



# STARTUP BALANCE: FINDING THE HARMONY BETWEEN WORK AND LIFE

KAUFFMAN  
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MESSAGE FROM  
**FOUNDERS SCHOOL**

For an entrepreneur, work/life balance can seem like something that exists only in the imagination. And it's true, supporting all aspects of your business and being truly present with those who support you outside work isn't easy, but as Meg Cadoux Hirshberg tells us in **SURVIVING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE: WORK AND FAMILY**, "you can take steps to lead a life that is fulfilling on both sides of the equation."

Starting a business often requires an entrepreneur to be "all in," and it can be all consuming of their time and attention. It can very easily swallow an entrepreneur up, unless they "devise strategies for balancing the competing demands of work and family".

As the entrepreneurs in this ebook will tell you, it's a treacherous road, and failure to maintain balance is often imminent, but the key is to keep trying in whatever way possible.

In the course of our work, we've interviewed entrepreneurs from all over the country for our Founder Genius videos, clips where entrepreneurs share insights on specific topics pertaining to starting and running a business. In this ebook, we've gathered transcripts from several of these entrepreneurs that illustrate the reality of surviving the entrepreneurial life while trying to find the harmony between the people that love and support them and the dreams they are trying to accomplish.



“The spouse has to understand the entrepreneur has to be all in. And what the entrepreneur has to understand is that what for him or her is a series of sprints and wins, for their spouse can be a long and, sometimes lonely, marathon.”

—Meg Cadoux Hirshberg



## JIN JUN - Watch Founder Genius Video

Sea Snax

**Q:** What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs when it comes to finding work/life balance?

**A:** The advice that I have for fellow entrepreneurs that are looking to find balance in their lives, whether they're juggling parenting and business or other careers and responsibilities is that, number one, I don't think that balance is a constant state of being, just as success isn't. That it's a journey, and that I would have to ask people to remind themselves that the steps to getting there are the qualities to being there. Even though there is this scarcity of time and scarcity of energy, if they could just take time and moments throughout the day, throughout the week, to pause and be present in that moment.

For instance, I work out of home primarily, and my daughter's always complaining that mommy's always on the computer, mommy's always on the phone. And there is no separation from home and work in her world. But then there are those moments when she'll say, "Mommy, Mommy, look at this," and I will pause, and I will be completely 100 percent with her. I will just shut everything out, and it will just be her and me, just the two of us in the whole wide universe. And so, I can't do that for her every minute of the day, but there are moments where we are deeply connected.

I also meditate in the morning. Every morning before I get out of bed, I meditate, and then before I actually start the day, I ask myself three questions that keep me going. And the first question is, "Am I guided by love?" The second question is, "Am I serving a higher purpose?" And the third and last question is, "Am I helping to make the world a better place?" And if the answer remains yes to those three questions, then I go forward with the passion and the energy, and it sustains me.

“...I don't think that balance is a constant state of being, just as success isn't. That it's a journey...”

Jin Jun is the CEO and founder of **SEA SNAX**, or as she calls herself the 'Chief Eating Officer'. Sea Snax is a healthy snack company that focuses on snacks made from seaweed products. A staple food in Korean diets, Jin combined her heritage with her love of healthy kids' food to provide something she could feel good about giving her daughter everyday.



## JARROD MORGAN – Watch Founder Genius Video

ProctorU

**Q:** How do you balance the ups and downs of the entrepreneurial life?

**A:** My wife Alaina has been with me from the very beginning, and there was a particular time in the early days that I had made up my mind that I was going to quit, and I was going to give up. Any entrepreneur who has started something from the ground up will tell you that there are a lot of long, hard days and sleepless nights. I went months without getting paid, and I had a new baby at home, and a bizarrely understanding wife, almost to the point where I was like, “Are you paying attention?” And I was ready to quit. I actually went so far as to have printed out a job application, and I was going to go take a desk job somewhere. I showed it to her, and I said, “Hey, I think I’m going to do this tomorrow.” And she scolded me and said, “What are you doing? All this time, all this work, all this sacrifice, and all this struggling we’ve been doing, and then you’re just going to quit?” Obviously, I said ‘no’.

“If you’re going to be successful, you have to have people behind you that are going to believe in you, even when it’s rough, because it’s not always pretty.”

