Are you a working mother who feels like you have to map out every minute of your day to get things done?

Do you go from one task to the next hoping there will be no unexpected glitches to throw off your schedule? Do you constantly try to make sure that you are appropriately dividing your time and attention between work and family? If so, you are definitely not alone.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, 70.9 percent of all mothers of children younger than 18 are in the workforce, as compared to 48.8 percent in 1976.

This change in the workforce has led to the ongoing debate of whether a working mother is able to achieve a “work-life” balance and “have it all.”

To “have it all” is a subjective concept that is probably different for everyone. For me, being able to take care of a large family and have a successful career was my definition of “having it all.” I own a law firm, sit on three boards and am raising five young children. I didn’t initially know how it would work, but I knew I was willing to work as hard as needed to make sure that it did.

As you can imagine, I experience the struggle of maintaining a balance in my life on a daily basis. I have to make sure I don’t work so hard that I am neglecting my family, but yet I need to work hard enough to be successful in my profession.

Life sometimes seems like an assembly line comprised of taking care of children, meeting professional demands, maintaining a household and finding time to stay involved in the community. There often are times that I stay up late or wake up really early to meet professional deadlines so I can give my undivided attention to my family. I have to make a point to sit down with my spouse to coordinate schedules for the week so we know who is taking the kids to school, who will pick them up if they get sick and who will take them to extracurricular activities.

We also have to make a deliberate effort to schedule date nights so we are sure it happens. That is what works for us, but I have learned over the years that it is absolutely exhausting. At some point not too long ago, I had to acknowledge that it is necessary to take time to recharge my batteries so I have the energy required to maintain the important relationships in my life.

Sometimes, as working mothers, we get into our routines, and it is difficult to just stop.

But here is my advice to you: Please take time for yourself physically and spiritually so you can recharge your batteries, put things in perspective, and nurture the relationships in your life. I once read the quote, “If you neglect to recharge your battery, it dies, and if you run full-speed ahead without stopping for water, you lose momentum to finish the race.” I remind myself of that every day.

Michelle Naberhaus is an attorney practicing in the areas of estate administration, guardianships, and probate and trust litigation. She is on the board of the Women’s Business Center. Columnist
series is sponsored by the Women’s Business Center at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. For more information, visit http://wbc.fit.edu/.