The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST
SESSION #31
Seven Keys to Developing Work-Life Balance in Your Engineering Career

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/7keys

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results. And now for your host, who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible, professional engineer and certified career coach, Anthony Fasano.

Welcome to The *Engineering Career Coach Podcast* episode 31 and today I am super excited because we're going to discuss work-life balance. I have an expert on the topic, who is going to be my guest today, Julie Cohen, who's authored a book on the topic. And it's one of the topics or questions that I get most from engineers is that, "I've been successful (or) I'm trying to be successful but unfortunately I have no life because I work too much. I don't get to spend time with my kids." I'm real passionate about this topic myself and so we're going to dig into this today. And all of the show notes for this show and any links that we mention during the show will be found at engineeringcareercoach.com/7keys, k-e-y-s.

So before I introduce Julie and we jump into the show I want to take a minute to tell you about today's sponsor for the show. Today's sponsor is Purdue University's Master of Engineering Management Program. I get tons of questions form engineers about this, "Should I get a Masters in engineering? Should I get a Masters in engineering management? Should I get a Masters in business administration (known as an MBA)?" The answer to that question is different for everyone but I can tell you from my research and from meeting with Purdue University at our meet-up in Austin, Texas last year that they do a phenomenal job with their engineering management program.

So if you want to earn a Masters degree that's specifically designed to advance your career in industry, that can be done online or you can go to campus - there's different options available - check out Purdue University's Master of Engineering Management Program. If you want to get details on the program all you have to do is call 1 877 598 4233 or just send an email to promasters@purdue.edu. They are processing applications daily. And like I said, I've had the opportunity to talk to a lot of these different programs and I really like what Purdue is doing.

And one of the things I'm going to try to do on a future podcast - I'm trying to work it out - is I'm going to have some of Purdue's students just come on the show and answer questions about what the Engineering Management Degree has done for them and how it's helping them. Because I've spoken to a lot of engineering management heads of programs and teachers and professors and that's a

great perspective but I also want to get the perspective from people actually going through it. So look out for that in one of our upcoming shows.

So now let's get into our topic and our interview for today. First let me interview our guest, Julie Cohen, who I'm so excited about having on the show. In fifteen years as a career and leadership coach, Julie Cohen PCC. has worked with hundreds of clients to clarify and achieve their personal and professional goals. Almost all of her clients wanted to enhance their work-life balance, whether they wanted a promotion, better communication skills, more meaning and satisfaction from their work or improved leadership capabilities.

Because of these requests Julie developed *The 7 Keys to Work-Life Balance*. It was a program that gives participants all the tools they need to identify, clarify and rectify the work-life balance challenges that they may be facing. Her book is called **Your Work, Your Life...Your Way: 7 Keys to Work-Life Balance** and her book does provide readers with a process to evaluate their work-life satisfaction and make real and sustainable changes for greater work and life satisfaction. And that is true.

I've read her book. I haven't gotten through her whole workbook yet, which you can get with the book, which is awesome. But I loved it and I'm actually talking with Julie right now about being one of the keynote speakers for **The Engineering Career Success Summit**, a big event I'm going to put on in Washington DC, May 1st and 2nd of this year. So save the date on the calendar and I'll get you more information on that event soon.

So to bring us into the interview now let me kick it off with a quote that goes like this, **"Thinking about work as a day job has made a big difference in the way I approach what I do. It also helped me not to confuse who I am with what I do."** And that's from Bob Goff, author of *Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World*. So with that let's get right into today's interview.

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: Alright, now it's time for the main segment of our show and today I have with me Julie Cohen, author of **Your Work, Your Life...Your Way: 7 Keys to Work-Life Balance**. Julie, thank you so much for being with me today.

Julie: Thanks Anthony. I'm looking forward to our conversation.

Anthony: So am I. I have so many engineers that contact me for help with balance in their careers because one of the things that I try to do is help engineers to become successful and to move up the ranks and become partners or owners in engineering companies. And what I've found is that they'll go through and put things into action that either I've told them or other seminars have given them

information and they're having so much success, which is great, but all of it is at the expense of their personal lives and their family time and it gets to the point where a lot of these engineers are saying, "How do I achieve my professional goals of climbing up the corporate ladder, so to speak, and not have to sacrifice everything else?"

