

And You Thought Your Work-Life Balance Was Difficult ...

Written by Ginny Grimsley
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Dad of Quadruplets Shares What He Learned Juggling Family Life and Successful Business Career

Larry Katzen forged an ambitious career as a leader at one of the world's most prestigious accounting firms.

But he has been equally ambitious with his family life; he's the father of quadruplets—three sons and a daughter. And he felt it was important to serve his community, sitting on more than 10 boards of directors.

"It was an incredible challenge and I don't regret one minute of it!" says Katzen, author of "And You Thought Accountants Were Boring - My Life Inside Arthur Andersen," (Larrykatzen.com), a look at working in one of the world's most historically important accounting firms while nurturing bonds with his wife and children.

"The quadruplets were born April 22, 1974, before multiple births became fairly common, so we were front-page news and featured on all the national TV news shows," Katzen says. "But that also tells you there weren't many other parents who could give us advice, and certainly no internet forums to turn to!"

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At the time, Katzen was also working his way up the ladder and taking on new challenges at Arthur Andersen, one of the “Big 8” accounting firms. How did he and his wife, Susan, manage?

“It comes down to sticking to some basic principles: doing the right thing, for one, and listening to your heart,” Katzen says.

He draws on his 35-year career and family life to offer these tips for working parents with multiple children:

• **Cultivate support systems!** One of the wonderful things about Arthur Andersen was the people who worked there, including his bosses, Katzen says. “They knew the physical and financial struggles Susan and I faced caring for four babies and, because I never gave less than my all at work, they did what they could to work around my situation,” he says. That included a heftier-than-usual annual pay raise that Katzen learned only years later was approved because the firm’s partners knew he would need the extra money.

Susan reached out to moms of multiples to develop her own support system, and the couple hired a recent high school graduate to help care for their rambunctious brood a couple days a week.

“There’s no glory in not asking for support and help,” Katzen says.

• **Combine business and family.** Katzen traveled frequently for his job and, when his children were 9 years old, a business friend suggested he bring them along, one at a time, on his trips.

“The first was my daughter, Laurie. We flew to New York on a Friday and spent the weekend shopping, dining, taking in a show. For the first time ever, we were alone together without any disruptions,” Katzen says. “Neither of us ever forgot that weekend.”

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• **Consider buying a small vacation home.** Traveling with four young children was extremely difficult, especially nights in motels, where the family would split up into two rooms – one parent and two children in each.

“When we discovered Sun Valley, Idaho, the children were 6. On our first trip there, they quickly learned to ski, and they clearly loved the snow – we could hardly get them to come inside,” Katzen says.

The family so enjoyed the vacation, they looked into the prices of condos.

“We found a furnished condo at a very affordable price and for the next 13 years, we enjoyed summers and winters in Sun Valley,” Katzen says. “It may sound like a big investment, but when you consider the costs of motels and dining out for a family of six, it works out well – and it’s a lot more comfortable.”

About Larry Katzen

After graduating from Drake University in 1967, Larry Katzen started working at Arthur Andersen and quickly rose through the ranks to become the Great Plains Regional Managing Partner. An honorable, hard-working man who devoted his life to Arthur Andersen, Larry was there from the company’s meteoric rise to its unjust demise. He stayed with the firm for 35 years, serving clients globally until 2002. In his new memoir, [And You Thought Accountants Were Boring - My Life Inside Arthur Andersen](#), Katzen details the political fodder in the government’s prosecution of Enron; how the company was unjustly dismantled for its supposed connections to the corruption; its vindication and why it came too late, and the devastating impact it had on 85,000 employees.