

## How to Balance Work and Home Life

By Chris Palmer and Angeli Gabriel

Many of us tend to be workaholics and neglect our families. Given the many responsibilities of work and home, it's easy to find yourself struggling to balance all of them. Reaching this balance is essential if you want to achieve serenity, fulfillment, and success in your life. In order to be successful in your career and also have a home life which is rich, fun, and rewarding, you need to pursue the following five actions:

- *Identify your most important roles.* Roles are your key responsibilities and relationships, both professionally and personally. It is important to decide which ones are the most valuable and worth cultivating. By doing so, you create a variety of perspectives from which to examine your life to ensure balance. For example, if your most important roles are spouse and parent, and you put that in writing and share it with your family, then you are more likely to keep your work at work in order to spend quality time with your loved ones. Discovering what you care deeply about, and committing yourself to act responsibly in that area, will help you balance work and home responsibilities.
- *Set goals.* Recognizing what you want to achieve is a powerful process. It allows you to focus your energies on turning dreams into reality, and it causes you to stretch and grow in new ways. For example, if you set a goal of having a closer, more emotionally intimate relationship with your spouse, then you will be more focused on doing that instead of wasting time on trivialities (such as office gossip or distracting social media sites). This will help you to develop increased self-discipline that will benefit you both in and out of the office.
- *Manage your time wisely.* Once you identify those meaningful roles and goals, manage your time accordingly. By focusing on important goals, you lessen your chances of procrastinating or becoming distracted. One example of this is starting your day by working on an important and valuable project, such as repairing a damaged relationship with a teenage daughter. Many people start their day by checking their email first, which often leads to a litany of smaller tasks to be taken care of all day. But by starting your day accomplishing an important project (for example, apologizing to your daughter for losing your temper and yelling at her), you will become energized and more confident about your life and keeping it in balance.
- *Learn to say "No"* This can be one of the most difficult skills to learn, but it can make a world of difference on how much time you have to balance your work and home life. By declining requests from others in a friendly and compassionate way, you will be able to focus on your goals and not waste your time and energy on things that are not as meaningful. For example, if a colleague at work asks you to attend a meeting during the time you originally set aside for your family, consider declining. That's not always possible of course, but if you do so respectfully, your co-worker

will hopefully understand and you will be able to pursue what is most important to you.

- *Take care of yourself* Last, and certainly not least, you must tend to your own self-development and self-renewal. This involves addressing four dimensions: **physical**, which includes exercise, relaxation, and a healthy diet; **social/emotional**, which includes love, friendship, and having a sense of belonging; **mental**, which involves developing yourself intellectually and building your intellectual capital; and **spiritual**, which involves finding a purpose and meaning in your life. Taking care of these four dimensions will help you become a more fulfilled and balanced individual with a great capacity for effectively tackling responsibilities both at work and at home.

Every human being only has twenty-four hours a day and one body to work with, so they have to make the most of them. By taking care of yourself, learning to decline requests, managing your time, setting goals, and identifying your most important roles, you can work toward having a balanced, fulfilling, successful, and deeply satisfying life.

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