If you’re going to be successful, you have to have people behind you that are going to believe in you, even when it’s rough, because it’s not always pretty. I mean, you come home late, you’re worn out, you’re stressed out, and the phone’s ringing at midnight. You have to have the people around you, your loved ones, be bought into what it is that you’re trying to accomplish. I try to reward them as much as I can. You try to look for opportunities for them to share in some of the good parts because they are inevitably going to share in the negative parts too.

I try to make it as important to my day to sit down with my kids before they go to bed and either read them a story, pray with them, whatever we’re going to do before they go to bed, make that as important as my 10:00 call with somebody. Because those things are just as important. What are we all doing this for, right? We’re trying to build something, we’re trying to do something great, but at the end of the day, ten years from now, if I don’t know my kids, how successful am I? And I think that’s a challenge for all people. Like, not just be successful in one little aspect, but try to be successful in all these different pieces—your personal life, your professional life, your charitable, your spiritual life, anything.

Jarrod Morgan is the co-founder of **PROCTORU**, an online exam company that works in the online proctoring space, or as Jarrod says, “we watch people take exams over the Internet using a webcam.” With the rise of online education and classes, ProctorU allows more people to take exams without having to travel to the nearest campus, all while ensuring the academic integrity of the examination.





## BETTINA HEIN – Watch Founder Genius Video

Pixability

**Q:** When did the balance between work life and home life first become a struggle in your journey as an entrepreneur?

**A:** Since I started Pixability, I've had two children. Louisa is three and a half, and Jacob is seven months old. Just before I had Louisa, it was really stressful because I had to go out and fundraise for the company, and I closed my round of funding ten days before she was born. I was hiding my pregnancy because pregnancy, unfortunately, does not inspire confidence in female CEOs. It actually helps male CEOs, I think it's known, but it does not help female CEOs. I did find enough investors to believe in me, and I did disclose to them, once they were interested, that I was pregnant. So, I don't advocate not saying anything, but just until they were interested enough in the company.

“It is hard to separate work and life if you work with your spouse.”

That was really stressful to do that, but then we moved our apartment closer to the company so that I could nurse the baby, and that we could balance having an infant and running a company. And at that time, I didn't have to travel as much, so that was good. And because my husband also works in the company, we can trade off really well between him having to travel for work, and me having to travel for work, and we have a great nanny. We have our system down, so that helps a lot.

It is hard to separate work and life if you work with your spouse. It's not easy to do that, and the stresses of work definitely spill over into the family life. Vice versa, not really as much, interestingly enough, at least with us. But maybe because we get along really well. If there are stressful periods in the company, we can definitely tell that and how we react and the family.

Having small children is stressful; running a startup is stressful as well. When you add those together, there's not much left. Outside of work, and the kids, you don't have a lot of time for yourself. That's tough. I mean, it's tough on any parent, but it's definitely tough for founders to do that. So you have to find an hour or something for yourself if you can. Sneak out of the office or something. Sometimes when I'm in transit or something—today on the plane, I just read a magazine. I felt really bad because I was supposed to work on a financial model and stress test, but I was like 'I'm going to read a magazine today'.

Bettina Hein is the CEO and founder of **PIXABILITY**, a software company that helps large brands and their agencies run their YouTube channels and the advertising on these channels. What started out as collecting video footage from people and editing it into family videos, turned into a technology platform that handles Cloud-based big data.



## FURQAN NAZEERI – Watch Founder Genius Video

ExtensionEngine

**Q:** How does an entrepreneur handle things like financial constraints and time constraints when it comes to your family and running a startup?

**A:** Every entrepreneur is faced with this challenge of kind of the work/life balance, and it's funny. I actually heard this the other day, and I think it's true. And I've noticed this in my personal life, when this person mentioned it to me. And it's that, if you're married and you have a family life, it actually provides sort of an anchor of stability. And I actually use that to provide some boundary. I always drop my son off at school in the morning, and I usually am coaching soccer or karate or some event in the evenings. That's the boundaries for my normal workday.

I actually tend to be a morning person, which is funny, because when I was single, I was a total night person, but I switched it to be a morning person. So I'll wake up really early, like 4:30 or 5:00, and then I can work for a few hours before I'm disturbing anybody. Do my workday, and then I come home, and I have the evenings. That's actually been really helpful for me because it provides a framework. It's stable. My wife and I are kind of partners in crime around this stuff. So having that ability to focus on work and to be able to turn it on and off, it's actually worked really well. I think there's a misnomer that somehow if you're an entrepreneur, that's it. You have to be a monk and not have a personal life.

