

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

PLANNING FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Overview

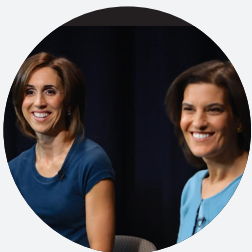
Although the majority of mothers in the United States work outside the home, women today still do the lion's share of housework and child care. How can we better balance the workload at home to ensure that women have the time and energy to invest in their careers and men have the opportunity to be equal partners and active fathers? As the second installment of our three-part series "Work & Family: Getting to 50/50," this meeting will help you develop strategies for creating the work/life balance that works for you.

Meeting Goals

- Understand the value of letting go of perfection, staying motivated at work, and asking for help prioritizing goals when you need it
- Identify the gap between how you spend your time today and your ideal time breakdown
- Learn strategies for improving balance at work and at home

Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch the "Planning for Work/Life Balance" video individually or as a group at leanin.org/education/planning-for-worklife-balance/
- Bring a printed copy of this guide
- Be prepared to share your One Action Update (if you're doing this)



Brought to you in partnership with...

Sharon Meers and Joanna Strober, co-authors of *Getting to 50/50: How Working Parents Can Have It All*, and the [Clayman Institute for Gender Research](#) at Stanford University.

Meeting Agenda

🕒 Approx. 1 hour and 45 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes
Warm up, catch up, and get going **p.4**

2 Educational Activities 🕒 Approx. 50 minutes
Learn from experts and one another **p.5**

- **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 5 minutes
Take a few minutes to review the core strategies presented in the “Planning for Work/Life Balance” video **p.5**

- **Activity 2: Reflect on Your Current Work/Life Balance** 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes
Do you have enough time in the week to live a balanced, rewarding life? **p.6**

- **Activity 3: Discuss Ways to Improve Your Work/Life Balance** 🕒 Approx. 30 minutes
Discuss the strategies that can help you create balance at home and at work **p.8**

3 One Action 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes
The little push you need to go for it **p.9**

4 Wrap-Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes
What’s next and a few final words **p.11**

Optional Worksheet
One Action Update **p.13**

Meeting Guide

Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with ourselves and one another. One by one, fill in the sentence below and share them with your Circle. Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- If I could give up one task at work, it would be . . .
- If I could give up one task at home, it would be . . .

Step 2: Member Updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting. The goal is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update]."*

Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 50 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, review the key takeaways from the "Planning for Work/Life Balance" video individually or as a group:

Give up on perfection

Doing things well is better than making them perfect. Perfection is stressful! "Good enough" will lead to greater happiness.

Don't leave until you leave

It's a perfectly reasonable decision to stay home with your children if you're able to, but don't take your foot off the gas at work in anticipation of having a family. Instead, try to achieve as much as you can in your career to be in the best possible position to balance work and family life when the time comes to make that call.

Build professional credibility

The more professional experience you have before you have kids, the more power you have to negotiate and build a career you love.

Learn to ask questions and prioritize

Engage your boss and coworkers in prioritizing. What are your key responsibilities? What matters most in your job? Sometimes you may feel yourself being pulled in many different directions. Find out what is most important. It's in your best interest to prioritize—and it's great for your boss, too.

Activity 2: Reflect on Your Current Work/Life Balance

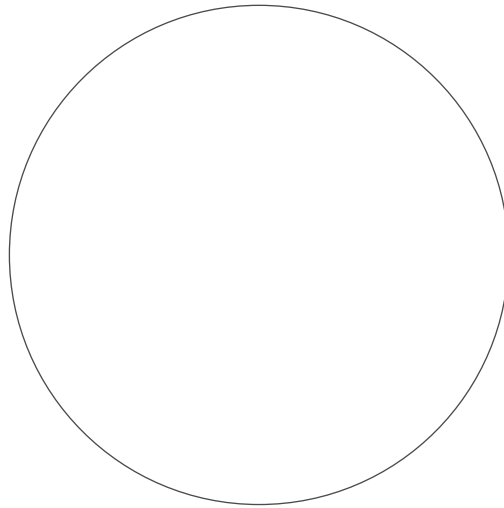
🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

Step 1: How do you want to spend your time?

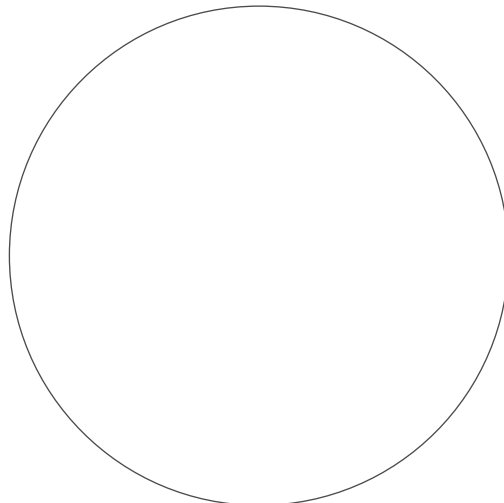
👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

In the space below, draw a pie chart showing the percent of time you spend on yourself, your job, and your relationships during your waking hours every week.




Are you happy with the arrangement you drew above? If you could change anything, what would it be? Draw your ideal time breakdown in the pie chart below.



Activity 1: Key Takeaways (cont.)

Step 2: Reflect on your different time breakdowns

 Individual activity

 10 minutes

Write down your answers to the following questions:

What about your current time breakdown works for you? What doesn't work?

How is your ideal breakdown different from your current one? Why is it better?

What are some things you can do to help achieve this ideal breakdown?

How would giving up on perfection help? In what area of your life would it have the most impact?

Is there anything you can ask for at home or at work that will help? If so, how will you do this?

Activity 3: Discuss Ways to Improve Your Work/Life Balance

🕒 Approx. 30 minutes

Step 1: Share your work/life balance strategy

👤👤 Pair activity

🕒 5 minutes per partner, 10 minutes total

Break into groups of two or three members and share the following:

- Your current and ideal time breakdowns
- How you plan to get closer to your ideal time breakdown, including where you can give up on perfection and whom you can ask for help

Step 2: Share your reflections

👤👤👤 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes per member, 20 minutes total

Go around the Circle and share your reflections from the pair activity:

- What surprised you about the difference between your current and ideal time breakdowns?
- What's one area in which you can give up on perfection to achieve greater work/life balance?

One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 25 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

Step 1: Identify the action you’re going to take

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Giving up a task you don’t enjoy, adopting a “good enough” approach to certain parts of your life, or asking to share tasks at home or at work are all strategies for changing how you spend your time.

In the space below, describe a situation you’d like to change in order to move closer to your ideal time breakdown.


What specific action will you take to change the situation?

Create a quick plan. When, where, and (if relevant) with whom will you take action?

One Action (cont.)

Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle

 Group activity

 2 minutes or less per member, 20 minutes total

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statements:

- One situation that prevents me from having my ideal time breakdown is . . .
- To change this situation, I will . . .

Housekeeping Note: We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 13 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update.

Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting, including day and time, location, and food and drink responsibilities. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who is going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting so you can brainstorm improvements going forward.

Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minutes or less

Ready to give up on perfection to make your life more balanced? Go around the Circle and share one thing you plan to do a “good enough” job on in the future!

Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following pages for an optional member activity.

One Action Update

Use the following prompts to prepare your One Action Update before your next meeting, to maximize your time with your Circle.

- What was the challenge that you planned to address?

- How did you accomplish this?

- What was the outcome?

- In the end, what did you learn?