

On Line Chat • March 1, 2004

**Topic:** Work-Life Balance Part I

★A brief summary:

We had a fruitful informal discussion about various topics including managing new babies while caring for older siblings, the selection and cost of sitters in our area, how to carve out sacred time with our spouses, balancing our focus on our spouse with that of our children, and how/where to begin our search for professional opportunities when we are ready (ie: focusing on an area of work, informational interviews and exchange of information on contacts/agency info).

Unfortunately there is no formal transcript of the chat room content. We were very casual in our exchange of e-lingo/ conversation. There were minor technical difficulties experienced by all participants, including yahoo's willingness to "log off" a participant after an extended period on line.

We are interested in knowing if you would be interested in a future chat. If so, would a different evening be better? how about the time? As far as topics, is there anything you might like to see us discuss in an e-chat format? I personally am interested in seeing what the group is capable of doing together - so please forward your feedback to the group.

Conference Call • March 25, 2004

**Topic:** Work-Life Balance Part II with Barb Zelonky

★A brief summary:

Barb then shared some observations, her biggest mistakes, and some advice with the women on the conference call.

★Bio for Barbara Zelonky:

Barbara Zelonky worked 4 years before earning her MAJCS/MSW at HUC/USC and then worked one year (in LA) before the birth of her first child. After a 3 month maternity leave, she returned to work part-time. At 1 year, she left that position to be home full time, though she did take a very part-time position as a teaching assistant (good money for few hours). After the birth of her 3rd child, she stopped working altogether. 2 years later she began to consult on short-term projects ranging from 5 hours/week to 20 hours/week. When her youngest was 4, her family went to Jacobs camp (UAHC camp in the South) for the summer where her husband had a job as song leader and she was asked to run the education program. The senior rabbi from a large temple in Memphis met her there and pursued her after the summer. Eventually, he convinced her/them to move to Memphis and take a fulltime position as Director of Education. She has been there 1 year and is very happy.

★Observations:

- When your children are older, it is easier to work. Scheduling is easier because there are places that they have to be, but also there are things that are not flexible because of their needs.

★Biggest mistakes:

- Taking a job that pays too little; e.g. if it doesn't cover childcare or doesn't make you feel good, it is too little!
- Not understanding what they want from you/the job description is not specific enough
- Not realizing how difficult it is to work at home. It is possible, but you need a plan!

★Advice:

- Consider everything, even if it doesn't sound interesting at first
- Make sure childcare is set up firmly
- Be clear about what your hours will be, but don't be rude and imposing
- People don't want to hear all about your children all the time. Be aware that others who work fulltime might think you are being judgmental

- Don't be resentful, even if you took the wrong job; be positive
- Be sure your title is good, for example, not program coordinator but rather director. This is important for your resume, even if it was a small or short-term job
- Stay sharp and stay current with general and Jewish issues
- Stay healthy - take care of yourself
- Don't be defensive about being out of the workforce or working part-time (especially in an interview setting)
- Don't use your child(ren) as excuses
- Present yourself well and with confidence
- Don't fall into the trap of being treated (or being paid) like when you last worked full-time.
- It is better to say no when you can't do a good job, than to say yes and not do well
- Show your face periodically without your baby/child
- You don't have to be perfect (e.g. your kids clothes don't always have to match, the dishes don't always have to be done)

★Resources:

During the discussion, Sue Fendrick gave 2 resources given for babysitters - [www.sittercity.com](http://www.sittercity.com) or post flyers at local colleges, nursing schools etc. and, of course, always check references!

Brenda Gevertz shared that Ann updated the JCSA board about Networking Parents and the board (mostly agency execs) was very impressed. They also expressed interest in trying to be a clearinghouse for part-time and/or short-term jobs, especially those that could be done by telecommuting. We will continue to work on this and share more info as it develops.

Follow-Up On Line Chat • March 28, 2004

**Topic:** Response & Feedback from Barbara Zelonky's conference call...

★A brief summary:

Our topics ranged from general networking and "Jewish geography", to childcare and when/how to return to work. Unfortunately, Barbara Zelonky was unable to join us - however her conference call sparked some interesting exchanges.

We referenced several items from the conference call with Barbara Zelonky when talking about the return to work. On the call her advice highlighted how not to be "defensive" about being out of the workforce -- and we discussed how the things we do w/our children are useful to our professional work.

In addition, we continued the dialogue and support of each other about managing our own needs as individuals and those needs of our children – how to carve out time to do things for ourselves and keep up our own interests.