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(wrongly) feel that they aren't excelling, both in their professional or personal lives. It's therefore critically important that you periodically take stock of all that you ...

Amy Vetter • Jun. 29, 2016



Can women do it all?

Depending on who you ask, you'll likely get a variety of different answers. But regardless of where you fall on this question, when you consider that **57% of women participate in the labor force**, the question should actually be, "How do we support

women who have determined that they can have a family *and* continue their career

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It's therefore critically important that you periodically take stock of all that you are doing so that you don't tip overboard.

Start by making sure you have blocked out the time you need for your family and for your own health and wellness. If you aren't getting it, speak up! Bring your family into the fold and have an open and honest conversation about what you need to stay grounded. As a working mom, having these types of conversations has allowed me to involve my children and husband in my career and, in turn, earn their support. At the same time, this two-way dialogue helps me to understand their wants and needs.

[Read Amy's previous column: [The New Face Of Women in Accounting: Changing the Profession](#)]

But the conversation can't stop at home. Women need to be transparent in the workplace, especially in accounting where per diem work is common. For example, if you have an arrangement with your employer that you only work 20 hours, be strong in that agreement. If clients email you on your day off or partners call you about certain files, don't overlook this. Talk with your employer about whether you'll be taking an additional day off or if you will be paid extra. You won't know until you ask.

Identify supportive peers within your business

Having a few friends at work can make stressful days easier, especially during busy times like tax season. But to truly thrive, women need more than a friend, they need a supportive network.

What comprises a supportive network? I recently attended a lecture at the CalCPA Women's Leadership Forum by Joanne Cleaver of [Wilson-Taylor Associates](#). As Joanne explained, a supportive network begins with a mentor. A mentor is someone

who is with you in the trenches and who can provide emotional support when

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sponsor is a senior executive willing to root for you at the management level and will help identify opportunities to advance your career. A sponsor, as well as a mentor or coach, doesn't necessarily have to be a woman. Rather, they just need to be someone that believes in you as a professional.

Find an outside peer group

Women in the accounting profession are fortunate in that there are a variety of professional organizations in the industry that are committed to supporting women in the workplace. The [American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants](#) (AWSCPA), for instance, offers resources for all stages of an accounting career. The AICPA's [Women in the Profession](#) portal offers live events and webinars, as well as a variety of other tools and information, to help with the retention and advancement of women in accounting. Based on your location, many state CPA societies and industry-agnostic organizations also sponsor women-lead councils or forums that can provide resources.

Regardless of the organization, it's not enough just to join. Rather, you need to actively engage in these organizations in order to reap the benefits. Attend lectures. Participate in networking events. Go to conferences. Only then will you be able to build a supportive network and a safe space where you can test ideas and collaborate together.

One size does not fit all

There is no cookie cutter female accountant. We're all unique and have our own goals and aspirations. So whatever they might be, it's important to understand the power of advocating for yourself, arming yourself with the appropriate resources and knowing that you have a team of female professionals who have your back.

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