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I hope you've been following the Work-Life Balance article series written this past year by members of the Women-in-Science committee. The 5 articles have appeared in the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA print journals and online in each organization's website membership sections. Each article is written from a different woman's work experience and perspective—older, younger, academic, non-academic—but the essential issues always seem to be the same and reflect the issues encountered by many women in the workforce at large: How do I, as a woman, survive and even thrive in the face of the everyday challenges associated with profession, work, family, and self-fulfillment?

While men certainly face these same challenges, it seems that women are hit a bit harder in terms of repercussions from the choices we make. Maybe we're harder on ourselves because we still have more to prove. Particularly in the sciences, though our numbers are rising women often remain in the minority and we feel we are being carefully examined and judged by both the men and the women with whom we work. We dread the comparisons: "She's a great scientist but not such a good mother," or "She's a really great person but just doesn't have what it takes to be a good scientist," or the awful "She's a great scientist, but I wouldn't want to have to live with her!" Do men worry about such comparisons?

Fortunately, as these articles have shown, women in science can be great multitaskers, great planners, and great jugglers of life priorities. Once we recognize a problem, we know how to go about finding a solution that works for us. The hardest thing seems to be for us to say "no" often enough to free up the time it takes to achieve an acceptable work-life balance.

As I read each of the articles I would ask myself, "Is this particular strategy something that would work for me in my own life?" I know that life works better for me when important things are planned, so I've made a real effort to formally plan out those activities that will help me feel more in balance. Put a "Break" on my work calendar each day to take a walk, or read, or go to the gym. Schedule time to do something fun with my husband and friends. Make sure I am routinely spending quality time with my family, something that really recharges my batteries and gives me the energy I need for my work and profession. It's very easy to let time slip by and find that too many moments have been focused on the wrong end of the work-life continuum.

Being Chair of the Women-in-Science Committee this past year has been a great honor (and, surprisingly, a great boon to my own work-life balance). I think that engaging the members to take an active, ongoing role in Committee activities (such as this article series) has been of great benefit to the societies, for both male and female members. I offer a huge thank-you to each of the Committee members who took the time to share their challenges and solutions through these articles, and I look forward to seeing the creative ways next year's co-chairs will build on this experience.