And that's exactly why I wanted to have you come on today Julie, so we can hopefully give these engineers some actionable items or tasks that they can do to try to bring a little bit more sense of balance back into their lives and back into their careers. And what I think I'd like to have you do to start Julie is just kind of tell us a little bit about how you got into working in the whole realm of work-life balance.

Julie: Okay, well so for the past twenty years I worked a few years, about five years, within an organization in human resources and then after that, the last fifteen years, on my own with my own executive coaching company. What I found as I was supporting individuals, helping them to be more effective in their careers as well as more satisfied with their work, regardless of what issues my clients wanted to speak about and wanted support about work-life balance was always part of the mix. You know some of them, I worked with clients on enhancing their communication skills, enhancing their ability to manage teams, how to make critical career decisions, critical leadership decisions but there was always, it's been a rare find to find someone who is completely satisfied with the mix of their work and life priorities.

So I started noticing this consistent dissatisfaction about seven or eight years ago and started seeing patterns. And the patterns led me to create the content for my book, looking at the seven keys to work-life balance.

Anthony: Okay, perfect. What I want to do is get into those seven keys and kind of let's walk through the seven keys and talk a little bit about how we can apply them and also I'll give some feedback myself from my engineering experience about how we might be able to apply some of them. Go ahead Julie.

Julie: Okay. Well just so you know, each of the seven keys I'm glad you and I heard you mention it in your introduction, it's about action so the content that I share and how I created the book and my workshops are about, it's a coaching approach to work-life balance. So it is one hundred percent based on knowing your own situation and kind of what your challenges are and I provide actions that people can do, aligned with their own personal situation. So it sounds like we're on the same page.

Anthony: Excellent, yeah I mean I know that in order to make any kind of change you have to take action and probably consistent action to be able to form any kind of new habits that you're going to form, which is great because I also, Julie has a workbook associated with her book, which I think is

awesome because that just tells you that it's not enough to just read something, you've got to put these things into action.

Julie: That's awesome.

Anthony: Alright so let's jump in to key number one Julie.

Julie: Okay, so key one is *develop priorities*. And the reason why this key is relevant to work-life balance is that we can't do it all or at least we can't do it all at once. And so it's really critical as you're making your personal and professional decisions that you know where you want to best focus your time and energy. For most of us we have to do lists that could go on forever but if the work we're actually doing is not related to our professional priorities or our personal priorities, often it feels like we're not moving in the direction we want to go. So when we look at this key what we want to do is make sure we're stepping out of the busyness of our work and life and to pause and spend time being clear on what our priorities are.

Anthony: Now Julie, when you say priorities are you speaking both personally and professionally?

Julie: Yeah I am. And you talked about action so one of the actions related to this key, and there's multiple actions related to each of the keys but one of the core actions related to this key is in order to develop your priorities, because there's multiple problems that people have related to their ability to prioritize. One of the problems is that people don't even know what their priorities are.

And so when we don't know our priorities one of the actions is to develop your professional and personal vision and what this entails is you need to pause and step out of the busy craziness of work and life and think about where do you want to be in one, three, five, maybe even ten years. And so that vision is literally creating a picture of what that looks like.

So imagine you're doing a five-year vision, you would look where do you want to be professionally in five years - what's the job title, what are the job responsibilities, what salary do you want to be making, what kind of people do you want to be working with, what kind of impact do you want to be having on your environment? And then you also look on the professional side, I mean the personal side - what is your personal vision, how do you want your life to look like, whether you have a family, what are your interests, what are your community service and volunteer vision, what does that look like?

And so once you create that longer-term vision you work backwards and you keep breaking it down. So this is my vision for five years, what s it that you need to accomplish in year 1, year 2, year 3? And ideally you want to break the actions down into six-month cycles because that's kind of where you can build priorities and it's more manageable. So that's one of the core actions is having a professional and personal vision.

Anthony: Awesome. Personally I have goals that I set at the beginning of the year and I have them on my monitor, right up on the wall. And it's basically I do it in a circle and I have half as personal and half as professional. And what I can say from my own experience doing a lot of work on goal setting is, for those of you out there, the personal side is important because a lot of times when people think about goals they just focus on their career goals and where they want to be in five years and personally they don't pay attention to what their goals are and don't give themselves the opportunity to kind of expand and grow in that realm.

