

## BALANCING FAMILY, WORK AND LIFE – part 1

Most families are familiar with the routine of rising early, getting ready for work, making lunches, getting children off to school, feeding the pet, mailing the bills, remembering the grocery list. And that's just the morning schedule. The afternoon means dropping off and picking up children from their many activities, shopping for groceries, doing laundry, cooking dinner, helping with homework and the list goes on until you fall asleep on the sofa, exhausted.

This hectic lifestyle often results in too little sleep, too little exercise and unhealthy meals on the run. Forget time to relax or have fun. It's no wonder so many adults complain of stress. Unrelenting stress takes a toll on the body, mind and spirit. There may be frequent colds or high blood pressure or headaches, to name a few. Depression and weight gain are common. You're worn out.

How can you regain control? Try this fun mental exercise first. Imagine it is your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and you are surrounded by family and friends. The media are there asking you to recall the 5 most memorable events of your life. Make a list of those 5 things and look for the theme. If having the cleanest house in the neighborhood isn't on your "top 5", then don't agonize, spending hours each week at that chore. If having a close relationship with your children and spouse made the "top 5", figure how many hours a week you are devoting to that value. That's what life is about – living your value system. As the old saying goes, "No one makes a deathbed speech wishing they had spent more time at work". If you are in synch with your values, you are spending your time wisely and with minimal stress.

That sounds lovely and idealistic but simplifying your life can be done. In next month's newsletter, there will be hints for doing just that – simplifying.