



The Juggling Act



Personal & Professional Lives
Nada L. Stotland, MD, MPH
Illinois Masonic Medical Center



marriage

and medicine

- **prehistoric**
- **24 hours/7 days**
- **major responsibilities**
- **highly emotional**
- **expect perfection**
- **legal ramifications**

- **no training**

- **prehistoric**
- **24 hours/7 days**
- **major responsibilities**
- **highly emotional**
- **expect perfection**
- **legal ramifications**

- **lots of training**




prehistoric?



**throughout recorded history, there
have been marriages and medicine**




24 hours, 7 days



**even when you're asleep
even when you're away
part of your identity**



major responsibilities



**life and death:
emotionally/physically
patients and children**



highly emotional

- **disease, disability, disfigurement**
- **psychological demands**
- **intimate relationships with partners and children**
- **birth, death**



perfection

- **answer every page & phone call**
- **know the literature**
- **know your patient**
- **stay at the bedside**
- **never be tired or cranky**
- **soulmate**
- **attractive**
- **witty**
- **sexy**
- **smart**
- **how smart?**



legal ramifications

- **malpractice suits**
- **divorce**



Both legal ramifications are emotionally and financially shattering.



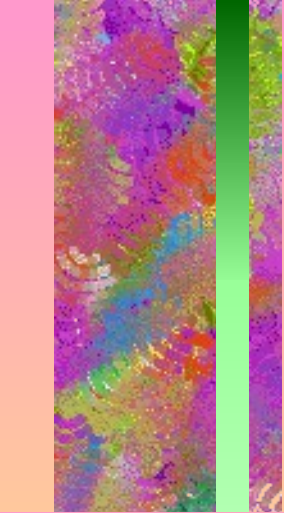
training

- **medical school**
- **residency**
- **fellowship**
- **watching your attendings' mistakes**
- **watching your parents' accomplishments and mistakes--**
- **or believing they didn't make any**



medical practice

- **fear of malpractice**
- **challenges of new knowledge and techniques**
- **changes in the medical care 'system'**
- **financial pressures/competition**
- **time pressures**



**“I don’t pick up cleaning;
I am a doctor.”**



**arrogance & entitlement;
old habits die hard**



**clashes between personality,
training, and current realities**




**We were trained to take charge and
to plan.**

**Others have taken charge of us, our
patients, and the plan.**



traditional divisions of labor



everybody needs a 'wife'--
housekeeper
social scheduler & entertainer
dependent care provider



the woman doctor

- **what is feminine?**
- **what is doctorly?**

- **moving the family to follow the career**
- **investing in one's career:**
 - **a fellowship, going to meetings, research**
- **being ambitious**
- **earning significant income**



gender discrimination



**we have the backlash, but we never
had the 'lash.'**



gender discrimination

- **unseen and unacknowledged in training**
- **hits at the junior staff/faculty level--**
- **at the same time as marriage and kids?**
- **salary**
- **space**
- **mentoring**
- **advancement**




**Gender discrimination is ignored
but powerful.**



**Talking about gender discrimination
is perceived to increase the risk of
gender discrimination.**



career/marriage tensions

- 
- Do you work in the same place?**
 - Whose career takes a back seat?**
 - Does Mr. Doc get exhausted/angry from hearing about it?**



experiences & assumptions

- **‘My father always took care of the car.**
- **‘My mother always picked up the dry cleaning.’**
- **Ted Nadelson:**
 - **Things are not really mutual until you find yourself on the podium, about to give a speech, and you remember we’re out of toilet paper.**



the dark side of assumptions

- **‘I’m not your slave.’**
- **‘No one ever taught me to cook.’**
- **‘What’s the difference if the socks are on the floor?’**



time management: reality v. fantasy

- **saving lives**
- **making scientific discoveries**
- **leading the team**
- **shaping souls**
- **shaping minds**
- **paperwork**
- **paperwork**
- **personnel aggravation**
- **driving to Sunday school**
- **buying potatoes for school projects**



What can you do?






Examine your assumptions.






Question your assumptions.



**You don't have to do what your
parents did,
what your parents say,
what people expect.**



Good news and bad news:



there is no 'right way.'
You can't be right,
and you can't be wrong.



maybe:

- **A woman likes fixing the car.**
- **A man likes cooking.**
- **Nobody likes cooking.**
 - **That's what restaurants and delicatessens are for.**



Don't expect perfection.





for example:

- **You can't read every journal article.**
- **You aren't responsible for your partner's behavior.**
- **Your partner can't read minds.**
 - **You probably have to tell your spouse what you need and want.**
- **They may not feature your home in Architectural Digest or your work in NEJM.**



What REALLY needs to be done?



prioritize

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Get help!!

- **Decide which tasks REALLY have to be done by a spouse/parent.**
- **What can the kids do for themselves?**
- **What help can you buy?**
 - ---a car for the child care helper?



unexamined assumptions

- **What is the empirical evidence that pizza or dust bunnies have ever killed anyone?**
- **that kids at school prefer your homemade cupcakes to gooey ones from the store?**
- **that one method of childrearing produces outcomes superior to another?**
- **that you will be professionally rewarded for personal self-sacrifice?**




Most things can't be controlled.

- **partners' personalities**
- **bosses' personalities**
- **patients' personalities**
- **kids' personalities**
- **unexpected emergencies**
- **date conflicts**



There are important decisions to make.



**Consider long-term consequences.
Make the decision.
Guilt doesn't do anyone any good.**

You are still the parent.

- **This is an emotional job.**
 - You have to kiss the ouchy.
 - You have to be at the birthday party, soccer game, graduation.
- **This is a management job.**
 - piano lessons or tennis lessons?
 - private school or public school?



Talk about it.

- **Talk about it.**
- **Talk about it.**
- **Talk about it.**
- **Talk about it.**



Negotiate.





negotiations

- **What do you want?**
- **What is a trip to the cleaner's worth?**
- **What is your favorite casserole worth?**
- **What is a tidy living room worth?**
- **What is bathing the baby worth?**
- **What is an evening to read journals or write a paper worth?**



Maybe it just won't work.



What is the alternative?
Think of ALL the ramifications.



Keep things in perspective.



What really matters?



You only live once.



Enjoy it.