So I think what Julie's saying is wonderful and I think it's important that you really explore both sides of it because a lot of times when people come to me and say, "I'm struggling a bit with balance," I would ask them, "Well what are your personal goals?" And they're like, "I hadn't really thought of that." So just one thing that I wanted to add there on key 1, to really focus on the personal side of it as well as the professional.

Julie: Great.

Anthony: Alright Julie, let's go into the second key.

Julie: Yep, so key 2 is *create boundaries* and so we create boundaries in key 2 to protect the priorities that we've developed in key 1. So boundaries protect important things in our work and in our life. And so for most people, people have difficulty and setting a boundary means saying no to certain things. So you say no to the things that are less important so you can say yes to the things that are. So that's the magic of boundaries. If we're saying no to the right things it enables us to say yes to the right things.

And so in this key one of the core action items is looking at where you may have wanted to set boundaries and where you have challenges. So we look to identify what I call loose or absent boundaries. There's situations in which you try to set boundaries and you're not successful or you don't have boundaries at all. So you may take all your work with you on vacation. So that's not, there's no boundary there or you may want to get to the exercise class that you have scheduled at 8 o' clock two nights a week but every week you end up cancelling that. So you had a boundary set and you were hoping to get to the meeting but, I mean to the exercise class but you cancel it because you never get there.

So you want to look where you're having challenges setting boundaries and then you want to create what are called SMART boundaries. Now you've probably heard the acronym SMART used and that stands for, for those of your listeners who aren't aware of it, it's Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-based. So you probably heard that term in context with setting SMART goals but I

also want my clients to create SMART boundaries. So when we know what we want to say no to, if we can apply those characteristics to it, it makes it easier to uphold that boundary.

Anthony: Excellent. And one thing I can add on this point is, I mean this is just critical I think to work-life balance, these boundaries because if you don't have any then it's going to be very difficult to focus on what your priorities are. A couple things that have been helpful for me here is I'm a big believer in the 80/20 rule. I talk about it a lot on the podcast and 20% of what you do is going to generate 80% of your results and I think you need to identify what those things are and focus on the bigger things and not so much on the smaller things.

Another thing that I've done a lot lately is I understand what my priorities are and then I'll look at all of the tasks that I have to do for the day and that I have on my to do list and I'll decide number one, which of these are really important to my priorities and number two, which are the ones that I can delegate out to other people and so I can focus on the bigger things myself. So those are just some things that you can help to do. I think one of the challenges with boundaries today and truly I'm sure that you've seen this a lot with people that you work with is all the technology.

Julie: Yeah.

Anthony: Right?

Julie: Right yeah, I mean we live obviously in what can be a 24/7-communication state and so you know if that's either how you operate or others expect you to operate then that way there sometimes feels like there is no boundary. And it's critical that you know how you want to operate. So I don't believe there's a one size fits all anything. It's knowing what type of boundaries are going to work so you're focusing on the most important priorities professionally and personally.

Anthony: Alright, let's jump in to key number 3 Julie.

Julie: Okay, so key 3 is called *manage your day efficiently*. So this key is the most tactical one. It's really looking at how you do things and are you spending your time and energy and attention in the most efficient way. So in this key we look for what I call leaks, l-e-a-k-s, so leaks to your time, energy and attention. So those are actions or lack of actions that pull you away and lessen your efficiencies.

So some examples of leaks are multitasking. So for many of us we think when we're doing many things at once we're getting lots done but there's actually significant, cognitive brain research that shows when we're doing many things at once, switching between task and task, it slows us down cognitively and it actually enhances our learning curve and it makes us less efficient. So in this key

we identify leaks - and there's many of them - and we create what are called plugs. So a plug is a new behavior that lessens or eliminates that efficiency.

So the plug for multitasking I call time boxing. So that's carving out very specific times to work on one task. So if your leak is you have your email and you're responding to emails throughout the day and it always pulls you away from a project you're working on or a document you need to provide to your boss or a spreadsheet that needs to be delivered but you never seem to get it finished and you always feel scattered. So you would time box it, "I'm going to check email from 9 to 9:30 and a half hour after lunch and then a half hour before I leave," instead of constantly responding to the ping of your emails. That's a plug for the leak of multitasking is time boxing.

