

CASE STUDIES (all names and some case details have been changed to preserve confidentiality).

Work Life Balance

Nicola was living her life with an overwhelming feeling of guilt. She loved her job and had made a brilliant career, but felt that she had to stay at home and look after her children instead. As a result, she was not enjoying her work and her feeling of guilt affected the time she spent with her children.

Whenever Nicola was at work, she heard an accusing voice in her head, most likely her mother's, that said "the best job for a woman is to look after her man".

Counselling helped Nicola to "turn the voice down" and to feel proud of her achievements. She realised that she would never have been happy to be a stay at home mum, like her mother was, and that her children would suffer as a result.

Previously, a successful business woman, **Laura** was getting depressed staying at home with small children and relying on her husband to earn a living. Her husband was very supportive of her going back into business again, but she was torn between the desire to be a "perfect mother" and re-claiming her "former life".

In a course of several sessions we explored Laura's feelings about working and her feelings about being a mother, which revealed a complicated relationship between her "inner child" and "inner parent". Counselling gave Laura the ability to differentiate between "adopted" feelings and prejudices about a woman's role, which did not belong to her, allowing her to discover her own feelings and desires.

Laura was then able to build a new life, which included her children and her work, the way she wanted it, not the way she was "meant" to live.