

WHAT IS A BALANCED LIFE?

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WHAT IS A BALANCED LIFE?

How many times have you heard people say that they would love to balance out their lives? Probably quite a few and no doubt you have said the same thing to. But what is a balanced life anyway? Let's take a look.

When your life is balanced you feel happy about those things you do and about who you are. You don't feel overwhelmed when unexpected things crop up.

In order to live a balanced life then try to use the following five habits and apply them to your own life.

1. While it is important to plan for the future you do need to be aware of what is happening in your life right now. So awareness is the first habit you need to form. When your life is balanced it means that you are aware of your current situation, it does not mean being obsessed with what the future might hold. It also means letting go of the past. Being aware allows you to make good decisions and choices, giving you fewer regrets later on.

2. The next habit is taking care of your body and your health. You need to be grateful for what you have and you need to take care of yourself to maintain this. This includes paying attention to what you eat and getting in enough exercise. This habit also includes learning to rest and relax when you are tired. If your body is not balanced then neither will your life be balanced.

3. Onto the next habit which involves your creativity. Every person faces some type of challenge almost every day. When you can learn to deal with these challenges by incorporating your creativity into them, you are well on the way to having a balanced life.

4. Your next habit is the one of patience and this can be difficult for many people to develop. By developing patience as a habit it will help you deal with almost all challenges, problems and issues that life loves to throw at you. Developing patience improves your own life and that of your spouse's and your children's lives. So learn how to not react immediately and quite often a simple smile can diffuse any situation.

5. Our lives are totally complicated and by simplifying them you can easily balance things out more. Try to think of what you must have in your life and do away with unnecessary things. Do you need to own two fancy cars, or go on that fancy vacation just because your

friends do? Pick and choose what is important to you and your family in order to live a happy and fulfilled life.

TOP TIPS FOR BALANCING LIFE AND WORK

Just about everyone these days has to figure out a way to balance life and work. Use the following tips to help you achieve just this.

1. Defining and Setting Your Priorities - regardless of how much you would like to get accomplished each day, you only have 24 hours. For this reason you must learn to set your priorities. Take a look at all the things you want to get done including:

Being successful at work

Exercising more often

Spending more time with your children

Taking an evening class

Now you must determine which items are most important to you. If you want to spend more time with your children, then schedule certain time periods for this.

While you may want to take an evening class, how important is this to you? Are you trying to improve your education to get a better paying job? Or is it for pleasure - define and set your priorities.

2. Planning in Advance - there is no doubt that from Monday to Friday you are extremely busy. If preparing meals is difficult and you tend to resort to fast food, start planning and preparing meals on the weekend. You could cook up a large roast or chicken on Sunday. Use the leftovers for Monday's meal. Make up a large batch of soup or spaghetti and freeze some for during the week. With a little advance planning and preparing you can feed healthy meals to your family and reduce your eating out budget.

3. Share Responsibilities - this applies to both your job and your home life. If you are feeling overwhelmed at work is it possible to delegate certain projects to a co-worker? Talk to your boss about this, they may not even realize how overwhelmed you are feeling.

At home you don't have to be the super parent, there is nothing wrong with asking for help. Delegate chores to your children, even young children can help tidying up and vacuum.

If you and your spouse need a break ask another family member if they could watch your kids for the evening or weekend. When was the last time they stayed over at their grandparents? This can be a

great way to free up some time to spent together and both your kids and the grandparents will love spending time together.

Use these top tips to add a sense of stability and balance back into your life. There is no need to feel overwhelmed at home or at work. Asking for help can bring you rewards you never dreamed of.

GETTING THAT BALANCE WORKING FOR YOU

To successfully balance your life and feel as though you are accomplishing your desires there are several things you can start to do. One of the first ones is to simply create a schedule.

If you haven't used a calendar then you should start using one. It is an easy way to see what you have going on and when. Plus it allows you to make time for those important things in life.

You should try and use two different calendars, one for work and one for your personal life. When you have a large project to complete start planning it out and allotting time on your calendar.

Schedule in your breaks and be aware of any appointments or errands that you have to run immediately after work. This way, when you know you have to pick up your children, you won't be tempted to stay a few minutes longer at work.

