

my **fif**o family

Creating balance



Balance and Happiness

Despite the initial attraction of greater finances and possibly a better work/home balance, many people see entering into a FIFO lifestyle as making sacrifices.

With the adjustment of working away, the extended hours, isolation, the missing out on family events and being apart, can be a big change. With unbalanced home and parenting duties combined with what can often be perceived as a restrictive lifestyle, suddenly the positives of FIFO seems to dwindle behind and the negatives take the lead.

To enjoy all the fruits of life it is important to give energy to the things you love, move towards fulfilling your personal and life goals and practice gratitude.

Sit down and divide your life into the areas that you see important, physical, possibly spiritual, family, career etc then rate each of those areas 1-10 in terms of how happy you are with them, this will allow you to see the areas of your life you need to give more energy to.

If socialising is important yet you feel it's not doing so well plan ahead and commit to putting some energy into that aspect of your life – it could be as simple as catching up with a friend for a coffee once a week or joining a book club.

To be sure that a working away lifestyle is right for you it is important to be sure that the lifestyle and reward are aligned with your values, short and long term goals. This lifestyle is mostly chosen to help us move towards achieving our life goals, so let's make it work.

Life Goals

A sense of achievement is awesome, it's something that gives purpose.

Identifying what is important to you (values) and what you want in life (goals) allows you to feel a sense of achievement. When you don't know what you want you can often have the feeling of being lost or lacking direction. This feeling of restlessness or floating can make you ask the question "what am I doing this for?"

In a lifestyle perceived to have a lot of sacrifices it's even more important to make sure these goals are discussed and prioritised; If you're single there won't be any resistance to moving forward but for couple it's important that life goals (not personal) are shared.

When you share life goals with your partner it is much easier to achieve them. While following a path to fulfilling what's important to you may look very different to the path of your partners, you will probably be able to identify some common themes.

Try sketching where you want to be in 5 years' time. It may be that both pictures require financial freedom, a world holiday, bigger house or just to be the best parents you can be, whatever the goals find the similarities and focus on where you can support each other to achieve them. A great example of this would be committing to FIFO for a period of time while the other studies so that when they finish you can both work from home.

If you are finding that you and your partner do not share similar life goals achieving them can cause resistance and can often mean that one person has to sacrifice their dreams to help build the others, a situation that often leads to resentment. Try to find some compromise.



Personal Goals

As individual we all have things that make our heart sing, things that make us feel alive and give us a sense of worth.

From here we can set personal goals to create more of what we love in our lives. I personally love to give, so from here I make it a personal goal to include charity work in several aspects of my life. My husband understands that it is important to me and so allows me the time to give energy to it.

Setting personal goals can be quite daunting for some, especially if they perceive it as being selfish. The thought of taking time out of our hectic schedule to do something for ourselves is for some, unconceivable, but it is so valuable and this is why we encourage those around us to follow their dreams especially our children. I want my children to grow knowing that they can follow their passions and live incredible meaningful lives, so I show them through my actions.

What else can you do?

Once you have identified what your shared life and personal goals are and the positives of the lifestyle you have chosen, you can see if there any areas which need more energy and focus.

If one of your personal goals are to get better educated to run a small business or go back to work it's time to take action. These actions can be as big or as little as they need to be. From going back to school to volunteering one day a week for a charity.

At different times of your life journey your energy and circumstances will dictate how fast or slow you move towards your goals. It's during the time when your life causes you to move slower towards your goals, that you take all efforts to still move towards them. No matter how smaller a step you take, it's a step in the right direction and before you know it you will find your life allowing you more and more time to devote towards them.

Negatives to Positives

Try making a list of negatives and offset them with a positive next to them. Human nature often sees us focusing on the negatives despite being originally drawn in by the positives.

By creating an offset list you may realise that the situation isn't as bad as you may have made it. I often hear people complain about the FIFO lifestyle, but upon challenging their choice they believe it is the best for them at that particular time. Allowing your focus to shift from the negative to the positive will bring greater happiness into your life. If the negatives truly outweigh the positives then it is time to rethink and see if there is another lifestyle option available or give yourself a time limit.

Negative	Positive
Miss a birthday	Home to school runs and mid-week sports
Away from home	Opportunity to travel on R & R

Assessing and Tracking your progress

From small children we are taught that good work will result in a reward, and why should things be any different as we get older.

Draw up your goals, I encourage breaking each goal down into smaller chunks ie if you are looking to lose weight and get fit track your progress in kilos lost or distance ran. Whatever the goal it is important to see your progress. Be witness to your awesomeness!!

mapyourprogress.com is a great website with images that can be coloured in as you achieve each step.

It is also important to regularly assess your goals, track your progress and make changes if need be. If you are finding that you were a little too ambitious when setting your goals don't beat yourself up, try to break them down to more achievable steps, and remember it's not how fast you move towards your goals, it's that you are moving in the right direction.

Gratitude

And last but not least be sure to stop, take a breath and give thanks.

Our busy schedules and increased stress load often see us forgetting to say thanks for all of the incredible people, experiences and influences on our lives. From our family and friends, the country we live in, the air we breathe and the opportunities that come our way.

Practicing gratitude not only resets our mindset but encourages greater abundance into our lives. Whether you each say what you were grateful for at the dinner table, keep a gratitude journal or may favourite is to use a gratitude tree from **wallitude.com.au** (pictured right) where we can take time as we see fit to jot down what we are grateful for, practising gratitude is a vital key to living a happy and fulfilling life.



Much Love
Deanne Hislop

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