

## Balancing Career and Family Responsibilities

By Evie DavyRomano, MS, LMFTA, Associate Marriage & Family Therapist



In today's busy world most of us have multiple roles that we need to fill. We are often torn between the demands of being a spouse, parent and family member while still having a full or part-time career.

In addition to this, we have other life responsibilities including being a good neighbor, active church member, volunteer, etc. So how do we keep our sanity while fulfilling all of these demanding roles?

First of all, we need to accept that we are not super human. We cannot accomplish all of these areas completely all the time. If we give our career all of the energy we have available, our family will get short-changed. If we give and do all that is possible for our

families, we will not be able to give our full energy to a career. There is no need to feel guilty if we can't "do it all." Instead we must accept that we have to choose our priorities and then balance them in a way that is best for us. That will be different for each individual.

Some people try to have a demanding career while still doing all the things that would be expected of a stay-at-home parent. This is a recipe for "burn-out" and when we are "burnt-out" we don't do any of the above well. If we aren't caring for ourselves, we will have nothing left to give to others.

It would be wonderful if we could decide to only do what fits neatly in our schedules, but for many of us that is not an option. When that is the case, we need to find the right balance of all our obligations with enough self-care to keep us healthy.

### So what is Self-Care?

Self-Care is the ability to recognize one's need and responsibility to take care of his or her own emotional, spiritual, mental and physical health.

Self-Care comes in different forms and is unique to everyone, but ultimately can restore, refresh and strengthen.

Self-Care is a discipline that must be practiced.

Self-Care indirectly cares for others because the time and energy expended will come from fullness not emptiness.

Self-Care is NOT selfish or self-serving; it is showing yourself the grace and compassion that God has shown you.

It is easy to get consumed with schedules, routines, and activities, which are good, but not at the cost of anxiety, guilt, depression and broken relationships, which are all likely outcomes of loose boundaries and poor self-care.

There are a variety of ways we accomplish self-care, and we have suggested some in the sidebar. What works for one person, might not work for another. The point is to find what helps you take care of your overall health and well-being.

(Continued on page 2)

## Ways to Accomplish Self-Care

- Leave negative emotions at work and not take them home and vice versa.
- Learn to say "no" to non-essentials.
- Seek peace, solitude and rest each day.
- Take a break from demanding tasks.
- Find a way to re-energize, seek solace or unwind.
- Nurture your valued relationships and be intentional with your time.
- Make date nights with your spouse a priority.
- Call a friend.
- Have one-on-one time with a child.
- Set and keep limits on work hours.
- Set boundaries that can be flexible if needed.

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**Our Mission**  
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

**Megan's Mosaic**



**Only Person You Can Control**

by Megan C. Fisher, MHS, CAADC  
Addiction Therapist

As an addiction specialist, you would think that I spend most of my time working with individuals struggling with addiction. In reality, much of my time is spent with the family members of the addicted.

One of the most common issues I encounter is a spouse or parent of an addict wanting to know how to get a loved one to stop drinking, using, watching pornography, etc. The honest answer to that question, as frustrating as it may be, is nothing. The follow up question becomes, "So what do I do?" My answer is, Begin your own recovery. I get some interesting reactions to that answer. Why would I, as the concerned loved one, need to recover? Isn't it the one who is addicted that needs

**Balancing**

*(Continued from page 1)*

If you are feeling overwhelmed with your responsibilities as a working mother, father or caregiver, and feeling anxious or stressed, then I encourage you to talk to someone about it. You are not alone! Take that first step in seeking the support you need to learn how to care for yourself.

recovery? Yes, your loved one needs recovery, but you can't force them to seek it. The only person you can control is yourself. When addiction attacks a family system, the addict is not the only one who becomes sick. The other family members adapt their behaviors in order to accommodate the addict's illness. A spouse might take over all of the finances, household management, child-rearing, etc., because the addict can't handle the responsibility. A parent might bail a child out of jail multiple times to the detriment of his/her own financial stability.

