

## The Ten Commandments for Re-Entering the Workforce

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Re-entering the workforce presents its unique challenges, especially after a long hiatus. Because in a typical family a woman's place continues to play a nurturing role, their challenges are different and the stress of managing a career is underappreciated. The following guidelines are useful in making the transition back to work more manageable:

1. **Know Why** you want to go back to work. Engagement, purpose, money, status, validation, and social environment are just some of the motivations for going back to work.
2. **Clarify Priorities:** For young families with school age children career and family demands often are at odds. Define your working parameters to protect those priorities and keep reminding yourself of why you chose those priorities when confronting choices.
3. **Do it for You:** When going back to work especially after a newborn, explore opportunities for flexible work schedules and telecommute. Design your own job and claim it at a company nearby. It is easier than you think! Don't get back into working because someone wants you to!
4. **Avoid Sudden Change:** After many years of being out of work, develop a phased approach to the transition. A sudden change can be difficult to manage and can create disharmony in the family and stress in your life.
5. **Manage Expectations:** Going back to work implies a significant change in a family. Make sure that members of the family are willing to accommodate this change. Create clear expectations from each family member and manage those expectations. Show your appreciation for this accommodation from time to time. Expect others to show their appreciation for what you do as well!
6. **Re-Evaluate Decision:** At the end of the first year of transitioning back to work, review your actual experience and compare it to the expectations *before* the transition. If this gap is large, make adjustments, including re-thinking your strategy.
7. **Do a Price Audit:** If the overall stress of transitioning back to work gets overwhelming, do a serious audit of the price you are paying in the new job. Learn how to monetize non-obvious influences and re-visit the going-back-to-work decision.
8. **Evaluate Opportunities:** During the past few years, corporate jobs have become more demanding. Explore employers in education, non-profit, and government sectors, where being in a job can stay more compartmentalized.
9. **Ask; Don't Assume:** Listen to those around you when they mention how their life has changed in light of your going back to work. Ask them what must be done to restore the harmony that was so important to them. Collaboratively develop a solution.
10. **Have Fun:** Make a serious change when you stop having fun and always trust your instincts.