Anthony: That's great. Yeah, I think it's critical and just one example, well first of all I did a podcast a couple sessions ago, which was session 26 about overcoming your addiction to email, where I talked a lot about scheduling it and having times in the day. So you can check that out for kind of an expansion on what Julie was referencing there. But also I have a friend who is a copywriter and so he writes for a living. And so I asked him, "How do you avoid a lot of these online leaks (I guess you can call them in Julie's words)?" and what he told me was he has a program called Freedom. It's like an app that he puts on his computer that locks down the internet so he can't use it and it allows him to have two hours to just write.

And obviously that may not work for everyone, that might not work for engineers because you're not just writing all the time but the point is is that you have to think of ways that you can really put these boundaries in place because it's not that easy to just change your habits in the matter of a day or two. So you might need other ways to help you do it - a coach, a program, accountability partner, a mentor in your firm, whatever the case may be. But the point is it's not going to be easy necessarily to implement them but if you seek out the right help anything can be changed from my experience.

Julie: Yeah, that app you mentioned is really interesting. One of the other, there's many different leaks. I just shared one but another leak I call social media or just even internet black hole. You know you get online, you're going to check one thing for five minutes and then an hour later you're somewhere that you didn't expect to be, watching a cat video and saying, "Where did my work day go?"

Anthony: Right.

Julie: So that's really important. And you said another really important thing that I want to reiterate for your listeners is that issue of habit. So what I'm talking about and what you're talking about, we're talking about behavior change, trying out new ways of responding to things that are happening. And so it's really important to remember that this doesn't happen overnight. Your personal and

professional situation has evolved over your career and lifespan. To attempt to change behaviors it will take time and it will take practice.

So the first time that you put on the app that you're talking about or that you say no to someone, it might feel really uncomfortable. And you need to keep trying and you need to quantify the results you get when you experiment with a new behavior. And if it works you try it again and if it doesn't you can stop. But it's definitely about trying new patterns to develop new habits.

Anthony: Great. And just so you know, all of the items that we're referencing like the Freedom app I talked about, links to Julie's book and other items in the previous podcasts that I'm referencing, we'll put them in the show notes that you can find at engineeringcareercoach.com/7keys, that's the number 7 keys, k-e-y-s. Alright Julie, let's go into key number 4.

Julie: Okay. So key 4 is **design reasonable expectations**. This is a big key and this works in two ways. So just for a definition, an expectation is something that is desired for the future. So you may have expectations of yourself, how you want to act, how you want to be, what you want to do in the future and others have expectations of you, that's what they want from you in the future. So in this key reasonable expectations are great. They help you achieve and accomplish your goals, they help you understand where you fit in an organization and they can be really motivating.

So in this key that what we're looking for unreasonable expectations that either someone else has of you or that you have of yourself. So that's the first part of the action is identifying unreasonable expectations that are impacting you and that's hard. Unreasonable expectations that other have of you, maybe your boss or someone in your family or maybe even a colleague - the way you usually identify that is you're doing something for someone else and you're annoyed, you're frustrated. That's likely that what they expect of you is not aligned with how you would prefer to be operating.

And when you identify the unreasonable expectation that someone else has of you, you want to create what's called a shared reasonable expectation and that involves communicating with that person. So it might be your boss, "You asking me to work till 9 o' clock every night for a month is really not working for me. I wanted to propose something new. Can we create a new, shared reasonable expectation.

So that's the concept. You probably wouldn't use that language but it's about if you've identified an unreasonable expectation that someone has of you, it's sitting down, talking with them to create a new expectation that meets both parties needs. It's not about slacking on your responsibility, it's addressing the reality and coming up with a solution that meets both your needs and the other persons needs.

Anthony: One thing that I just want to kind of emphasize on this key is I work with a lot of motivated engineers that really want to be successful in their careers, however what I often find is a lot of the unreasonable expectations that they're pursuing are expectations that they've created themself.

Julie: Yes.

Anthony: Only for themself. So in other words if I said to them, "Well why do you have to have it done by that time?" they'll be like, "Well that's just the goal I set for myself."

Julie: Right.

Anthony: So I think when you look at this and think about this key of reasonable expectations you have to think about the goals that you're setting and the timelines that you're giving yourself to achieve them. Because I do this to myself all the time I have to stop and say, "Listen I'm the only one expecting myself to get this done by this time. I can give myself more time," and then you don't have to sacrifice maybe some personal time or family time.

