



When A Lack Of Balance Is Okay

From Jones Loflin

Powerful Ideas-Practical Solutions-Personal Approach



Whether you call it work life balance, work life blend, or just maintaining your sanity, we all seem to be in search of that elusive point in life when it seems that our work, relationships, and personal well-being are in harmony. If this article were a commercial, this would be the point at which soothing music would begin, and some really happy-looking people would begin appearing on your screen. And then someone would promise to deliver what every other thing you have tried has failed to do... bring you a greater sense of balance.

Don't get me wrong. There are any number of products and services that do help us bring more order and sanity to our break neck schedules and execution of our work and life priorities. I just think we put an enormous amount of negative pressure on ourselves when we examine our schedules and don't see a "balanced" mixture of work and life.

Instead of always trying to figure out how to obtain balance in our lives, what if we gave ourselves permission to experience an out of balance life from time to time? In other words, when is a lack of balance okay? After giving the question some thought, here are some of my thoughts:

When it is temporary. Depending on the activity, temporary could be 15 minutes or one year. The thought here is that you have a clearly defined ending point when you will no longer be so consumed by this area of your work or life. Retail store managers and employees will certainly experience a lack of balance in their lives until the end of December and will neglect other areas of their lives. They know that come January, however, their lives will return to some sense of normalcy. My friend Chad is a plant controller, and the first 3-4 days of each month he does what is called "period close." I don't dare call him during those few days because I know he is up to his eyeballs in numbers. His workflow adjusts after a few days. Instead of wringing your hands about the hours that a current work assignment is taking, take comfort in the fact that it will end, and make plans now on how you will replenish those areas of life you have been neglecting.

When you have been fully engaged with other areas you will now neglect for awhile. As I write this article, I am on a 5 day business trip. I miss my family already, and feel a twinge of guilt because I won't be there to experience life with them this week.

However, I am just coming off a weekend where I spent all of it fully focused on them, and I am already set to be with them all day on Saturday. The mistake I find many people make is that they don't take care of the right things at the right moment, and they spend so much time regretting that they didn't make better choices when they had the chance.

When you are experiencing a breakthrough. Call it being in the zone or in the flow, there are times when ideas start coming, and we need to stay the course to make sure we don't lose them. I typically write first thing in the morning. When I get a new idea rolling around in my head, I can't just stop and come back later. I may have to miss a breakfast with my family, get to work a little later, or forego exercise in order to finish the thought.

When you know you'll regret it later. As my dad's health failed in his last year of life, the time I had to devote to his care was significant. My business suffered, and time with my own family was sometimes limited. I knew, however, that not taking the chance to honor and care for my dad in this way would haunt me forever. I also knew it was temporary. The choice to take a challenging work assignment or pursue a higher degree will no doubt impede on time on family and personal time, but when will it *not* do that?

When it's the chance of a lifetime. Rebecca Jones, an extremely talented videographer who is also a friend of mine, once had the chance to intern with Ken Burns. It required a move to the Northeast and very little financial reward, but what an amazing opportunity to work with someone who is the icon in producing documentary films.

Now the question that's been on your mind since you read the title of this article is, "When is a lack of balance NOT okay?" That's a subject for another day, but here are three possibilities:

- When the lack of balance is the result of continued poor choices about how you use your time
- When your actions are influenced more by who others think you should be than what you know you want to become
- When you consistently make choices that are out of sync with your values

If you go back and review the reasons that it's okay to have a lack of balance, you probably recognize that your life is probably going to be *out* of balance more often than it is *in* balance. That was the premise behind the book [*Juggling Elephants*](#), I co-authored with Todd Musig. In it, we equate the struggle of balancing work and life to a circus with 3 rings. In a circus, there is rarely the same level of activity in all 3 rings (balance). One moment one ring is bursting with activity while the other two are less busy, and then a few minutes later

another ring becomes the focal point while another may go dark (unbalanced). At the end of the circus performance, however, there will have been a balance of acts in all 3 rings.

In the same way, giving ourselves permission to more fully focus on one area of our work or life when it meets the criteria above is a better approach to achieving success in all of them.

What criteria do you use to allow a lack of balance in your life?

About The Author

With a passion for success that is instantly infectious and a wit that will have you laughing from his first sentence, author and speaker **Jones Loflin** equips individuals with real tools to conquer today's tsunami of work and life challenges. You can learn more about Jones at www.jonesloflin.com

You can also contact him at:

info@jonesloflin.com 800-853-4676