



# Amanda Bernardo

Community &  
Engagement Manager  
Canada School of  
Public Service



#PDWeek



LIGHTNING ROUND: WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE

FMI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK

# WORK LIFE BALANCE

Amanda Bernardo





@AmandaBernardo

Communities and Engagement Manager

## PROFESSIONAL

- Canada School of Public Service
- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Parks Canada Agency
- Little Voice Books

## PERSONAL

- Mental health & Alzheimer Advocate
- Author / Public Speaker
- Philanthropist
- Dog Mom



011PG453544  
Federal public servant

AMANDA  
BERNARDO



011PG453544  
Social Entrepreneur



# ARE YOU IN BALANCE?

Canadian Mental Health Association

YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE LOST  
CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

YOU OFTEN FEEL GUILTY ABOUT  
NEGLECTING YOUR DIFFERENT  
ROLES

YOU FREQUENTLY FIND IT  
DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE  
ON THE TASK AT HAND

YOU'RE ALWAYS TIRED



If you're finding it difficult to balance the different elements of your life, you're not alone.

58% of Canadians report "overload" associated with their many roles – work, home and family, friends, physical health, volunteer and community service.

- Canadian Mental Health Association



"We need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list."

—First Lady Michelle Obama

# MY PERSONAL STORY

Work



Diagnosis



Depression/  
Anxiety



Lessons Learned



# PUTTING WORK FIRST

"I WAS WORKING EXTRA HARD TO  
PROVE TO MYSELF AND THE WORLD  
THAT I BELONGED."



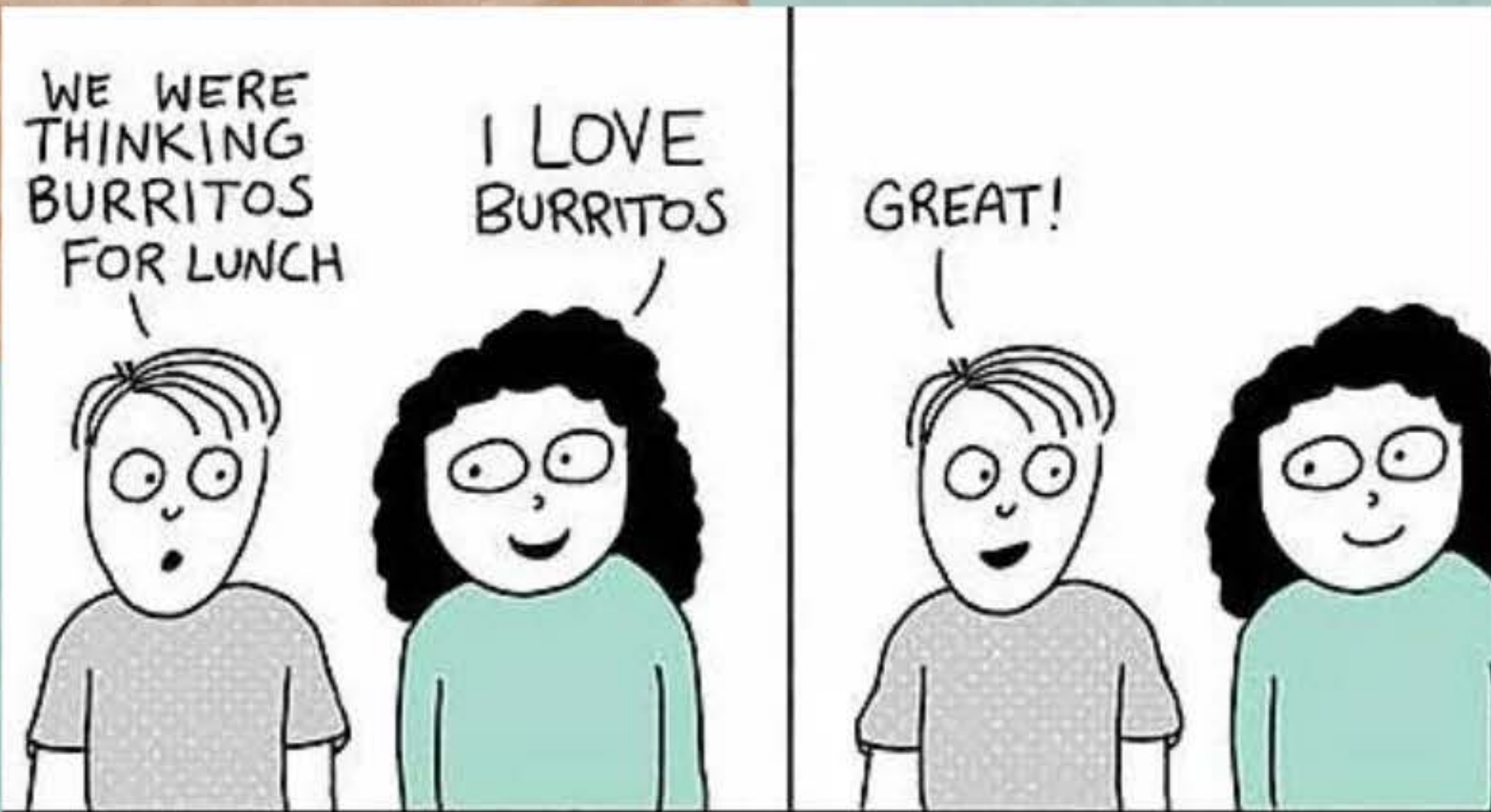
**SENIOR ADVISOR**  
Next Generation HR & Pay



