Balancing Career and Self: Maintaining Health, Humor, and Sanity in the Academy Jennifer Emerling Bone Colorado State Univesity

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"Excellence involves enjoying what you're doing, feeling good about what you've learned, and developing confidence. Perfection involves . . . always finding mistakes no matter how well you're doing" (Marano, 2008, p. 50).

Tip 1: Maintain Connections and Collaborate with Fellow Graduate Students and Mentors

- Create and maintain networks
- Collaborate and co-author
 - "The networks we formed with each other has been an invaluable resource for support, insight, assistance, and advice as we finish our degrees, look for jobs, participate in conventions, publish, and pursue tenure and promotion" (Anderson, Bonewits, McDormann, Pierce, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2004, p. 89).

Tip 2: Be Open-Minded to the Many Different Professional Possibilities and be Patient

- Stay open-minded to the possibilities
 - "What I've tried to do . . . is accept that my identity, who I am, has to sort of be in flux. Sometimes I'm a really strong scholar. And, sometimes I just kind of float. And, I just have to accept that, that's who I am at least while the kids are really little" (Aubrey, Click, Dougherty, Fine, Kramer, Meisenbach, Olson, & Smythe, 2008, p. 192)
- May need to (re)define success
 - "Regardless of similar educational experiences, women are not a homogenous group sharing career goals, or even definitions of career success. Women make diverse career choices for a host of reasons: personal aptitude and interests; opportunities presented or barriers faced as a result of ethnicity, social class, culture, or age; family circumstance; even the desire to live and work in a specific region" (Anderson, Bonewits, McDormann, Pierce, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2004, p. 90).
- Focus on benefits and not limitations
 - "Every life choice and subjective position is fraught with advantages and disadvantages" (Tracy, 2008, 173).

Tip 3: Move Past the Academic "performance" and Ask for Help

- Ask for feedback throughout the writing and revising process
- Make choices that are best for you, not that meet the expectations of others
 - "I slowed down my academic progress, taking, for example, an extra year to complete courses and qualifying exams, in order to achieve a productive

balance of my career and family life" (Anderson, Bonewits, McDormann, Pierce, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2004, p. 98).

Tip 4: Branch Out

- Attend workshops and seminars across campus
 - "I found it equally important to have a group of peers with whom I can share ideas and engage in honest conversation about the joys and stresses of the early stages of the tenure process. These peers were not to be found in my department—rather, they were members of different departments and most often entirely different colleges.... They help me feel sane as they remind me that there are others out there struggling with the same issues" (Anderson, Feldner, Hoffmann-Lontin, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2007, p. 3
- Find activities that keep you grounded

Tip 5: Compartmentalize your Time

- Make the best out of your graduate program research.
 - "There is likely no other time in your professional life when you will have as much dedicated research time and thorough feedback as you get when writing your dissertation. Plan to publish a couple of chapters as articles and also expand the project into a book shortly after graduation" (Anderson, Feldner, Hoffmann-Lontin, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2007, p. 6).

Tip 6: Help the Academy Expand its Notion of Success in Terms of Commitments Made to Personal and Professional Choices

- "It means expanding out understanding of career and the choices we make in constructing our working lives so that our professional and personal lives are allowed parity in importance and influence" (Townsley & Broadfoot, 2008, p. 138).
- "By combining family and work commitments, these 'new academic subjects' are 'performing the professoriate' in ways heretofore unprecedented, unconsidered, and unimagined, pressuring their institutions to respond with structures and practices also unimagined, and, in some instances, highly contested" (Townsley & Broadfoot, 2008, p. 139).

Tip 7: Understand you're Not Alone

• Read Women's Studies in Communication (2008) vol. 31 (2)

"Assistant professors who seem happiest in this process do what communication scholars do best—they communicate; they network, they get out there on campus and get involved and find out what others who have gone before them found the process to be" (Anderson, Feldner, Hoffmann-Lontin, Procopio, Sheeler, & Tate, 2007, P. 7).

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