

# Perspectives on Work-Life Integration: How to Make it Work for You

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When women first started entering the workforce in numbers, it's fair to say there was work-life separation. Women showed up at work and discreetly kept their personal lives, families, and other private. As more and more working mothers continued to stay in the workforce the notion of work-life balance was introduced with the idea that you could do both but separately. The FWA-NJ panel on June 14th at Investors Bank in Short Hills NJ, explored the concept of work-life integration and how work, self, family and community could be more holistic.



A panel, moderated by Christine Birnbaum Principal of Claremont Coaching, shared their personal insights and perspectives. The panelists each with a unique lens and specific examples of what has worked for them included:

- Andrea Lillard, Senior Manager, Audit, KPMG LLP
- Karen Macleod, Co-Founder and CEO, The Arete Group LLC
- Yai Vargas, Founder, Latinista
- Ellen Goldman, Founder EllenG Coaching

Here's a recap of what the panelists shared, based on personal experience, as learnings:

Use technology wisely: technology has dramatically changed our ability to connect yet it can be a double edge sword; set boundaries and avoid the temptation to check/respond to emails 24/7; it sets an unrealistic expectation that you are always available



Seek out workplaces (and managers) with cultures conducive to your needs:

many companies have programs to support employees and provide an array of employee resources and family friendly policies

Make self care a priority: this includes sleep, diet, exercise, and relaxation; you can't take care of others unless you take care of yourself first; and you'll have more energy

Be present: deliberately keep your focus in the moment and avoid replaying what you "should have done" or thinking about what you "need to do"

Ask and communicate your needs: overcome the fear of asking and confidently express your needs; chances are you'll be surprised how supportive others will be

Nurture friendships and support systems: very few of us can go it along; surround yourself with friends and others who can be there for you and you enjoy being with

Recognize stressors: we all have them; become attuned to when stress levels are rising and how you can reduce them; some find meditation and mindfulness valuable tools

Be true to your values: examine what you do both in your personal and professional lives and how they align with your value system; make changes as necessary so that you are living a purposeful life by design

What made the evening was the authentic and genuine way in which the panelists told stories related to their work, families, passions, and goals and what they have learned. While there is no set way to achieve work life integration yet the points made by the panelists can easily be adapted. Based on the response of the audience it's clear the learnings resonated with them.

*Many thanks to Investors Bank for generously hosting this event and to their WOMEN employee networking group for joining us.*