The biggest thing about being a successful entrepreneur is to be really open and transparent with your partner about what you're about to go through. Keep those communications or lines of communication open. There are going to be ups and downs. There are going to be highs and lows. There's the financial aspect, but there's the work hours aspect. There's actually travel, which tends to be kind of a tough one. And being able to set boundaries around those things and say, "This is the red line, you know, below this amount, I have to go get another job or, honey, you have to go get another job." Those are really important, and if you assume your partner's on board without having that discussion, it's a recipe for trouble.

“I think there's a misnomer that somehow if you're an entrepreneur, that's it. You have to be a monk and not have a personal life.”

Furqan Nazeeri is a partner at **EXTENSIONENGINE**, a consulting business with expertise in online and blended education technology. Growing up on a farm in Oregon, Furqan was forced to learn to 'build stuff and do stuff' without constant directions. This do-it-yourself attitude and tenacity has led him to found and co-found several startups, as he'll tell you, "both successful and unsuccessful."



## BRAD JANNENGA – Watch Founder Genius Video

WebPT

**Q:** What goes into the process of co-founding with a significant other or spouse?

**A:**

I've got a background in technology, studied management information systems in school. I worked my way up from desktop support to a director level of technology position, and then I met a woman who was a physical therapist. During our dating process, we would talk about all kinds of things. One of them was the clinic she was running. She wanted to find a more efficient way to run her clinic, and so she wanted to leverage my technical background to help her find an application that she could employ in her clinic.

She was pretty out of my league, so I was happy to help and went out and demoed about nine or ten different products and just found them to be terrible, terrible pieces of software. On top of that, just tremendously expensive. I was trying to impress her, so I offered to build her an EMR.

“...I really didn't have what it took to do what I was trying to do, but we just fed off each other.”

It originally started as just a tool for her clinic, and as we got more developed into a prototype, or an Alpha product, she started showing it to the other clinic directors in her region. They loved it and wanted to start using it. Then as we were signing up more and more people, we were doing some market research and found out that 80 percent of physical therapists were still using pen and paper. So entrepreneurial light bulb goes off in my head, and I signed up for our first trade show. We grew over 300 percent year over year for the first three years.

It was probably the most collaborative process or period in my life where I really didn't have what it took to do what I was trying to do, but we just fed off each other. For about nine months to a year we worked to build an alpha product. Then when it actually hit the market, people were like, “This is awesome.”

We got married, and she continued to practice up until our daughter was born about three years ago. She had light patient loads on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so she would be in the office doing the books and validating all the stuff that we were doing. For the first four years of our relationship, she would go treat patients. I would bang away at the keyboard writing the code and figuring out how to get the business started. We'd come together, dinner, we'd talk a little bit about day stuff, and then we'd get right into business and we'd work until 11:30, 12:00 at night, go to sleep, wake up the next morning and she'd go to the clinic and I'd go into the coffee shop before we even had an office and suck down vanilla lattes and bang out code.

Brad Jannenga is the co-founder of [WEBPT](#), a saas, Cloud-based medical record platform for the physical therapy space. Brad and his wife Heidi came up with the idea while they were dating. Wanting to impress her, Brad agreed to help her build an alpha test product. The rest is history.



## LINDSAY HYDE – Watch Founder Genius Video

Strong Women Strong Girls and Baroo

**Q:** How do you make time for your spouse when both of you are involved in entrepreneurial endeavors?

**A:** Work/life balance has definitely been a question in my marriage and our relationship. Both of us are out doing entrepreneurial endeavors. Certainly, early on in Strong Women Strong Girls, I think I was less able to shut down and say, “I’m going to leave work at work and come home and be focused on my family.” It was definitely a struggle, and we had a lot of late night conversations about how do you prioritize your relationships with your friends and with your family in the context of an entrepreneurial endeavor.

Now I feel like I have a little more practice at it, and although things feel incredibly urgent with Baroo (formerly BarkStop), I also recognize that some of it is about just drawing boundaries and saying I’m going to take the time to be with my husband or to be with my family because those are the people who get you through those really crazy highs and those really crazy lows.

It’s been very helpful to have somebody who is in the startup space because he certainly understands when funders need something, you’ve got to be able to get that to them. When you’ve got a big change in the business, you’ve got to be able to focus on that. He’s been an incredible champion and supporter, but it has taken us a number of years of good practice and really focused effort to be sure that we’re able to give each other what we need in a way that satisfies two very ambitious people being out leading companies in various ways, and two people who are really committed to one another.