**POLICY ADVISOR**  
Parks Canada Agency



**ANALYST**  
Treasury Board Secretariat



TheCooperReview.com



## "I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SAY NO"

- I wanted to be a team player
- I didn't want to let my boss down
- I wanted to prove that I could take on any challenge
- I didn't want to appear weak or "lesser than"
- I didn't have children so I volunteered to stay late, when needed
- I wanted to stay relevant

# GETTING DIAGNOSED

"SUDDENLY MY PRIORITIES  
SHIFTED AND IT BECAME CLEAR  
TO ME WHAT MATTERED MOST."

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**JANUARY 2016**

Admitted into the hospital,  
followed by months of  
testing.

**MAY 2016**

Diagnosed with  
endometriosis.

**MARCH 2018**

Admitted into the hospital,  
diagnosed with PCOS.

## **FLEXIBILITY**

I was able to work from home in order to make medical appointments and on days when I simply didn't have the physical or mental strength to go in to work.

## **POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

I had management that regularly checked-in, encouraged and promoted work life balance, talked about mental health, and set really great examples.

## **LEARNING TO DISCONNECT**

I had to make the distinction between work and the rest of my life by setting boundaries.

I had to accept that I didn't need to always push myself so hard in order to prove to myself or others that I was making an impact.

"NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED, I COULDN'T FIND THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL."

## TRAPPED IN A DARK PLACE

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### SIDE EFFECTS OF MEDICATION

Included depression, anxiety, pain, stiffness, fatigue, etc.

### REOCCURRING TRIPS TO THE HOSPITAL

Whenever I started to feel like I was getting better, I'd end up back in the hospital.

### FEAR OF NOT BEING A MOM

Endometriosis and PCOS can affect a woman's fertility.

### FINDING COURAGE

Admitting to myself that I needed help and finding the courage to ask for it.

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE HARD  
TO GET UP OUT OF BED.  
SOMETIMES WE CAN STRUGGLE  
WITH THE VOICES IN OUR HEAD.

"WRITING BECAME  
AN OUTLET THAT  
ALLOWED ME TO OWN MY  
EMOTIONS, CHANNEL MY  
THOUGHTS, AND FIND  
THE SPACE AND  
COURAGE TO HEAL."

THERE CAN BE DAYS WHERE WE  
JUST HIT A WALL,  
AND WE'RE DRAINED  
AND DON'T FEEL AT ALL.

IT'S OFTEN PRETTY RARE TO SEE  
A POST WHEN SOMEONE'S SAD.



# LESSONS LEARNED

## AT WORK

### HAVE A CONVERSATION

1

Let your manager know what you're going through; you can't be supported if people don't know that you need support.

### TAKE YOUR BREAKS

2

You deserve to eat your lunch away from your desk; to take a 15-minute walk; and to take a break.

### DON'T BE AVAILABLE 24/7

3

It's okay to not take your work home with you; the work will always get done.

### BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

4

Culture change is like having a baby, it takes a village to raise it.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## AT HOME

### MAKE TIME FOR WHAT YOU LOVE

1

For me, this means taking my dog for a walk, indulging in my latest read, or writing.

### NO GLASS HALF EMPTY

2

It's okay to prioritize yourself on your to do list and practice self-care.

### IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ONE OR THE OTHER

3

You shouldn't have to choose between your work and home life - we should strive to integrate the two to find true balance.

