

SES CDP: Life Balance

Even though I did work long hours on SES capacity, I find that clearly it does demand more of your personal time and it's something that we need to pay attention to, and as part of the mentoring program I counsel candidates to be thinking about that, and it's very easy for you to get sucked into the job. I think most of the jobs that you see at the SES level can consume 16 or 18 hours a day if you're not careful, not just in the office but when you go home. There are lots of people that take work home. With our ability, with the technology today, our ability to have laptops and to access the systems, it's not uncommon to find people catching up on their E-mail when they get home when they probably should be dialoguing with their spouse or with their children, so it's something that if you're really not conscious of and don't manage it can have an effect on your family life, and before you know it your kids are grown up and your spouse has grown in a different direction than where you are, and your career has cost you part of your family life, so indeed it is something that is important because we need executives who are well rounded and healthy, not only physically but mentally, and that includes having a good relationship at home and make it a part of your life in your career.

Some sort of work/life balance is a very important thing, and life is short, and different people are different in what they desire to get out of work and what they desire to get out of their home life, and so it's impossible to answer the question for everyone, and I think I really need to turn it around on the individual that's thinking about work/life balance and ask them what do you want to get out of

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work and life and how do you strike that balance. I think that selecting a career path or a position that you want to be employed in are all important decisions. Before you get to the question of how many hours do you work, you really need to think about what sort of fulfillment you do get out of the work you're doing. I could use some cute phrase that if you enjoy your work you'll never work, it will never seem like work. Somebody's probably said that better in the past considering there are a lot of scholarly folks that have thought about this, but it's really true that you need to be thinking about what you're doing and then let the other stuff fall into place afterwards. Sure I work long hours, but I enjoy what I'm doing and I also take time for myself and make sure that I take time with my wife, and sometimes that comes with the sacrifice of things that I probably could be doing for work, and you just need to prioritize and make sure that you've got the balance there.

I actually tell people that I work with that are looking into Senior Executive Service that I worked harder and longer when I was a GS-9 through my GS-14 years than I did as a (GS)15 and as a senior executive, and that's not because I became lazy and decided to delegate everything. It's because I knew more at that point about what needed to be done. I knew the salient variables in my job so I was better able to work smart, whereas in the early years I just had to do everything well cuz I wasn't sure exactly which was the most important set of things. If you look around, your senior executives, depending on their position, they may travel a lot, which can be very grueling, but if they don't, for the most

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part, and with the advent of technology like blackberries and homework stations, people can spend - I believe if they manage their time well, they can work in the office 45 hours a week and be home and work some more but more at their own – the time of their choosing so they can still make their kids' football games or they can still make book clubs and other things that they like to do and be a senior executive, and in fact, they should do that because it's very important to maintain a strong work life balance.