

were already doing stuff, and we were one of them. As LiL has evolved, there are now 100 schools in Tasmania that have funding. 'High needs' is the classification to get the money. As it's evolved they need people to help set up the other schools. Part of my role is in the South East, across the river, where there are 32 schools with LiL Funding. I've needed to step out of the B4 room, but still be based at my school because I believe you've got to practise what you preach so I'm still involved, I'll be there on a Tuesday, and the other days I'm just around helping where I can.

Df Employed by?

Suzanne The Education Department of Tasmania. It is good. I also do a lot of training, 'Family Partnership Training'. It's a model that's come out of the UK and I'm a facilitator of that. I'm employed three days by the Education Department and the other days I train groups of 12 people. It's about how you can work in partnership with families, working with respect and shared power and shared responsibility. The last three I've done I've organised it so that it's not just all teachers. It's teachers, parents, teacher's assistants, health workers, so you're getting 12 people in the community working together with a common language. It would be ideal to have all of Tasmania trained from the Premier down and from the parents up so that when you go to a doctor, or you go to a professional, you're treated with the same respect. I really like doing it and I really believe in it, in having a common language, and especially that shared power and shared ownership and trust and humility.

Df You obviously love what you do.

Suzanne I do love it and

I'm very passionate about what I do. I don't suffer fools and I don't suffer mediocrity

at all; I just get very annoyed. So, when someone asks, "Could you do this?" or, "Do you want to do this?" I always think, will that make it better for the early years in Tasmania. We've only got 500,000 people here, just, so when I get asked to do things, or I think about what I'm doing now, I think, Is this making a difference to the early years and can I work with the people I'm working with? Are they going to make it easy or hard, and how am I going to do that? It makes it really clear to know if I should go and do that or not. I think the training from Family Partnerships comes in, trying to understand other people's points of view.

Df Have you found it hard to balance home and this work?

Suzanne Because I'm so passionate about the dream I just really want to be doing it and sometimes it does become a bit of a juggle. I've learnt now, in the last year, I've just got it happening, that balance (*see page x *A Recipe for Balance*). Colin is pretty flexible, he's got his own business as an engineer, so he just works in the city whereas [at the school] I'm half an hour away. I have my mother down the road, I have my sister over there and my brother. We've got lots of support with my family although my mother does think I'm mad sometimes. When I won the [Inaugural Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Inspirational Champion] award, I said to her, "You need to come with me." People were saying to her, "You must be so proud of what your daughter's done", and she'd reply, "I didn't really know what she'd been doing actually." She's sort of more interested in who my friends are and what my children are up to. Afterwards she said, "It's funny; you've always been doing this, but I've never really asked you ... Why did you win the award?" Whereas my dad was always very interested. I took up rowing in my early 30s ... I think I do things because I'm told no. I remember at school, girls weren't allowed to row, so in my 30s I took up rowing and we went off to some event in Adelaide and Dad handed me the \$100 bill, you know; he was so proud. He died a few years ago, but he was really proud of ... he was interested and came to things I was doing. When he died I realised that what he valued in life is what's important and I did make some really big changes. When someone

*A recipe for balance By Alison Nancye

With two young children born just over a year apart, a hubby that goes away a lot for work and no family support close by, I really did have to get serious about creating work-life balance sooner rather than later.

After becoming a mum, I wanted to maintain a career I loved and get real joy from motherhood, but ultimately

whether you're with your kids or clients, you're pretty much 'on' the entire time.

Finding work-life balance for me was not so much about finding the balance between the two, but finding the balance within, no matter what I was doing or who I was doing it with. Now I haven't always been

great at mastering the art of inner Zen, but I've found with practise, it really has had a profound impact on the health and happiness of me and everyone around me (kids, clients, and community!). So if I was going to say there were five secret ingredients to creating true work-life balance they would be:

1. A great recipe:

As a working mum you will have a lot on your plate. At the beginning of each year, I create a blank slate and use my 'Dream Week' life-recipe to help me get clear about how I want to spend my time and use that to support me making decisions about the year ahead. For example my diary looks something like this. Monday-Wednesday kids are at kindy and I work. Thursday is kids' swimming lessons. Friday is Friday Fun Day; we don't have to learn anything or be anywhere on time, our mission is to have fun). Saturday we mix it up and Sunday is Family Day. I throw a monthly date night in with the hubby for good measure, an outing with the girls and 'me time'.

2. A decent amount of sleep:

One of the best ways to feel good from the inside out, is to get enough sleep (often difficult as a mum). If you want to feel well rested each day, beat Cinderella to the post, and get to bed at least one hour before midnight. If all else fails (you know, kids get sick and all that), meditate. A few minutes of 'om' each day, will help you feel more centred no matter what lies ahead.

3. A generous pinch of 'me time':

This has been a harder to master, but I'm on a roll now and there's no stopping me! I had a foot massage the other day – I mean a whole hour spent just on my feet. I will definitely go back for seconds!

4. A healthy dash of play:

Just because you are raising kids doesn't mean you can't be a kid. In fact your children love it when you play at their level and in their world. I have had such an incredible time dreaming on my dreams since having children.

5. Serve it up beautifully - a good garnish can work wonders:

I was a woman once! My hubby loves it when I remember this one. When you have kids, your body changes, you change, you know ... everything's a bit different. Having kids so close together I really lost my mojo in the feeling feminine department but my four year-old daughter has set me straight. She is such a 'dress' girl (who climbs trees) and always tells me to frock up. So I've taken a leaf out of my her book and now I feel and look great when I walk out the door.

Now I don't always follow this recipe to the measure, but when I leave these key ingredients out of my weekly diet, it all kind of comes undone. You know the saying, 'happy mummy, happy family', so what's a girl gonna do, she's going to take care of herself that's what!

Alison Nancye is the Founder of The Life Kitchen, directing and encouraging everyone she meets to serve up a lifestyle smorgasbord they love, Author of 'Recipes for Everyday Life, cook up the life of your dreams', and the Creator of Your Delicious Life. www.thelifekitchen.com