When you, as the family member of an addict, find yourself putting the needs of the addict ahead of your own well-being, you could probably use your own recovery program. The formal term for a person who puts others ahead of oneself is a 'codependent.' If you are close to someone suffering from an addiction or displaying a controlling personality, consider the following questions honestly:

- Do I focus on others' needs at my own expense?
- Do I have a hard time asking for help or accepting help?
- Do I feel most worthy

when giving advice or handling a crisis situation?

- Do I obsessively think about another person and what he/she is doing?
- Do most people like me because of what I can do for them?
- Have I experienced abuse or emotional neglect in past relationships?
- Do I avoid expressing my emotions because it shows weakness?
- Do I have difficulty with intimacy?

There is no magic formula, but if you are answering yes to many of these questions, you might want to seek some help. Here are a few places you can start:

- Reading material: I highly recommend anything by Melody Beattie, particularly her renowned book 'Codependent No More.'
- Al-Anon: 12-step program for the loved ones of alcoholics/addicts.
- www.al-anon.alateen.org
- Individual or group therapy.

If you would like to learn more about codependency call 708-895-7310 for an appointment. If you would like to share your feedback or thoughts, you can send me an e-mail me at megan@newleafresources.org.

## Finding a “Safe” Place for Counseling

**A** client recently shared how his experience at New Leaf Resources has given him hope, help and healing.

*“Initially we came in for marital problems. There were escalating sexual behaviors between us as a couple and pornography use. My wife was able to convince me to go with her to an addiction therapist but I didn’t feel safe*

*there so I quit. My wife knew we needed someone who could give us more specialized care and compassion, so she reached out to New Leaf for help with addiction.*

*We’re still working on being a couple. My counselor has helped me understand my wife and the addiction. I communicate better, not perfect, but better. It’s progress.*

*When my insurance benefits changed, New Leaf worked out finances with me so I could continue to receive care. I have not felt judged. It’s a safe place to go for counseling and try and work through issues.”*

**- Male client, 52  
in therapy for  
addiction, marital issues**



*“I have not felt judged. It’s a safe place to go for counseling.”*  
- a client

## Getting Involved in the Community



**New Leaf Resources Volunteer Donna Hamstra (seated in back of truck) and her grandkids rode in the “Touch of Dutch” parade in DeMotte.**

**A**s our ministry prepares to move into an expanded new office space in the Wheatfield/DeMotte area, we were invited to participate in two community events. Armed with candy to throw to the crowd, a group of New Leaf volunteers and staff were recently in the “Touch of Dutch” parade in DeMotte. This annual event brings together

hundreds of local residents for a fun day of celebrating.

Also, this summer, our staff participated in the community’s “Back-to-School” Fair at Spencer Park.

Organizers of the event brought together community groups and businesses which helped distribute donated school supplies and other

resources to local children and their families from the Kankakee Valley area.

The first annual event was created to help those parents who could use some extra assistance. New Leaf distributed information about our ministry and new location and gave away pens and bookmarks to the students.



**New Leaf’s tent at the “Back-to-School” Fair**

## What’s “New” at New Leaf

**G**ood luck to Addiction Therapist **Megan Fisher** who will be running the Chicago Marathon next month with Team World Vision!

**Kate Jongsma**, Accounts Clerk, was part of the Highland Parks Performing Arts Group production of “The Wizard of Oz” in Highland, Indiana playing the part of Glinda the Good Witch.

Marketing Communications Director **Terri Kasper** has been named to the Lansing Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.



## Save a tree

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## Opening of New Office Celebrated



New Leaf's newest office on 1100 N near 231 in Wheatfield, Indiana.

To celebrate the opening of New Leaf's Wheatfield/DeMotte location, some friends and supporters hosted a "get to know you" party at the Sandy Pines Golf Course Pavilion. Many business owners, church leaders, school administrators and friends attended the informal gathering to enjoy light refreshments and learn about New Leaf's ministry.

"There is an obvious need for professional mental health services in Jasper County," said Executive Director Terry Top, "and we are excited to meet that need." The new office is expected to open in early October.



The DeMotte Celebration committee included from left: Donna Southard, Liz Dorn, Darla McKim, Marta & Tim Belstra, Donna Hamstra and Terri Kasper.

 **new leaf resources**  
hope. help. healing.

### New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling and consultation services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.