, I would figure out a different path for my career to accommodate their needs,' says Susan Steele, a senior manager with Deloitte Tax LLP.

me to support my entire family and also fulfills me personally and professionally," says Steele. "We were hesitant at first to go down this path and made a deal that we would check-in with each other regularly to make sure it continued to work for our relationship and our children. It has now been four years and neither of us could imagine it any other way."

Steele proudly says Deloitte Tax has provided her with tremendous opportunities for growth both professionally and personally with great client assignments and mentors in a number of offices across the United States. In the community, she serves as a treasurer/executive board member for two nonprofit organizations. "My family is more important to me than anything else. If my choices made them miserable, I would figure out a different path for my career to accommodate their needs," says Steele.

For other women like Lynn LaChapelle, it's about finding balance between her career and her passion. "I have found that there is no perfect balance as everything melds into one big stewpot — a continuum of sorts," says LaChapelle.

As managing director for JLL, a global real estate company, she is thrilled to be following a passion LaChapelle shares with her husband — making wine. The couple opened Domaine



'I have found that there is no perfect balance, as everything melds into one big stewpot — a continuum of sorts,' says Lynn LaChapelle, managing director for JLL.

Artefact Vineyard and Winery in Escondido last year. "We have worked side-by-side on all of the initial planning, plantings, design and development. My husband is the winemaker and I am the tasting room hostess and marketing guru," says LaChapelle. "We are a small boutique winery so the heavy lifting comes during the evenings and weekends."

When it comes to her position at JJLL, LaChapelle says, "I selected a very competitive, high risk-high reward profession that can be very challenging at times. I am fortunate to have an optimistic outlook on life and was provided a strong work ethic by my parents. These two attributes have helped me navigate my career and design my life."

The balancing act is not simple. For some it means giving something up or having to set your alarm for 4 a.m. the next day. Each path is different in dealing with this challenge. However, there is one thing most working women can agree on; free yourself from guilt and do what works for you.



Courtney Dwyer is a consultant with TW2 Marketing. Dwyer is also the mother of two young daughters.



YOUNG WOMEN FINDING BALANCE:

For women who are not married and do not have children, there's a tendency to assume they can work all of the time without the demands of children or a husband.

"I think balance is one of the hardest things to achieve as a young professional woman. There are so many pressures pulling us in so many directions," says Star Hughes of Hughes Marino. The 24-year-old is a director at Hughes Marino, one of Southern California's leading commercial real estate firms that exclusively represent tenants and buyers.

The University of San Diego graduate believes it's important to choose a career that you love and to also choose a partner that supports whatever lifestyle and career choice you aspire to. "Know yourself, know your limits, and know when it's time to take a breather. My parents always told me that life (and your career) is a marathon — not a sprint — so it's important to take care of yourself first," says Hughes.

According to published reports, the young professional workforce in America is majority female. Women have maintained majority status in education and health care occupations, but men still hold most jobs in engineering and computer occupations.

Hughes currently spends most of her free time planning her wedding and she's excited about the future. "In 10 years, I see myself continuing to help our clients find office space that truly brings out the best in their teams, and delivering amazing economic results that allow them to continue to grow and flourish. I see myself continuing to advocate for Downtown's growth and success — as I am passionate about the amazing culture, lifestyle, and amenities it offers to companies and their employees," says Hughes.