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Although Not Easy, a Guy Can Have It All—Family and Successful Career

Rick explains that in addition to the typical things a pharmacist leader has in his office, a few others such as photos of his family probably go unnoticed but are more important to him. Rick outlines how he is integrating his family life with his career. He also discusses how he is engaging staff and leaders at *eight* locations versus one while not letting the rest of his work suffer.

Rick Couldry is currently Executive Director, Pharmacy Services, and Residency Director of the combined MS-health system pharmacy administration postgraduate year (PGY) 2 program at The University of Kansas Hospital. Previously, he was Director of Pharmacy. He is Chair, ASHP Section of Pharmacy Practice Managers. Rick received his BS in Pharmacy from the University of Missouri–Kansas City and his MS in Hospital Pharmacy Administration from The University of Kansas. He completed a 2-year administrative residency at The University of Kansas Hospital.

Rick's advice is: ***Don't sacrifice time with your family because you can't get it back. Decide where you will make sacrifices when you can't do it all or say "yes" to everything. Find and sustain your perspective on what is truly important to you and let that be your guide.***

 ***Dear Young Pharmacist,***

When you walk into my office, you will see many things you would see in any office such as diplomas, art, and licenses. Of all the items, a few that probably go unnoticed are the most important to me—a mouse pad with a picture of me and my young daughter walking hand-in-hand, a photo of my 5-year old son wearing a t-shirt and tie in a cheesy frame that he labeled Happy Father's Day, and a photograph of my beaming bride in her wedding gown. I really enjoy having these

items there where all kinds of meetings, decisions, mentoring, and work happen. Although many aspects of success are important, these treasured mementos are constant reminders that not all of them are directly related to leadership, pharmacy, or healthcare.

I have been fortunate that my mentors have given me great advice. Often, it was related to not letting your family life slip in deference to work success. I remember, quite vividly, one of these discussions. It was at a hotel in Orlando at a Midyear Clinical Meeting. In a fortunate moment of solitude, between the conference's many demands, I found myself at the hotel bar with a successful, widely recognized pharmacy leader. As we sat and talked, she asked what was on my mind. I told her I wondered if I was doing all I should to serve pharmacy and to uphold and advance the legacy of pharmacy leadership. I told her that my peers were advancing by giving more talks, being elected to national positions, and writing more articles than me. I didn't feel like I was doing enough. I went on to tell her how I was torn between doing more and being a good dad. My daughter was 4 at the time, and my wife and I were expecting our second child. She asked me a lot about my family and what I was doing at work and for the profession. One of her questions was so simple and powerful, I have never forgotten it: "Do you think in a few years when your kids are more grown up that pharmacy *won't* have a need for leaders?" I was speechless. I stammered, finally, "I guess I never thought of it that way." She just smiled, nodded, and said "Don't sacrifice time with your family. You can't get it back. There's never a shortage of opportunities for good leaders."

I have lived by those words ever since, but making them work has not been easy. I sometimes find myself focusing on who got elected to a position, who is chairing a committee, and all those pictures on social media of people touring international pharmacy sites and attending conferences. These things push and nag at you. Even harder is receiving a request from a colleague who wants me to attend a conference or give a talk. It gets harder when the colleague is someone close to me—a friend, someone you never want to let down. So, of course, sometimes (actually, many times) the answer is "yes." I keep mental track of my "yes" responses. A funny thing about them is that I often feel like I haven't done a lot, but when I review my list of accomplishments it's fairly significant. Occasionally, I need outsiders to give me perspective. One such person was a Senior Director at ASHP with whom I often worked. When I confided my concerns about my contributions, he laughed—not judging me but in empathy. He had struggled with the same feelings. We have continued to share stories and parenting tips, and he's often told me he appreciates our talks because they happen so infrequently.

Another area where professional and family responsibilities often collide is with meetings. For example, my daughter's birthday is in early June, so it always conflicts