So that's just something to keep in mind that I think when you talk about unreasonable expectations they could be like form your supervisor, where you need to talk with them like Julie referenced and come up with a shared expectation or it could just be your own expectation that you have or an own goal for yourself that just may be too lofty or just you're not giving yourself enough time to achieve it.

Julie: Well and you're spot on Anthony so that's the second half of this key. So the first half I talked about, that's when unreasonable expectations others have of you. Your own unreasonable expectations, which you clearly identified, those are actually often more challenging to create because they've made you successful. But what happens over time is if you consistently are trying to uphold your own unreasonable expectations, over time it can lead to burnout and it'll stop losing it's effectiveness if it's preventing you from being well and happy with your work. So the way you address that it's called a reframe of your own unreasonable expectation and it's more of a change in belief as opposed to a change in action.

And you identified it perfectly with that example, "Okay I must respond to email, I must in ten minutes." That could be an unreasonable expectation that's never going to let you get creative work done or you know, "I have to get this report done in two hours." Your boss may not be expecting it but you equate getting it done in that time will show your boss that you're really great but it may prevent you from doing something else that's more meaningful for your boss and you know you may be looking at the trees and not the forest. So both sides of that equation are really critical.

Anthony: Great. Alright, let's go to key number 5.

Julie: Alright, so key 5 is *reprioritize your values*. And again, key 4,5 and 6 are, actually all the keys are relevant and important but key 5 and key 6 are some biggies that can potentially require you making some significant changes in your work and in your life. So in this key you look at what your core values are. And this is an exercise that I do with all of my clients, it's in my book. It requires you saying, "What are the important beliefs and principles that are critical to who I am, that make me who I am, that I uphold in how I live my life?"

So when we know our core values it enables decision making to be easier. But also on the flipside, when we are making choices that are not aligned with our core values we often feel frustrated, angry, dismayed, disappointed. So in this key we look at our core values and we look at our work-life balance preferences to see if there's any conflicts. So you might have a value of leadership development and you want to be promoted to a director in three years but you also have the value of you know, "I want to train for a marathon because my value of physical fitness is really important to me." So in this key you look to see if there's conflicts and if there are you have two choices.

One is accept the status quo. So you may be focusing more on that value of leadership and spending all your time and energy on your promotion and not spending time on that value of physical fitness and training for the marathon. So if you accept the status quo and you're saying, "Well right now where I am in my life, even though it feels unbalanced, I'm not getting to that marathon, I'm okay with that because what I gain from working towards that promotion is more important to me right now. So that's one path.

The second path is called reprioritize your values. So you may identify this conflict and decide, "You know what, that's not working for me anymore and that value of physical fitness and training for that marathon is more critical to me right now. It's something I wanted to do for the past ten years and because of that I'm going to pull back on my value of leadership development and focus more on the action related to the value of physical fitness."

Now that doesn't mean I stop caring about leadership development and my job and a promotion but it may mean instead of chairing an extra two committees and attending conferences and speaking on area of expertise and doing research, all in addition to my fulltime job I may say no to certain extra work related responsibilities so I can spend a little more time on that other value. So that's the action of reprioritizing your values.

Anthony: Okay, excellent. Alright let's keep moving to key number 6.

Julie: Okay, that's *navigate an unbalanced organizational culture*. And in this one we acknowledge that sometimes the organizations we're part of don't support our work-life balance preferences. And when we talk about organizations it's not only our job but it can be professional associations, religious institutions, social clubs, teams we're on, even our family - sometimes our

family is very unbalanced, doesn't support our work-life balance preferences. So in this key we look at all the organizations we're a part of to determine if they're having a negative impact and if they are there's options.

And a lot of times people think, "Oh if I'm working and my company is working against my work-life balance there's nothing I can do." And just a couple examples of what you can do is you can try to change the culture of that organization, either covertly or overtly. So you may identify that, an example I often use is the culture of face time, which means a company expects you to be present at your desk regardless of whether you're doing work. They don't give you any flextime. They don't allow you to work from home and no-one leaves before the boss. So you're at your desk for twelve hours even if you've finished your work.

So if that's the culture, a way to change that would be you could covertly just decide, "I'm going to wait and let's see what happens," and you might find out that no-one even notices, that it's an unwritten rule that no-one realized existed. Or on the other hand you could try to overtly change the culture, where you would speak with colleagues, bosses, decision makers and say, "This part of the culture doesn't work and it's impacting effectiveness and I want to propose another solution." So that's a way you could overtly try to change the culture.