### DON'T FEEL GUILTY

4

If you need to take a day, can't work late, or need to say no.



**“NEVER GET SO  
BUSY MAKING A LIVING  
THAT YOU FORGET TO MAKE  
A LIFE.”**

**- DOLLY PARTON**



**THANK YOU**

**AMANDA BERNARDO**

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#PDWeek



## Brenda Brulotte

Director, Systems, Policy  
& Control Division  
Canada Revenue Agency



LIGHTNING ROUND:  
WORK-LIFE BALANCE

On the  
edge: FROM  
mental  
health To  
illness and  
BACK TO  
health again





# Background

- ▶ **July 2013** – Promoted from EX-01 to EX-03
- ▶ New team of 120+ employees with Many large initiatives to deliver
- ▶ Lost 2 key Executives on team – 9 month search yielded no replacements
- ▶ **September 2014** approached ADM to express doubts on ability to deliver suggested examine changing accountabilities
- ▶ **January 2015** Asked to be reassigned, Health at risk
- ▶ Early **April 2015**, reassigned
- ▶ Late **May 2015**, left for sick leave, never returned to Organization

# Warning Signs

- ▶ Working more and more hours – trying to ‘**catch up**’
- ▶ Unable to fall **asleep**, Frequently waking up and unable to fall back to sleep
- ▶ **Dropping** personal and Fitness activities
- ▶ Aggressive and **angry**
- ▶ Friends and Family expressing **concerns** viewed as another stressor



# Crisis

- ▶ Monday morning, simply could not face the day
- ▶ One month of leave turned into almost six
- ▶ Hormonal impact of stress required medication

# Return to health and to work

- ▶ Sleep, exercise, Meditation, **Mindfulness**
- ▶ Rebuild self-esteem and **Self-awareness**
- ▶ Awareness that EXTERNAL support IS **LIMITED**
- ▶ Make **conscious** decision to return
- ▶ Establish plan of **action**
- ▶ find right fit – need conditions to complete **recovery**



# Staying healthy

- ▶ If you **measure** your worth solely by your job, you are at risk
- ▶ If your supervisor is not supportive, **reconsider** your commitment
- ▶ **engage** in social and fitness activities, broadens your worth measures
- ▶ **Practice** Self-awareness; pay attention to nature of self-talk





# Mélanie Cabana

Principal Director  
Office of the Auditor  
General of Canada



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# WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MOBILIZING PEOPLE



# WHO AM I ?

## **AT WORK:**

- Melanie Cabana, CPA, auditor CA
- Accountant with 20 years experience in auditing & accounting
- Principal at OAG
- Work in financial audit for Crowns and Departments
- Area of focus is pensions, pension assets and payroll ... Yes ... payroll !
- Leading an administrative team of 12 and many audit teams of all size

# WHO AM I (CONTINUED)?

## BUT OTHER THAN THAT:

- Mom
- Wife
- Volunteer
- Friend
- And much more...