For your home calendar get into the habit of scheduling family time, along with time for housework, shopping and some alone time, just for you! When you do this you will know that your child has a baseball game that you don't want to miss. Simply schedule this time on your work calendar as well, so you don't forget!

Another way to get a balance between work and home is to avoid as many distractions and interruptions as possible. Maybe you can put your phone onto voice mail, or use headphones if the office is busy.

One huge distraction is your inbox. You don't have to check your mail every 10 minutes. Instead make a habit of only checking it just a few times per day. This way you won't be tempted to start answering unnecessary emails or start chatting with a friend.

This next item is super important and has to do with your mindset. Stop thinking that you have to be working on overdrive, or that you have to be a superman or woman. You don't and you can only accomplish so much each day.

Don't get into the habit of skipping your breaks or working through lunch. Instead always make a point of taking these breaks and recharge and refuel. You will find that your energy and concentration levels are renewed.

In addition to this learn to say 'no'. You don't have to accept every invitation you receive, and you don't have to always be the parent

that volunteers at school. You will have more peace of mind when you refuse certain things and only take on those that you truly have time for.

FINDING TIME IN YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE

Do you feel as though you are running around like crazy, you feel as though you are being pulled in all directions, and don't know where to turn next? This is not an uncommon feeling and is a sign that you need to discover ways to free up time in your busy schedule.

When you have achieved a work - life balance you will be enjoying life every day. You can handle pretty much anything that life throws at you, you are happy and content with the person that you are.

To find time in your schedule you need to try and find a way to remove unnecessary things. Your goal should be to live a much simpler life.

To achieve this try and make a list of all the things that are important to you. Then narrow this list down again and have just two or three main priorities in your life. Just doing this removes a ton of stress and gives you more time.

For example you may be trying to juggle work, studying for a degree after work and saving for a new home, as well as spending time with your family. If you are feeling overwhelmed with all of this is there something that you can put on the back burner for a while?

Is studying for your degree just an interest or a way to get that new home? If it is only for your pleasure can you spend less time on it or put it off for a year. This would free up your time to focus on saving for your home or having more family time.

Once you can limit some of your activities you will find that having more free time makes you feel happier and more relaxed. You automatically feel less stressed because you can envision getting home and playing with your children before they go to bed.

Sometimes it can definitely be difficult to cut things out of your schedule. If your work hours are getting longer and longer, take a look at what you do all day. Actually write out a calendar and allocate times to everything you do.

Say you work from 8am to 4pm - write down everything you do for a couple of days. This way you can see any patterns emerging. At the end of the day you can tally up how much time you spend on certain projects and how much time you spend on emails. You may be surprised at what you discover. Then see what you can cut back on so you can leave work at the right time each day.

DOES YOUR LIFE FEEL LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON?

When you are attempting to balance your life and your career you are often left feeling as though you are running a marathon. You just keep going and going and never seem to find, let alone reach, the finish line.

At work you may face a full calendar of meetings and deadlines for projects. While at home you have children to take to after school activities, homework to deal with and more. Let alone laundry, grocery shopping and dinner preparations.

When you feel so overbooked a natural reaction is to start putting more hours in to get everything done. You may find yourself staying later at work, or you may stay up late at night to finish that load of laundry.

Most people are struggling to find a way to balance their work and their personal life. Many actually have this as a priority over making more money or getting that promotion. They are looking for balance!

In order to stop running that marathon and never finishing it you need to take a good look at your life. Has your 40 hour work week manifested into a 60 hour week? The question you need to ask yourself is why? What has happened in order for you to spend that additional time at work.

One of the first things to look at is your time management skills. Are you spending too much time checking your email, do you sneak on social media sites? It is amazing how much time can be wasted by doing menial tasks.

Instead of arriving at work and checking your email, prioritize what you have to get done that day. What is the one biggest project that must be accomplished? Then simply get it done! Put off checking emails and other items until this project is finished. At least you now know you won't have to work late because of the fear of missing a deadline.

Each morning create a list of what has to be done and when. Always move the less important items to after lunch.

You can apply these same techniques to your home life. When you get home concentrate on getting the main things done first. This might be cooking dinner or taking your child to an appointment.

Leave the things that can wait until later on, try leaving them until the weekend. If you can do this then you know that job wasn't as important as you thought.

Just by making a few changes in how you look at things you can actually cross that finish line!