

Finding Balance

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Too much of a good thing?

- Computer science research jobs are amazing!
 - Choose the problems you work on
 - Work with really smart people
 - Chance to make a huge impact
 - Flexibility in when you do a lot of the work
- But, such jobs are very demanding...
 - Too many things to do?
 - How do you know if you are doing a good job?
 - No one will tell you what to do
- How do we balance everything?

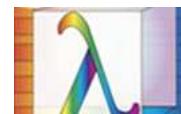


A bit about me...

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1990 | Married Steve (while a junior at Stanford) |  |
| 1991 | Received BS; started PhD at Stanford | |
| 1992 | Daughter Elaine was born |  |
| 1996 | Received PhD in theoretical programming languages | |
| 1996 | Started as researcher at AT&T Labs in NJ | |
| 1997 | Started Hancock and Moby projects | |
| 2000 | Divorced Steve: joint custody of Elaine | |
| 2002 | Married Bob, a colleague at AT&T Labs | |
| 2003 | Promoted at AT&T | |
| 2003 | Started PADS project at AT&T Labs | |
| 2004 | Bob took position at Google | |
| 2005 | Moved to California for Bob and Steve's jobs; work remotely | |
| 2008 | Named Consulting Professor in CS at Stanford | |

Some of the things I do...

- Technical co-lead of inter-institution PADS project.
 - Manage distributed team
 - Plan and do research, supervise students, write papers
 - Program & prove theorems as well :-)
- Various research collaborations at Stanford
- Co-teach a class at Stanford each year
- Editor of Journal of Functional Programming
- Program committees, NSF panels, etc.
- SIGPLAN Past Chair
- Board member of CRA, Co-Chair of CRA-W



SIGPLAN

Managing Goals and Expectations



- Many sources (external & self-inflicted)
 - Job requirements: teaching, grant writing, etc.
 - Personal technical goals
 - Personal goals
- Consciously monitor
 - **Decide** whether to take on/continue a given goal
 - Ensure that goals are **achievable**
 - Know **why** you want to achieve it
 - Continually evaluate your progress
 - Talk about it with your mentor(s) and others
- Learn how to enjoy the process
 - Focus on the present
 - Appreciate your achievements before moving on

Waves of Demands



- Demands come in waves
 - Too many at once cause stress
- Riding the waves
 - Prioritize demands
 - Work hard during high-demand periods
 - Take a break, re-energize during low-demand
 - Recognize/work on the transition between the two
- Management is continuous, incremental process
 - You must work at it; it doesn't just happen!
 - Make changes incrementally



Time Management



- **There's always more to do**
 - Learn how to estimate accurately the time required
 - ▶ Don't take on too much or feel pressured to say yes
 - ◆ Worse to take on something and only contribute minimally or do an average/poor/late job at it than to **say no**
 - Renegotiate unmanageable commitments
 - ▶ Be honest with those you are working with
 - ▶ Identify a solution that works for all
 - Taking on a new task can be an opportunity to let go of an old one.
 - Work with people who are good at getting things done.
- **Identify your guiding principles**

My Guiding Principles

- Enjoy what I am doing.
- Have great relationships with my daughter, husband, extended family, and friends.
- Work on interesting programming language research problems with smart people.
- Be highly successful at AT&T and hirable at strong academic institutions.
- Make research in programming languages more relevant.
- Contribute to the vibrancy of the communities to which I belong.

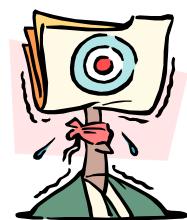
Be Organized

- Keep a calendar that you always have with you
 - Electronic (**back it up**) or paper
 - Keep it up to date
 - ▶ Meetings as well as work things (email, paper reading, writing, coding, seminars, etc)
 - Schedule in both work and play
 - Block out time for only research
 - Know when you work efficiently:
Don't squander that time!
- Avoid churn: pick a task and do it.
- When "on a roll", keep the momentum.
Conversely, if something is a grind, don't push too hard.
- Handle email efficiently.
- Keep a research/idea book or wiki.



Managing Insecurities

- Being insecure contributes to being out of balance
- Don't set yourself up to fail
- Seek out a good mentor (may/may not be your advisor)
- Be proud of and celebrate your accomplishments
 - Don't belittle achievements --
just because it's **you** who achieved them ☺
 - Keep a "good file" of positive feedback
- Realize that we all have insecurities
 - Think them through
 - Talk them over with those you trust



Finding Balance



- Most importantly -- take care of **you!**
 - Figure out what makes you happy/unhappy
 - Look up every once in a while to take stock
- Apply money to the problem if possible
- Exercise!
- Eat well
- Sleep enough
 - Identify your optimal number of hours
- Help and receive help from others
- Don't **isolate** yourself
 - Seek out family, friends, others
- Have a life as well as work
- Set realistic goals to achieving balance

Finding Balance

- Giving myself permission to relax.
 - Great friends & family who help me with that.
- Ballroom dancing with my husband and daughter, almost daily when I am at home.
- Having great friends/colleagues
- Site-seeing on work trips
- Studying Italian
- Traveling with family
- Cooking



Ideas for Questions



- Balance and the tenure process or high-tech industry
- Dual-career couple
 - Working at it
 - Finding jobs that are equally satisfying
- Managing relationships
- Having children
- Deciding on your future and considering balance