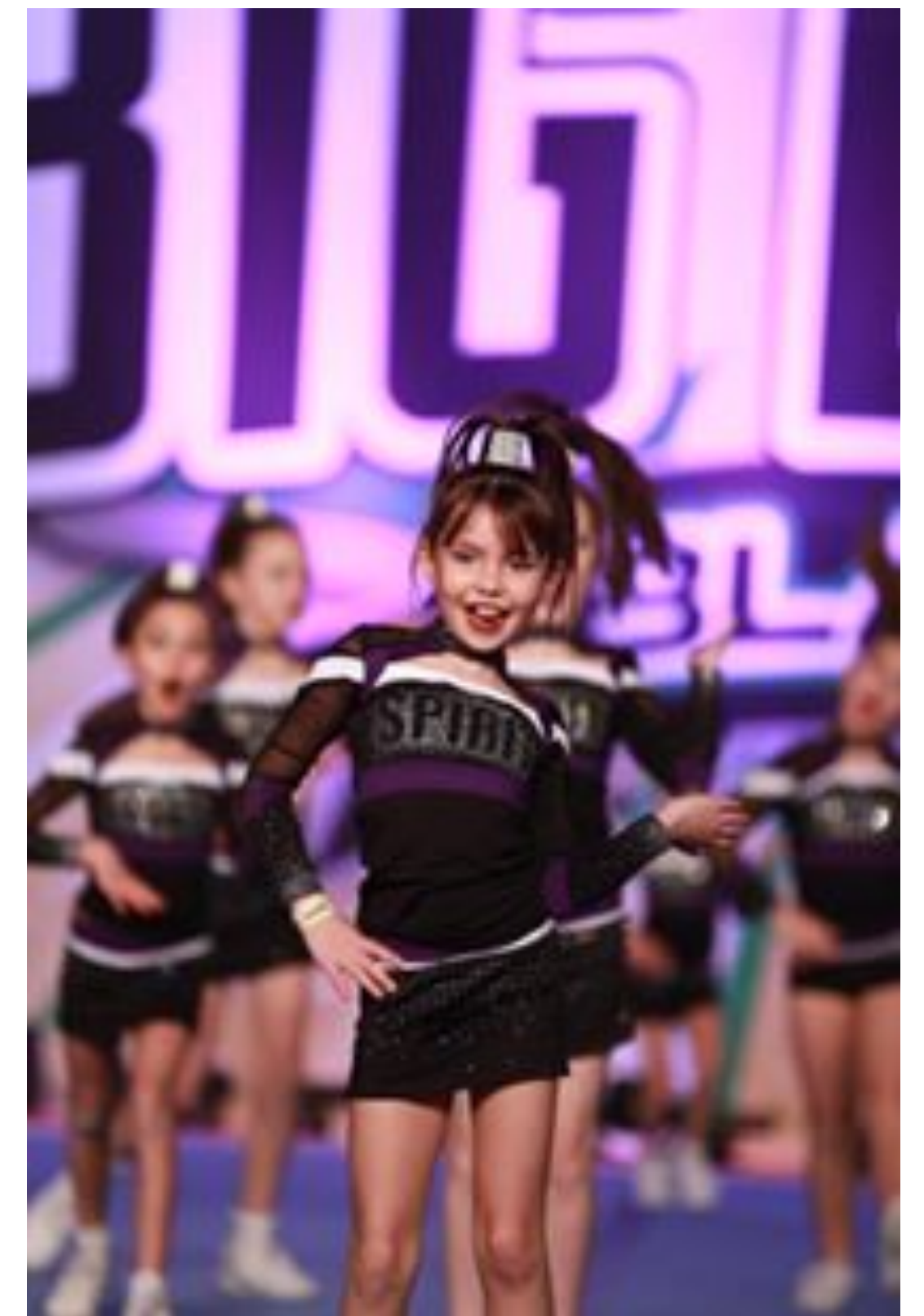
# WORK-LIFE BALANCE

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES:**

- It is personal (needs to make you and your family happy)
- It is an every day job
  - you don't magically master it for the rest of your life
- Key ingredients:
  - Trust
  - Flexibility
- Walk the talk !