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Lindsay Hyde is the founder of **STRONG WOMEN STRONG GIRLS** and the current founder of **BAROO**. Strong Women Strong Girls is a non-profit that trains college undergraduate women to be volunteer mentors for low-income girls in elementary school. After leaving her position as head of Strong Women Strong Girls, Lindsay started Baroo, a premiere pet care provider for onsite dog day care.





## TOM ELLINGSON - Watch Founder Genius Video

Fandevor

**Q:** Where do you draw the line between time spent on work and time spent on family?

**A:** When you have a startup, which is like a baby, and two real-life babies, I think you definitely understand time management. You understand that when you're in the office from eight to five or nine to six or seven or whenever, you're kind of focused on work. You have to maximize those hours and those minutes and those seconds because when it's time to go home, and for two hours get the kids fed and bathed and all those things, there's not a lot you can do. You're focused on the family. You can't waste time in the office because time is so valuable.

I think it's a work in progress. Having kids is hard enough, and it puts enough strain on your marital relationship. Then adding a startup to the mix; it definitely doesn't make things easier. So I think it's a constant work in progress. It just takes constant communication, and I'm pretty good about when I'm at home, of being able to carve out the time I need to be able to spend time with my kids and my wife.

I think I've seen a lot of founders kind of burn out and pull a lot of all-nighters and not sleep. That works for some people, but that doesn't last forever. So, I think for me, it's been nice to have a little bit of balance, and it's actually been something that I've been able to make work.

“When you have a startup, which is like a baby, and two real-life babies, I think you definitely understand time management.”

Tom Ellingson is the co-founder and CEO of **FANDEAVOR**, providing fan travel packages and VIP experiences to big sporting events. Before launching Fandevor, Tom ran business development at Zappos, working on sports sponsorships and experiencing the exciting opportunities of red carpet treatment at some of the top events. From here, the idea was hatched with his co-founder to provide these experiences to more people.



## CHAD STIENING – Watch Founder Genius Video

Kypha

Q:

Is there such a thing, in reality, as work/life balance?

A:

Balance has been my biggest challenge professionally and personally, and then the two together. This is a really tough gig. It's a really tough thing to do, and if you don't have support from your significant other, don't do it. I can tell you that. There are certainly days where I have to remind my wife that she's the one that gave me the push, especially on the hard days.

I think we've tried every single routine and every scheduling trick that we could to make it work, so that I could either be home for dinner or see the kids go to school or whatever it is. And every one has failed, and so we're still trying to find schedules that work. Even to the extent of just last month, we moved to St. Louis, to the city, from the suburban home where we were with our land and property and ponds and creeks and all that. We loved it. But we moved to the city to make it work. You're consumed by the startup, and you have to embrace that, and those around you have to embrace that, but you can't let it prevent you from living your life. If you're committed to a family or a partner or whatever, you can't neglect that.

“For me, the ability to [take a break] didn't come until I had good mentors and advisors that actually forced me to do it. It was some heavy handholding.”

Part of what makes entrepreneurs successful is their ability to think outside the box, their ability to maybe find connections among things, or make things happen that others couldn't. And a lot of that involves some creative thinking. It's really hard to think creatively when you're sleep deprived and you're in the weeds of whatever you're doing. You have to take a break. You have to enjoy your weekend; you have to take a vacation once in awhile. I've found that's been very hard to do. I've gotten better at forcing myself to do it. A lot of times, I find it's in those moments where I have my “aha” moment, where I think of a solution to the problem that I've been stressed about all week, and couldn't figure it out when I'm sitting in my office cramming away on a task-oriented list. I take a break, mix a drink, and go out on the back patio and think about nothing, and then suddenly, I think of what it was that I couldn't figure out all week long.

It's really important to remember that's part of the balance. But, it's so hard to put into practice on the day to day when you are living and breathing your company, and feel like you have its success riding on your shoulders. So how in the world could I take an hour break and go walk around the block, or go to the beach or whatever it is that you do? For me, the ability to do that didn't come until I had good mentors and advisors that actually forced me to do it. It was some heavy handholding, like, “No, you will go do this.” But it was great advice, and now that I've seen the results of that, it's a lot easier to do.

Chad Stiening is the CEO of [KYPHA](#), a diagnostics company developing game-changing inflammation diagnostics to improve the way inflammatory and immune disorders are monitored and treated. Despite some challenging circumstances, such as “having two kids and no savings account,” Chad ultimately, with a little push from his wife, made the leap to start Kypha in 2009.