

KAREN SAYS

MITOSIS ME

THERE was a time I worked in a non-governmental organisation, which ran five shelters for our beneficiaries. The people who ran them just blew me away in the way they approached each day, totally dedicated and joyful in the face of everything that was thrown their way.

Attached to the main office, was also a nursery for infants and toddlers. Moms would often say that when they were having particularly trying days, it was always a treat to be able to hop down, pick up their bundles of joy and feel the stress ebb away.

So when we learnt of the companies in Malaysia that are blazing the trail in introducing innovation – not just in terms of products and services for their customers – but innovation focused entirely on creating an environment for their people to “be all they can be” at work and at home, we were very glad to share the news with you, our readers.

I was fortunate to have met up with some of the senior leaders of organisations who won accolades at the recent Life at Work Award 2014, and could hear the conviction they felt in developing meaningful options for their teams. Innovators, change agents, champions – these leaders shone for all the right reasons.

I find myself being the ambidextrous economist/public health person again (on the third hand?).

On the one hand it makes perfect economic sense to be able to retain executives who have amassed great experience and developed expertise in their fields (not to mention the impact on productivity that comes with better work-life balance).

On the other hand, the impact on their families at present time and into the future is immeasurable.

It was great to also have met the people who have opted for flexible work arrangements and for a moment, I imagined the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* with George Bailey running through the streets of Bedford Falls in a parallel dimension brought on by his angel Clarence – to show him how the entire community would have been different had he never existed.

Imagine if we didn't have the benefit of key researchers in R&D teams of different industries, or the movers and shakers in the financial world, education or healthcare.

This week, Dr Yvonne Sum also addresses the need for a global mindset. And last but not least, we have another installment of Movie Wisdom with punny Sarah Tan.

Akin to healthcare, where two people with the same diagnosis may not necessarily be prescribed the same treatment, it is heartening to see that some organisations and their leaders recognise that their people face the difficult choice of work or family at certain points in their lives, and go to great lengths to ease that burden. The hope is that many more organisations follow suit.

Kick back and relax with your family, friends and loved ones this Saturday. Savour the moments and recharge!

Have a fantastic weekend all!

KAREN NEOH
Editor
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WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

By **SARAH TAN**
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UNSURE as to whether the work stress you experience is of a healthy amount? Or if it's normal to work the number of hours you do?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself to ensure the presence (or absence) of work-life balance in your life. Keep in mind that this cannot lead to a proper diagnosis.

If you are feeling overwhelmed with your work to the point of hardship, please seek professional advice. Work-life balance is crucial to avoid serious health issues.

AM I ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT WORK?

You've spent your required time in the office productively and effectively. Once you pack up and go home, do you leave your work behind?

Recently, I spoke to a friend who has a busy schedule and was constantly on the go.

When I asked him how he coped with his work and activities, he told me that he has mastered the ability to “switch off” his working mind.

Once he's in the car and driving home, he “switches off” his thoughts about work and focuses instead on the rest time that awaits him.

DO I HAVE TIME FOR MYSELF, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS?

Or is my time filled with work, work, and more work? Another good indicator is if your family and

friends have mentioned that you haven't been able to spend quality time with them.

Every week, allocate some time to spend recreationally. On the weeks you need some “me time”, spend it on a hobby. On other weeks, make time for your family and friends.

Go hiking (exercise has been said to help combat stress), watch a movie, have a meal together, or just do anything you feel up to on that day.

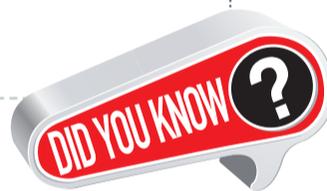
DO I EAT IN FRONT OF MY COMPUTER?

Personally guilty of this, some of us might think that working through our lunch break isn't a big deal. However, skipping lunch can take a toll on us.

Remember, “lunch break” doesn't mean just eating! It's a time to rest and recharge. Grab a bunch of co-workers and go out for a nice lunch in a nearby restaurant.

Take this time to connect and build on your workplace relationships. There's nothing wrong with having fun at work – use your one hour break wisely!

Here is a quiz from the Canadian Mental Health Association that checks your work-life balance: http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/work-life-balance-quiz/#.Vct7lmeSzy0



The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.



- 1 “It's all about quality of life and finding a happy balance between work and friends and family.” – **Philip Green**
- 2 “You will never find time for anything. If you want time you must make it.” – **Charles Buxton**
- 3 “We have overstretched our personal boundaries and forgotten that true happiness comes from living an authentic life fueled with a sense of purpose and balance.” – **Dr Kathleen Hall**
- 4 “You don't have to make yourself miserable to be successful. It's natural to look back and mythologise the long nights and manic moments of genius, but success isn't about working hard, it's about working smart.” – **Andrew Wilkinson**

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