# MY WHOLE-LIFE BALANCE

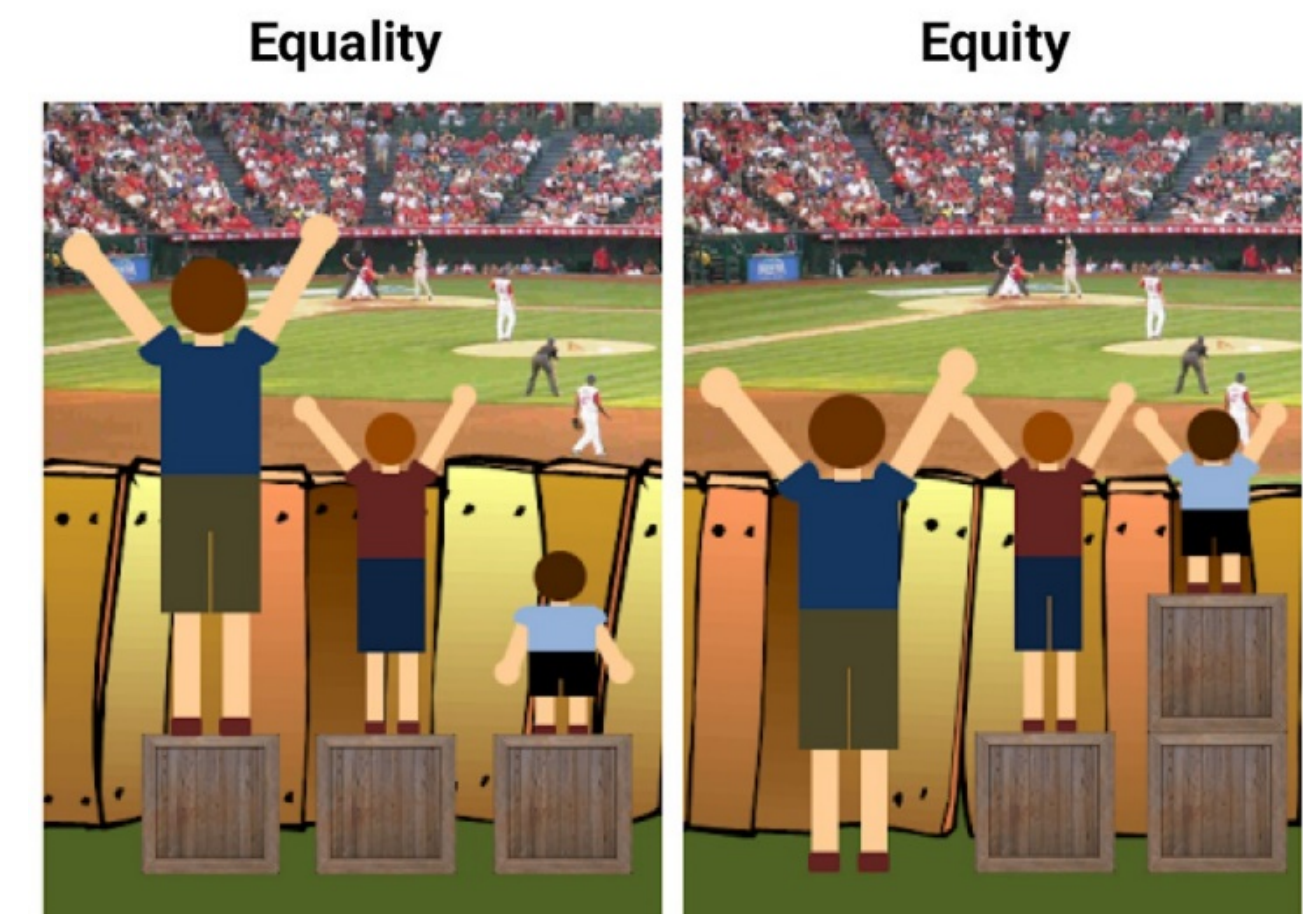
- Active lifestyle
  - My life (personal + work) is well planned
- Whole-life balance for me
  - Be present for my family (not just physically)
  - Be at the cheer practice on time 😊
  - Be able to volunteer
  - Support my OAG team
  - Deliver on projects
  - Work from home (flexible work arrangements)



# WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR MY TEAM

## The supervisor's perspective

- Get to know your people and their reality !
  - They need to know you too
- Trust
- Flexibility ... but it's a two way street
- Adaptation
- Clarify expectations and ground rules





# MY TIPS AND TRICKS

- To achieve my work-life balance:
  - Set boundaries / ground rules at work
    - Stick to it (easy to give up on you)
  - Use your calendar efficiently
    - Block off time for you in your agenda
- Get help if needed



# MY TIPS AND TRICKS (CONTINUED)

- To help my team achieve work-life balance
  - Pay attention to people and their challenges
  - Help and support your team in making better decisions
  - Be innovative and creative with solutions
    - Learn to manage performance and not presence
  - Show the example to reinforce your openness to flexible work arrangements
  - Small gestures can make a big difference



#PDWeek



## Nicolino Frate

Director General,  
Communications  
Shared Services Canada



LIGHTNING ROUND: WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE




# NICOLINO FRATE

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Director General,  
Communications

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Shared Services  
Canada

Services partagés  
Canada

Canada

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a person's hands and arms working on a silver laptop. The person is wearing a grey and white striped long-sleeved shirt. Their left hand is on the trackpad, and their right hand is on the keyboard. The laptop is open on a white desk. In the top left corner, there is a small notepad with two pens (one orange, one red) resting on it. In the bottom right corner, there is a white cup of coffee with a latte art design. The background is a plain white surface.

Professional Development Week 2019  
Mobilizing People stream

# WORK- LIFE BALANCE

Why "Balance" Isn't Always the Answer



## PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

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# NICOLINO FRATE

Director General of Communications, Shared Services Canada

### Experience

- Bank executive in the private sector
- Leading a non-profit aimed to combat homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia
- Thirteen years in the Federal Public Service

### Areas of Focus

- Championships : LGBTQ2, GCWCC, GCworkplace
- Leadership & Mentoring
- Social media and professional branding





# In my role as DG, I'm often busy...



**LEADING A TEAM**



**MEETINGS**



**ATTENDING EVENTS**



Work is only one  
aspect of my life.