Anthony: Okay, excellent. And I know that that's certainly relevant for engineers because I know that I've talked to a lot of engineers that say that they feel that even if they're done with their work - and they probably work 45 hours for the week - they don't feel comfortable. They need to work more because that's just the culture and that's what it's driven to this point. So that's definitely something that I know that *The Engineering Career Coach* listeners will be, will be very helpful for them. Let's go into the last key here, key number 7.

Julie: And that is ***engage in self-care***. And this is the last key and some people think when they hear the word self-care it's kind of fluffy and, "Oh yeah I don't need to go get a massage." But I actually think key 7 is one of the most critical keys because how we take care of ourselves enables us to do all the things that are required as a professional engineer or in any field. So in key 7 we look at how are we rejuvenating and reenergizing ourselves.

And self-care is very personal. It doesn't look a certain way. It's really what energizes and invigorates you. So once you identify what they are then you need to look at what gets in the way of you doing this. When I do my workshops I usually take a survey and I give about ten examples of lack of self-care and I ask people to raise their hand, how many people are a victim of one example, two example and for most people we don't take great care of ourselves. We're the first thing that gets crossed off the to do list.

So in this key I teach a process of four steps that makes sure you're focused on self care and the first step is to first make it a priority so you actually make appointments with yourself for self-care, whatever you define that. The second step is seeing that it's valuable. You need to believe in taking care of yourself so that's a belief shift. So that's the second step. The third step is making sure what you've identified as self-care is self-care for you, not what your friends think is self-care. And then key 4 is surround yourself with good people who support you in taking good care of yourself.

Anthony: Great. And that is important. I do some stuff for myself like different stretching and stuff every morning to take care of myself and I know that when I'm busy the initial urge is to skip that and to go right into work, get right in front of the computer. But I've kind of trained myself that I need to, whether it's taking a walk or whatever the case may be is that I need to do that for myself and it's become kind of a permanent fixture, which is important because when you develop those habits then they become a fixture and you don't necessarily compromise on them anymore. And I think that's a big part to kind of creating this idea of balance in your life.

So we've gone through the seven keys. One question that I have for you Julie, just I want to get some feedback from you on. You talk about work-life balance, do you think it's related to the number of hours you work? Like in other words if you say work-life balance is there some idea that you can only work a certain number of hours to be balanced or is that not necessarily the case?

Julie: Great question. And it's definitely not the case, in my belief. I think it's very personal definitions. So I think there's two myths to work-life balance that get in the way of people being satisfied in this area. The first myth is that there's one definition of what work-life balance means, so that kind of gets at your question. It's really critical that each person define what it looks like. So for some people it is hours, "I want to put in that 45 hours a week and then I want to completely disconnect and focus on my family and my hobbies."

But for other people they want their work and life to be more integrated. So it might be that energy and being able to relax when you're at home and being able to be really intent when I'm at work. For others it's about being present you know, "I don't want to be thinking about work when I'm with my kid or when I'm at the gym and I don't want to be thinking about home when I'm at work."

So it's very personal so you really need to think about, "What does it mean to me?" And so I think one of the things that causes dissatisfaction, you might read in a magazine or see in a TV this is what work-life balance is, getting to do this, this, or that but if that's not important to you then it's irrelevant. So you really have to decide what satisfies me personally and professionally.

Anthony: I agree with that a hundred percent. I think I've worked with some engineers, it's funny actually, I've worked with multiple engineers that have the same kind of personal goal, which was just

to be home for dinner with their kids, which I think is a good goal or good way to kind of get yourself thinking in that pattern and to bring the personal side of it into things.

I'll give you another example just for myself is one of the things that I did or my wife and I did is we took up ballroom dancing about a year ago. And I think for us it's been nice. It's not like we weren't together, I mean we might have been home sitting on the coach so it's not like I was working at the time but then it's something more that we're doing together so I think it's helped us a lot just to have more fun.

So I think the point is it's not like if you work a certain number of hours you're going to be necessarily balanced or not. I think it depends on what you do in those hours, where you focus your energy and a lot of the other stuff that Julie touched on.

So what I'm going to do real quick here is just summarize the 7 points that we discussed and then I'll have Julie stick around with me and I'll go into the last few minutes, into the take action today portion of the show and we'll give you one specific action that you can do to kind of start to move forward on this.

