

# Making the connections between work and life

THIS TIME WITH



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**Success comes at a price. Business leaders face difficult decisions regarding demands on their time on daily basis. The responsibility towards their families and their employees makes them carefully consider each minute of their day. We wanted to know how they like to spend their time out of work, what inspires them and motivates them.**

## Have you planned any trips or holidays for this summer?

(MK) We've combined a few days by the sea (with restrictions to stay safe) with a few days in the Slovak mountains. We like active holidays and as kids are getting older, they are becoming our best hiking mates.

(EV) My dad says it is ideal to have a life one does not need a holiday from. I agree with him. I have not been to the seaside for several years. Due to the unexpected circumstances of 2020, we haven't travelled to Greece as we had planned. And to be honest, I am not really missing it. We enjoyed trips to various locations in Slovakia, our garden and the woods of Bratislava immensely.

## Do you have any tips for places worth visiting in Slovakia?

(MK) I am a fan of Eastern Slovakia, here I would recommend Poloniny National Park, wooden churches and also Jewish history sights, such as the Jewish cemetery in Topoľa. From other regions, it is Gemer and its forgotten villages, for example Štítnik, which was love at first sight. And the view from Muráň castle is a must.

(EV) I recommend Vyhne, the hills above Nová Dubnica, Trenčianske and Turčianske Teplice. Get off the beaten tracks and the nature of Slovakia will amaze you.

## What is the favorite part of your day and why?

(MK) Morning coffee at work or at home on weekends.

(EV) I am a morning person. Having a cup of tea on the

terrace or enjoying the early morning fog above the Bratislava skyline from my office are my favorite views.

## Do you have any habits or routines that help you maintain your work-life balance and work well for you?

(MK) Well, I am still struggling to find this balance. The only thing I have managed this summer is to play more (family) golf. I have had a green card for almost 13 years, but never managed to play more than ten times a year. This year it's different and I've enjoyed it very much, as nothing clears my head better than golf.

(EV) Running in Small Carpathians with my dogs, rest in the solitude of my home, reading a book. And switching off the work email.

## What advice would you give to your 20-something-year old self?

(MK) You will never be ready. Do it anyway!

(EV) Follow your intuition. Say "no" more often. Always wear sunscreen.

## What are the parts of your work that still excite you and give you motivation?

(MK) First of all, being among my colleagues. Positive energy and true devotion to work and looking for best possible results in what we do is in Pontis' DNA.

(EV) The majority of my work is exciting and motivating. I am lucky to be working with dedicated colleagues, progressive teachers, creative children and business people who value corporate social responsibility and giving back to the community.

## If you had to make a career switch, in what other profession can you imagine yourself?

(MK) Any, under two conditions. I would have to learn constantly and be among people. Otherwise, I would be bored.

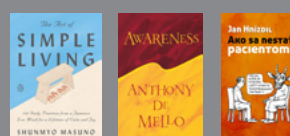
(EV) When I was a child, I wanted to be a movie director. I thought managing people and creating an emotional masterpiece afterwards was a dream job. And that's exactly what I do. Running an educational non-profit organization is a huge challenge. I would not want to change it for anything else right now. The positive impact my work has on lives of thousands of people is definitely worth it.

## What book do you gift or recommend the most often and why?

(MK) From leadership books there are especially two: Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way and Lean In by Sheryl Sandberg. From fiction it is any book written by Chaim Potok, I like his style. And recently I have read Kapuscinski's Szachinszach. It is great and tiny.



(EV) It is impossible to choose one book. These three books drew my attention lately: The Art of Simple Living by Shunmyo Masuno, Awareness by Anthony de Mello and Ako sa nestaf pacientom by Jan Hnízdil.



## Can you name three sources you have recently learned from or have inspired you the most (e.g. people, books, websites...)?

(MK) I regularly listen to podcasts and I'll pick two: Editor's Picks of the Economist, released weekly, and also NPR's How I Built This. As for people, I've been recently impressed by Kamala Harris, the US vice presidential candidate.

(EV) I am a very lucky person. I get to meet and learn from many successful, clever and inspiring people in my line of work. Working with Fraser Gault has been particularly motivating for me recently.

## What is your biggest fear for the generation of your children? What about the biggest hope?

(MK) The biggest fear is that the abundance of digital will make their lives easier but less enjoyable. And the biggest hope is that every kid will be able to achieve his/her potential.

(EV) I think today's children as well as parents are in a difficult position. Today, more than ever, we are all being faced with a perception of perfection. Comparing ourselves to one another. Having to be "successful" – and not being aware of the fact that the definition of success may vary significantly for each person. Trying to reach a destination and not enjoying the ride. Having a talent and not making a benefit of it.

I believe that children are the world's biggest hope. A child is a miracle and it should never be taken for granted. Children and young people are fantastic – playful, curious, inventive, honest. We need to work with them, dedicate our time and energy to them, teach them by example, learn from them, talk to them and listen to what they are saying. The return on investment on educating a child and a young person is much higher than educating an adult. My hope is that we keep this in mind.