Who am I outside of  
work?

# A glimpse into my life...



**FAMILY FIRST**



**BOXING**



**DOG LOVER**



**FOOD**

# Work-Life "Balance"?

I personally don't believe in work life balance.

For many, including myself, it is unrealistic to keep work and life completely separate.

You are only one person - you come into work with your own world and your own concerns.

Much easier to say "just put personal life on the back-burner".





**LET'S TALK  
ABOUT  
WORK-LIFE  
INTEGRATION**



# Work-Life Integration

For me, I work all the time because I'm always thinking about challenges and solutions.

When I need to do something on the personal front, I do it without feeling guilty about it.

By focusing on work-life integration, it allows you to better manage your needs.

This sometimes takes time and discipline but work-life integration is always possible.

# How Do We Achieve This?

## Flexibility

- There are days where work hours are inevitably going to spill out the of standard 9-5 schedule
- Flexible working hours require making decisions that alleviate the risk of burning out
- Start a little earlier or leave a little later - giving you time to relax - giving you more control
- If you have something in the middle of the day, you address it, and get your work done at night.

## Quality Over Quantity

- Instead of focusing on how many hours you can cram into one week, focus of the quality of your output
- How you blend your time gives you control and allows you to combine the demands of work life and home life
- Putting energy into producing quality work prevents burnout
- Gives you time to focus on other important areas in your life

## Find Creative Links

- If you truly care about something and have a passion project, find creative ways to incorporate that into your work
- Having a way to connect your interests and your work will keep you motivated and invested in your projects
- It allows you to bring a personal touch to your work

# Integrating my work and life



Taking time away from  
work to enjoy family trips

**Nicolino Frate, M.S.M.** @nickfrate · Jun 25

As a leader, it is important to balance and set priorities, but it is equally important to nurture what matters in your personal life. So today I took the time to attend my son's end of year poetry and art recital. It nourished my soul. #ProudDad



