

## Title:

5 Steps To Get Your Priorities Straight At Home And In Business

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## Summary:

Operating a successful home-based business is a time-consuming endeavor. This is doubly true as work-at-home moms in that we are responsible not only for the success of our business, but for our family as well. We must be self-reliant, self-motivated, and discipline ourselves in order to attain success in both areas.

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## Article Body:

Operating a successful home-based business is a time-consuming endeavor. This is doubly true as work-at-home moms in that we are responsible not only for the success of our business, but for our family as well. We must be self-reliant, self-motivated, and discipline ourselves in order to attain success in both areas.

When running a business from home, it's easy to let the phone calls, emails and paperwork keep you tied down, making you feel that you don't have time to take a break or to spend quality time with your family. Maybe you've noticed that you spend a little more time than you'd like in front of your computer or on the phone. Maybe you see your kids acting out, trying to gain your attention. Perhaps you are seeing that this isn't the work-at-home dream you envisioned. You started out with such noble intentions, but maybe the excitement of success in your business has caused you to lose sight of the REAL reason do what you do each day. It happens to so many of us, but don't worry, help is on the way.

Below are five ideas to prioritize your life and business:

1. Be honest - You probably didn't start your work-at-home career to climb the

"corporate ladder" of your at-home business. Chances are that you started your business with the best of intentions - to be able to be at home with your children, to contribute financially to your family, or simply to have a little spending money of your own. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Lord to show you the things that you need to change.

Take a moment and honestly ask yourself how you've been handling the time commitment of owning a business:

- Are you spending too much time on the phone, the computer, etc?
- Are your kids spending more time than usual in front of the TV?
- Do you snap at your children because of the stresses of your business?
- Do you worry about your business - to the point that it distracts you when you are with your family?

2. Make a list - Sit down and write out a list of things that you see that you'd like to change. This can be a list of things you can do differently to limit the time you spend on your business; or a list of ways you can "de-stress" so that you can deal kindly with your family.

3. Log your time - Buy a notebook or create a spreadsheet that you can use to log the time you spend on your business each day. Make a column for each day across the top and a row of half an hour increments down the side. Every time you sit down at your desk, write "IN" in the box that corresponds to the time and day. Every time you leave your desk (or complete a task), fill the appropriate box with the word "OUT."

At the end of the week, total up the hours each day that you have spent on business tasks. Are you surprised or is it about where you thought you'd be? This can be a real eye-opener and show you in black and white if your priorities have gotten off track. Take special note for how much time you spend on e-mails and things that aren't billable.

Diana Ennen of Virtual Word Publishing, <http://www.virtualwordpublishing.com> also recommends that you plan ahead and schedule your time. Prioritize things and have the work that will require the most effort and concentration scheduled for your peak time. Try and not get sidetracked and stay on task focusing on what you need to do. You'd be amazed how much more work you can get done by simply changing how you work e-mails. If you only answer them at set hours, you save yourself from being online all day and not accomplishing much.

4. Take a break - If you get to the end of the week and your time log has you in shock, it's time to take a break. If you normally work during the weekend, make

it a point to take this weekend off. Shut down your email, turn off the ringer on your phone and shut the door to your office. You'll be surprised at how refreshing this will be.

Use this time off to re-evaluate how you need to be spending your time. Try to plan out when you can work on your business without losing out on time with your children. If your children are in school, make it a point to stop working when they get home. If your children are still small, maybe you can limit work hours to naptime or, if possible, have a grandparent watch them once or twice a week to allow you a bit more work time.

5. Plan an activity - Now that you're ready to make a change in your routine, why not plan an activity once a week? This can be an outing with your child or just something simple like setting aside time to make cookies together.

If possible, find another work-at-home mom and hold one another accountable to keep to your new schedules. Make a weekly play date where your children can spend time together - you can talk business if necessary or decide to make it a "no business talk allowed" discussion time.

The years that you have at home with your children are a gift as is your business. The time necessary for each will be different for every family and situation. Take the time to find what works for you and set your schedule accordingly. Make it a point to evaluate your priorities every few months to make sure that your time is spent properly. The rewards will be well worth it, when your family not only is proud of your accomplishments in your business, but also more importantly your accomplishments as their mom. Jill Hart is the founder of Christian Work at Home Moms, CWAHM.com. This site is dedicated to providing work at home moms with opportunities to promote their businesses while at the same time providing them spiritual encouragement and articles. Visit CWAHM.com for additional information. Jill and her husband, Allen of CWAHD.com (Christian Work at Home Dads) reside in Nebraska with their two children.