

The Juggling. Not just a tired metaphor. Truly real-life exhausting. But perk up, peeps.

A solid list of life-hacks here to help.

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Because oh, what juggling there is. Parenting. Mentoring. Overseeing. Role-modeling. Annnnd [fill in your top 27 other, most demanding -ings here.]

Those of you who joined our last Lead Like a Mother panel discussion know that we did manage to cover enough topics to fill a large laundry basket. But we realized afterward that we only lightly touched on the true juggle – how to keep all those balls (mostly) in the air. So we thought we'd do a follow-up. We tossed a pretty-please out to our network in search of their helpful-est hints for keeping their sanity – in those moments when said sanity is asking to be excused. (No, wait – sanity, come back! We need you to stay in the near vicinity!)

Here's what we got. Our friends are genius. We owe them. They're not expecting compensation, but we know they will also not say no to a thank you coffee (or something whisky-er).

We've grouped their life-hack genius-ness into a few key categories:

Big-picture-y – Prioritizing where to put most of your mental energy.

Embrace the many things you'll never do.

Take joy in deleting an entire list of things that never should have made it onto a list in the first place. Enjoy saying, "I'll never learn Chinese" and "I don't need to take overnight Amtrak sleeper train trips." Everything you say no to creates space for things to say yes to. It keeps the bucket list focused.

Trust your negative gut, not your positive gut.

This also is a time saver as well as reduces heartache and hardship. If you have a great feeling about something, it might just be excitement or impulsivity, so take your time with positive gut to be sure-sure. But if you have a bad feeling about something, you're almost certainly right about it every time.

You only need to make a few great decisions per year.

You only need to get a few big things right each year and follow through on them. If you think back on your years, you'll discover your life has been shaped by surprisingly few big choices. So save yourself some meaningless angst and focus on fewer/bigger things.

Make early part of your strategy.

Get on trends early, try new things early, visit places early. Learn how to develop the requisite taste and courage to be a little ahead of everyone else. It's fun and can be profitable, if you either invest or catch the beginning of the wave or even use it as a means to learn a new emerging technology or skill that helps you pivot in your career and become an expert ahead of the curve.

You usually kill by overwatering, not underwatering.

This is a good rule for houseplants and humans. It can be hard to hold yourself back, but sometimes the best action is to do nothing or wait instead of trying to constantly do something. It will save you time and someone else's annoyance with your interference.

Blood-flowy – Back away from the desk. The physical really does impact the mental/psychological:

Prioritize movement.

Exercise first thing in the morning as many days as you can swing it.

Get outside every day.

Even if only for 15 minutes, a brisk walk does wonders for how you feel.

Commute by bike.

You save money, get exercise, get outside and clear your head. Highly recommend the Stone Arch bridge – it's an idea-sparker.

Nuts-and-boltsy – A super practical action plan:

Schedule priorities on your calendar like you would a meeting.

This should include workouts, your kid's sports events, drinks with friends etc – losing your mind happens a lot more quickly when you've budgeted no time to do things you love.

Morning prayer, meditation, or quiet time with a hot cup of coffee is a must.

On the days you think you're too busy and skip this step, life feels more complicated and chaotic – it makes a difference.

Stop thinking so hard about it and just do it.

It takes less time to move it off your desk rather than dwelling on how to do it, or when to do it, or what you need to do to get it done.

Use your commute as reset time.

Try to breathe and put work behind, focus on what's important (kids and family) once you walk in the door.

Put work on hold from 6-10pm.

If you must, log on after 10 when everyone else is sleeping.

Money can absolutely buy happiness.

So long as you spend it on upgrading and expanding the things that make you happy or use it to buy yourself back time (housecleaning, meal prep, lawn service). Don't fritter it on playing the status game. It's a waste of time and money – and it's fleeting and false, like Milli Vanilli.

Annnnd finally, the most popular response. (A staunch bunch of list-makers, this group.) There were myriad and sundry variations on this, so we just picked one to represent:

Clear the "mind swirl" by putting your to-do's on one list each morning.

Then start checking them off in order from most to least important. (And use a great pen!) It's pretty simple, but it allows you to quit prioritizing everything when you only have so much time. The smaller stuff can wait.

Let's get together soon-ish. How's the fall looking?

We're taking a bit of a breather from live events this summer, but we'll be back in the fall with another panel discussion. Topic TBD. Actual panel, also TBD. But it'll be fantastic, as they always are. Well worth the schedule-shifting it usually involves.

Hope to see you there!