3

6

118



Adjusting schedule to attend  
important commitments

# Integrating my work and life



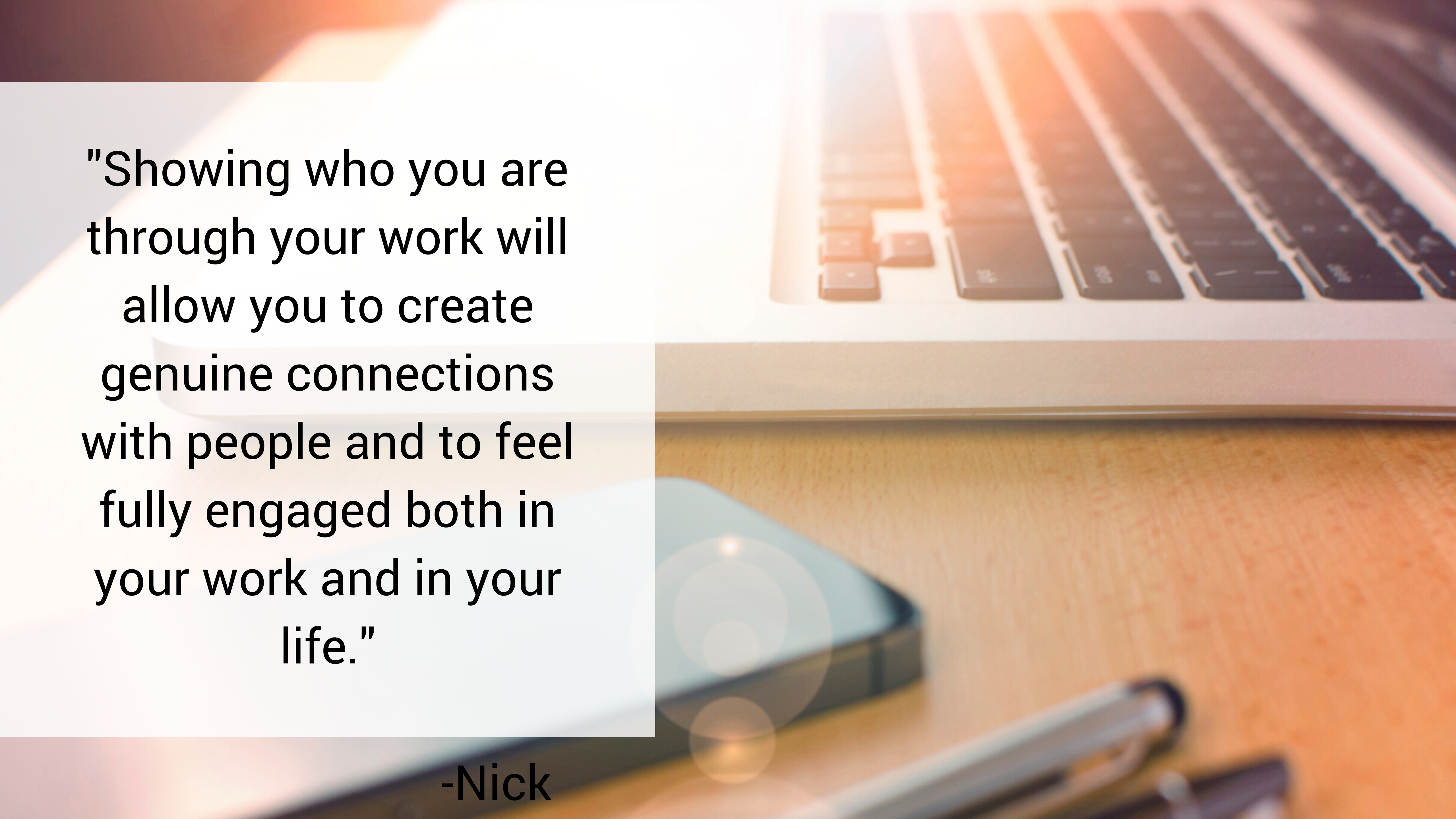
LGBTQ2 Championship



Outings with the team



Going back to school



"Showing who you are  
through your work will  
allow you to create  
genuine connections  
with people and to feel  
fully engaged both in  
your work and in your  
life."

-Nick



## Nicole Girard

Director General, Navigation  
Protection Program  
Transport Canada



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# WORK LIFE BALANCE

Nicole Girard  
Director General  
Navigation Protection Program  
Transport Canada



# Who am I?

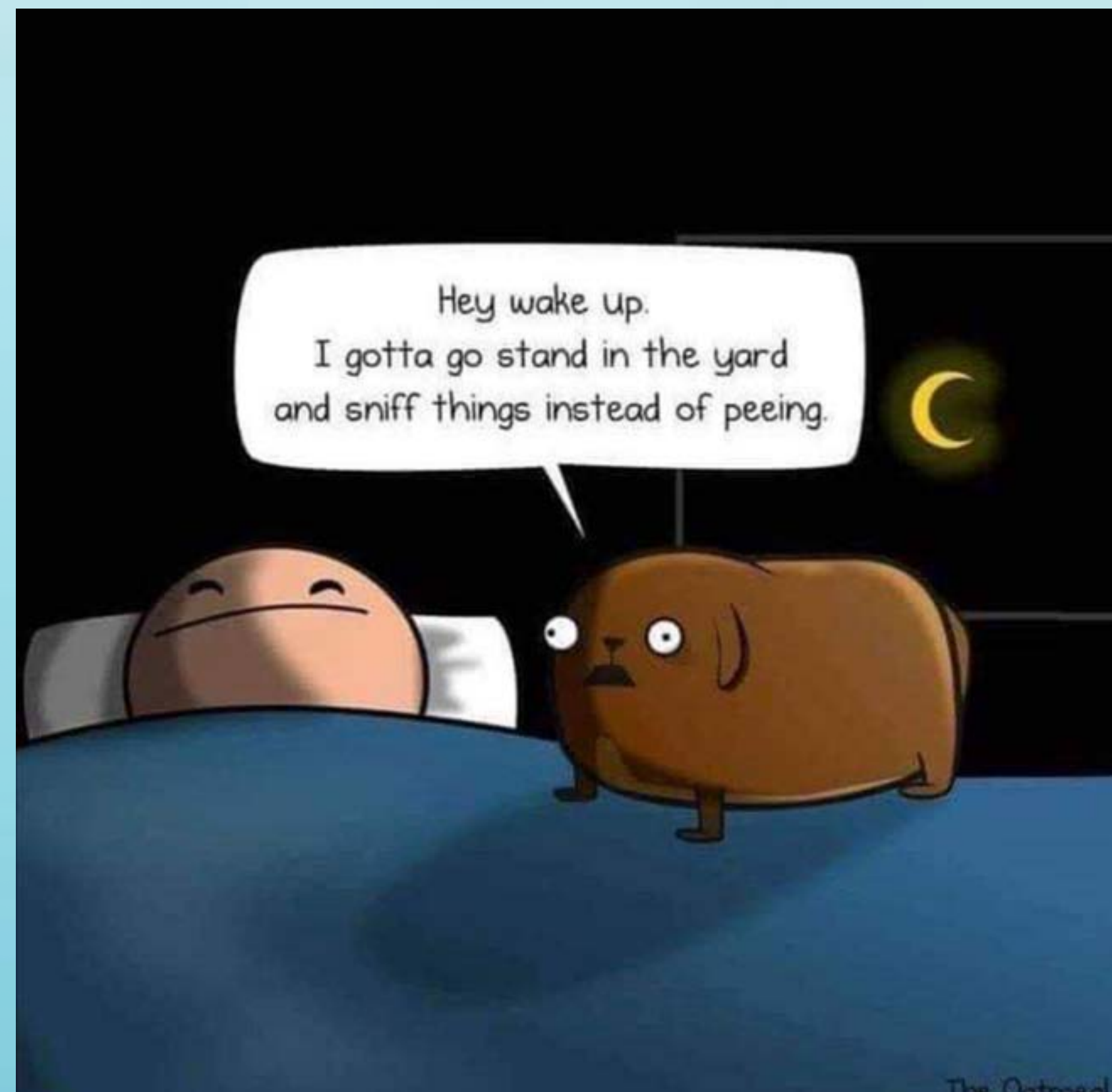
- Originally from Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec
  - Youngest of three siblings
  - Daughter of a 92 year old mother
- Spouse –married for almost 25 years
  - Mother of a 26 year old daughter
    - Canine Wrangler
  - Harley Davidson Enthusiast

