

from Science 326:656-658



Liz Blackburn

Carol Greider and children

Has anything helped you be successful in terms of managing your time?

Elizabeth Blackburn: Is it time to tell the Bagel Bites story? ... It's about producing beautiful cookies or cupcakes with beautiful icing and you're up till 2 a.m. making them for your children. This is what motherhood is supposed to be like, right? Well, it turns out that if you go to your supermarket, you can buy these little Bagel Bite things, they're called commercially, and you put them in the oven and they have cheese on the top and they bubble and they're lovely and brown and taste wonderful. And you take them to any children's function, and the children swarm over them, they love them, ... and it takes 12 minutes in the oven to cook. So my feeling is there's plenty of time ... to catch the essence of what it is that people like mothers to do, but you don't have to do it in a very laborious, conventional way.

To what extent do you have to blend your personal and your professional life to achieve a balance?

Carol Greider: Many professional women face this kind of issue, and I tell people that it's actually very nice to be in science because what we're judged on in the end is how productive we are and what we get done, and it's not necessarily 9 to 5, and so I feel like I do have a lot of freedom. You know, I'll go out for my son's play at school at two o'clock in the afternoon and then come back again, and that kind of freedom to have a flexible schedule, I think, is not always true in other professions.

Many reports have said that women leave academic science because they are looking for more regular hours and a more predictable schedule.

Elizabeth Blackburn: Right. People have been giving them bad information. I think there's a lot of conventional ideas about being a mother and, you know, certain sorts of formulary and stereotypes are there. And I really think that they're not terribly helpful.