- So key number 1 is to develop priorities both personal and professional.

- Key number 2 is to create boundaries and those boundaries can help you to protect those priorities that you developed.

- Key 3 is to manage your day efficiently. Think about those leaks, where you could be leaking, whether it's getting off on the internet and going off on a tangent. Think about ways that you can stop those leaks.

- Key 4 is to design reasonable expectations. So we talked about both looking fro unreasonable expectations, whether they're from your supervisors or people that you're working for or yourself, or of you set unreasonable expectations for yourself that may burn you out.

- Key 5 is to reprioritize your values, which is again it's another thing that's not easy to do because you're changing habits, you're changing thought patterns. But it's important for you to start to get onto the track that you want to be on.

- Key 6 - navigate an unbalanced organizational culture. So Julie talked a bit about sometimes you just work in a certain culture or your family has a certain culture but what kind of action are you, either are you going to take action to make a change or you're going to do something

covert, like Julie said, maybe you're just going to start leaving on your own earlier and see what happens.

• And then the last key was to engage in self-care and think about yourself and do something for yourself on a regular basis because you need that, you need that break, so to speak.

Did I do a good job there Julie?

Julie: You did a great job. I'm very impressed.

Anthony: Excellent, excellent. And again, we're going to link to Julie - all information is going to be in the show notes so that you can find all of her information. And her website is 7keystoworklifebalance.com. So we'll be right back with the take action today portion of the show, where we will give you one piece of action that you just start to implement it right now if you want to.

Take Action Today Segment:

Anthony: Alright now it's time for our take action today portion of the show and this is when I try to take one piece of advice and turn it into an action item for you so that you can stop listening to the show and do something to forward something that we talked about today. And what I want to focus on is Julie's first key, and I still have Julie with me and I'll have her chime in a bit on this as well. But the first key was to develop your priorities.

So what I would like you to do is take out a sheet of paper or use a whiteboard and start to write down your priorities, not just professionally though, personally and professionally. And this is important because the personal side, like I said earlier in the show, always seems to get left off. And when you do this, one of the things you might want to do is not necessarily do it in a line because these aren't to do items, you might want to do it in a circle or a mind map or something else.

But they're priorities, bigger pictures like for example, a project might be a priority for you, one of your engineering projects but not making phone calls for the project. That would be more a to do item. So you want to think bigger picture. Julie, maybe you could give us just a quick example of a couple of priorities.

Julie: You made a nice distinction there. So getting a project done, maybe there's some professional development, there's a journal article around your area of expertise that's been sitting on

your desk that's important and that will help you advance professionally and maybe speak at an event but it's not necessarily immediate but it's a priority because it's gong to enhance your overall career. So that professional development piece would be a priority as opposed to something that's a to do list that will always get taken care of. Is that a good distinction?

Anthony: Yeah, absolutely. So if I were to say like family time or time with your kids, that would be a priority, correct?

Julie: Right, and I would encourage a client to get more specific - what does family time look like? So for me, family time for me, my son gets home at 4 o' clock, I'm still working but I like to take fifteen minutes when he gets in to transition him into his homework and then a half hour after dinner where it's uninterrupted family time with me, my husband and son. Now it's often more but to me that's the priority, it's uninterrupted quality time everyday with my husband and son.

Anthony: And I think you can see by Julie's example right there, which is perfect, that that's something that she does consistently, which I'm sure again cements it and makes it become a habit and something that you do on a regular basis.

Julie: Right, and with that, again I always give the caveat, you know sometimes stuff happens - my son's busy, an emergency comes up - and it doesn't happen. But when you set that priority it's much easier to go back to it the next day. So that's critical.

Anthony: And this is good advice for engineers because in the engineering world, especially with projects, construction projects and other things your schedule is very hard to maintain. But if you do things on a regular basis for a certain period of time, if you get pulled out onto a project site for two or three days, when you come back you're going to want to naturally get back into the rhythm that you have once you've established it.

So with that I want to again thank you Julie for coming on and sharing your information with us. Please you can get all the information that we talked about at engineeringcareercoach.com/7keys, that's the number 7 keys and you can check out Julie at 7keystoworklifebalance.com.

Anthony's Closing Remarks:

So with that I look forward to helping you to continue to engineer your own success and we'll catch you on the next show.

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