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a landscape. It shows a calm body of water, likely a lake, with soft, out-of-focus mountains in the distance. The colors are muted, with a lot of light blues, greys, and soft greens, creating a serene and somewhat ethereal atmosphere.

# Identifying Burnout Before it Happens

# The difference between whelmed and overwhelmed

Some triggers that let me know I could be on the verge of burnout:



- Sweating the small stuff
- Compassion valve is shut off (depersonalization)
- Becoming too fixated on details
- Feeling there is not enough hours in the day to complete work
- Loss of mindfulness (not appreciating the present but focused on what is coming up)
- Eating too much pizza

A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, which perfectly reflects the surrounding environment. On the left, a steep, forested hillside slopes down towards the water. In the distance, more rolling hills are visible under a vast, clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

What are my tips?

# Managing My Work Life Boundaries

## What are my little business rules?

- When in a hurry, think slow
- Be kind
- Laugh
- Be accepting of my limits
- Differentiate what is urgent and what is important
- Avoiding toxic colleagues
- I try not to create false emergencies
  - Someone's lack of planning should not become my emergency (and vice versa)
  - Real time management
- 70-20-10 Rule
- Block time in my calendar for myself
  - e.g. Lunch time, 30 minute blocks
  - Even if I don't use it, it's time for me to catch up or take a breather
- I try not to schedule meetings after 4 (on Fridays – no meetings after 3)
- No emails in the evening or weekends unless it's an emergency
- For long weekends, practice in place to have a meeting-free day on Fridays

# Managing My Work Life Boundaries

## What are my little personal rules?

- On week days:
  - Go easy with the second shift (do I really need to do laundry on Monday evenings?)
- On weekends:
  - Mini-vacation (tourist in my home town)
  - Try once a month to do something cultural
  - One day for errands, one day for relaxation
  - Allow myself some unplanned or unstructured time
- Refocus the negative energy
  - Learn something new (scuba diving, AI)
  - Exercise (3 – 4 times per week)
  - Eat better – plan ahead
- Don't sweat the small things (do I care about wrinkled socks on the floor?)
- Plan time off (within your financial means) and schedule in advance



What happens when I  
conquer my fears?





Don't forget to have fun!

# Recommended Reading

*Essentialism* - Greg McKeown

*Younger Next Year* - Chris Crowley & Henry S.  
Lodge

*The Power of Habits* - Charles Duhigg

*The First 90 Days* - Michael D. Watkins

*Speed of Trust* - Stephen Covey



## Sahir Khan

Executive Vice-President  
Institute of Fiscal Studies  
& Democracy



#PDWeek



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