



BALANCING YOUR LIFE

Impact of work and career on family and marriage

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Balance in life is absolutely necessary for sustained high performance leadership. Putting personal health, family and professional relationships, mental sharpness at risk with an unbalanced life style, creates the danger that leaders will ultimately fail in one form or another.

Good business and good leadership demands self-mastery of the choices we make in our lives. As never before, managers at all levels must ask “how is the balance in my life?”, and have the courage to take control, by what ever means, to live a “quality of life”. Otherwise we are likely to become a “hostage” to demands around us, causing pain to those we love, our employees, and to ourselves, leading to serious negative consequences. It is myth that to be a high performer and to succeed at the highest levels, work life-balance must be sacrificed.

Establishing life pillars

We can all establish pillars of life-balance that work for us. These pillars can be work/career, family/friends, personal interests (hobbies, sports, philanthropy). Additional pillars, such as spirituality and religion, community service and voluntary work, or accumulation of wealth can be added if they are the right ones for you. Time is scarce and must be divided, to ensure balance is maintained across the pillars.

Make balance sustainable

Make sure that none of your pillars take over your life completely and overpower other pillars permanently. It may happen temporarily, but you have to be careful that it does not become a long term trend. Whenever one pillar grows disproportionately large, conscious actions should be taken to redress the balance. Personal time is important. It is the time to reflect and focus your conscious mind on things outside work. It gives you spiritual satisfaction and increases brain processing time. Occupying your conscious mind with hobbies allows your unconscious mind to figuratively wander off and work undisturbed on its own thoughts. There are numerous examples of employees and executives whose balanced lives help them be more creative, less stressed, and maintain sustained high performance. In addition, hobbies and personal interests can make you a more interesting person.

Listen to your life chapters

Visualize your life as a book. Each chapter must have a beginning, middle and end. Listen to your life chapters actively, with all your senses: Doing so can help bring balance to your life.

What are some signs that chapter's end? ·

- When business goals and personal objectives are achieved. ·
- When stagnation occurs – you may find yourself on the wrong track and feel dissatisfied. ·
- When you feel a need to change priorities – attain new skills and new horizons.

Following life chapters allows you to be in touch with your own compass and not follow agendas set by others. As a leader, you may want to help raise awareness of life chapters for others by coaching and acting as a sounding board. Coaching should include those executives who are underperforming. However, no favor is made to continually underperforming executives by finding a slot for them elsewhere in the organization. It only prolongs their agony and delays the inevitable. These executives should often be encouraged to leave – to finish their chapter, and move on to the next stage of their lives.

Preach what you practice

Leaders should find the time and energy to talk publicly about the benefits of finding balance. They are watched and listened to, and can instill change. Show deep respect for employees' interests. Take direct actions – insist that your employees take holidays (not pay-outs as compensation for untaken vacation), as well as time off to pursue personal interests.

Today young employees enter the workforce with expectations of having more time for balance in their lives. They aren't necessarily focused on corporate loyalty or status symbols. Their workplace focus is more on relationships and outcomes. They expect greater workplace flexibility. Each generation has its own distinct values, view of authority, connection to the world, sense of loyalty and expectations of leaders and the workplace.

Express yourself fully

Select a way of life that is congruent with your own personal qualities, values and needs. In essence, all life components are tied to your identity. Your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual being is connected and needs harmony. Expressing yourself fully requires a lot of awareness, effort, and careful planning.

Value time - life is finite

Time is lost when you're involved in activities you don't enjoy or add value to your life. Clarify your needs, values and purpose. Note activities that energize you and let your creativity blossom. Identify skills and accomplishments that give you a sense of pride and purpose. If you do not have a hobby, get one.

There are models of highly successful leaders who do manage their life in a way that they maintain balance and get great business results. They never let themselves or their life be a "hostage" to anyone, anything, anytime, anywhere.

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