

A photograph of a baby being held by an adult. The baby is looking down and holding the adult's arm. The adult's hair is visible in the foreground, blurred. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

LEAN IN

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

THE ECONOMICS OF WELL-BEING

Overview

Do we limit our thinking and focus only on short-term goals when we make trade-offs between career and family? This final meeting in our three-part series “Work & Family: Getting to 50/50” will use economic concepts to help broaden your thinking about the short- and long-term impacts of work and family decisions.

Meeting Goals

- Understand how career and family decisions impact the short and long-term well-being of you and your family
- Use economic principles to optimize your decision making, including when you calculate child-care costs, invest in your own human capital, and try to maximize efficiency at work

Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch “The Economics of Well-Being” individually or as a group at leanin.org/education/the-economics-of-well-being/
- Bring a printed copy of this guide
- Prepare to share your One Action Update (if you’re doing this)



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Meeting Agenda

🕒 Approx. 2 hours for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

(Please note: This is one of our longer meetings, and we love the way the activities build on one another. However, you can always skip an activity or spread the agenda over two meetings—whatever works for you!)

1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

Warm up, catch up, and get going p.4

2 Education Activities 🕒 Approx. 70 minutes

Learn from experts and one another p.5

- **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 5 minutes
Take a few minutes to review the core concepts of “The Economics of Well-Being” video p.5
 - **Activity 2: Apply the Economics of Well-Being** 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes
Practice using economic concepts to help guide your decision making p.6
 - **Activity 3: Reflect on Your Decision Making** 🕒 Approx. 40 minutes
Evaluate the impact of the economic framework on your work/life decisions p.9
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3 One Action 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

The little push you need to go for it p.10

4 Wrap-Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

What’s next and a few final words p.12

Optional Member Materials

One Action Update p.14

Meeting Guide

Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with ourselves and one another. One by one, fill in the sentences below and share them with your Circle. Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- One of the scenarios presented in the video that I relate to is . . .
- To me, using economic concepts to think about work/life issues feels . . .

Step 2: Member Updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minutes or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting. The goal is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update]."*

Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 70 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, review the key takeaways from the video, "The Economics of Well-Being," individually or as a group.

These four economic concepts offer a unique way to think about the short- and long-term impacts of your decisions around work and family:

Utility maximization

Think of "utility" as happiness or well-being. We all try to make decisions that will maximize our own happiness, and this calculation becomes more complicated when we factor in a partner, children, and our family's short- and long-term goals. To maximize utility in your work/life planning, consider whether a potential decision maximizes (a) your own well-being, (b) your family's well-being, and/or (c) your chances of achieving one of the family's short- or long-term goals. The best course of action achieves all three.

Investment in human capital

You invest in yourself by developing your skills (through education, training, and experience) and building your network. You want that investment to pay off—not depreciate. Working full-time, part-time, or as a volunteer keeps your skills sharp and helps you maintain your network, both of which can be immensely helpful in the long term.

Economics of child care

Child care is a family investment—not a cost covered by one parent. Although the cost of child care might seem high compared to your salary today, remember that staying in the workforce and advancing in your career now will likely earn your family substantially more in additional income over the long haul.

Efficiency

Efficiency means getting more output with the same resources—and you can do this both at work and at home. Many people's efficiency at work goes up when they become parents. They learn to delegate more, prioritize better, and focus energy on the things that really matter at the office.

Activity 2: Apply the Economics of Well-Being

⌚ Approx. 25 minutes

Step 1: Think about your current work/life challenges

 Individual activity

⌚ 5 minutes

In the space below, list work/life challenges you're facing today or will face in the near future (e.g., deciding whether or not to take on a new role or assignment, asking for a raise or more flexible schedule, or taking time off). List as many as you can in the time allotted.

Step 2: Apply the economic framework

 Individual activity

⌚ 20 minutes

Select one of the scenarios above and write it down below along with your current plan of action.

- The work/life scenario I want to address is: _____
- To address this scenario, I plan to: _____

Next, answer the questions below to apply the four economic concepts presented in the video to this scenario.

Utility maximization

How will your plan of action maximize your well-being?

Activity 2: Apply the Economics of Well-Being (cont.)

How will it maximize the well-being of your family (if applicable)?

Will it help you or your family achieve a short- or long-term goal?

Investment in human capital

Will your plan help you invest in your own human capital? How?

Will it increase or decrease the value of your human capital?

Economics of child care

If your work/life scenario is related to the cost of child care:

How does your current or anticipated cost of child care compare to your current salary?

Activity 2: Apply the Economics of Well-Being (cont.)

How does that cost compare to your combined family income (if applicable)?

If your salary increases by 3 percent every year, how much will you add to your family income by the time your child or children are in school? How does that additional income impact your cost of child care calculation?

Efficiency

Does your plan maximize efficiency (getting more output with the same resources)?

If not, can you enhance your efficiency by delegating or shifting priorities? (Note: It's OK to be inefficient at home if it maximizes the well-being of you or your family.)

Conclusion

Now that you've thought through the decision using these economic concepts, would you like to change your plan of action? If so, write your new or adjusted plan below.

Activity 3: Reflect on Your Decision Making

⌚ Approx. 40 minutes

Step 1: Compare your plans before and after the activity

 Pair activity

⌚ 10 minutes per partner, 20 minutes total

Break into groups of two or three and answer the following questions:

- Briefly describe the situation you used for the activity.
- What was your original plan of action?
- Did your plan change after you ran it through the framework? How?

Step 2: Share your reflections

 Group activity

⌚ 2 minutes per member, 20 minutes total

Come back together as a large group and share your reflections with the Circle:

- What resonated with you (or not) about this exercise?
- Will you use these concepts to help make decisions in the future?

One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

Step 1: Identify the action you’re going to take

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

The video encourages all of us to start talking about strategies for navigating work/life issues. Consider sharing the framework in this guide with a partner, colleague, or mentor, or ask for their thoughts on how to make better decisions about balancing work and family.

- Identify the person (or people) with whom you’d like to have a work/life strategy conversation.


- Imagine where and when it will happen.

- Create a quick plan. What information will you share with this person? What questions will you ask her/him?

- What do you hope to achieve in the conversation?

Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle

 Group activity

 2 minutes or less per member, 10 minutes total

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statements:

- In the next month, I plan to have a conversation about strategies for navigating work/life challenges with . . .
- During the conversation, I will bring up and/or ask questions about . . .

Housekeeping Note: We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 14 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update. Individually or as a group, you can decide to bring the worksheet to your next Circle meeting.

Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting: day and time, location, food and drink. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who's going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting and brainstorm improvements going forward.

Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minutes or less

At its core, the message of “The Economics of Well-Being” is all about maximizing your own happiness. Take a moment to visualize your very best self—the person who has successfully maximized well-being. One by one, go around the Circle and share one adjective that describes that best self with the group.

Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following pages for optional member activities.

One Action Update

Use the following prompts to give your One Action update during your next meeting. You can even prepare your answers ahead to maximize your time with your Circle.

- What person did you plan to talk to about navigating work/life challenges?

- What information did you bring to the conversation?

- What new information did you get as a result?

- How did it feel to bring up the topic? In the end, was it beneficial?