

Video 2 - Grades, Life, Balance

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Grades and Life

Your grades do not define you

You are here at UCLA. One of the reasons you got into UCLA was because you had good grades in high school and/or at community college. While you are in school, a lot of your energy is poured into your classes and I can understand why grades feel so important. That said,

Your grades do not define you

It feels good to get good grades. Grades do play a role in graduate school admissions. But they are not the most important thing in life. No one on their death bed looks back and says “I wish I got an A- instead of a B+ in that one college class.”

A Story from my life

Work - Life Balance

I like to split where we put our energies of life into three broad categories:

- Work
 - Jobs and internships
 - School and academics
 - Other professional obligations
- Relationships
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Romantic partner
 - Other social obligations
- Self
 - Care of physical health (food, sleep, exercise)
 - Care of mental health (sleep, play, entertainment)
 - Care of spiritual health (if you are spiritual/religious)

There are 24 hours in a day. It is not possible to give 100% to all categories

Work - Life Balance

Work-Life balance is achieved by consciously choosing what is important to you and devoting your time and energies accordingly.

In general, the more you put in, the more you get out.

Satisfaction can be found by accepting the natural consequences of what you have chosen to deprioritize.

Work - Life Balance

Let's say you are part of a group of friends. Let's say that one day you become involved with a romantic partner.

If you choose to invest all of your relationship hours into your romantic partner, you will likely develop a very strong relationship with your romantic partner. However, because you now invest much less into your original group of friends, those relationships will naturally become more distant. When you see distance forming, it can initially feel hostile. This is not (necessarily) the result of your friends being angry that you have a romantic partner but the natural consequence of having less time to spend with them.

As people, we have to make a choice about what is important to us.

When you accept the natural consequences of investing less time into something, you can reduce your own feelings of bitterness and jealousy.

Work - Life Balance

In the corporate and professional world, people who devote a lot of energy into the goals of the company are rewarded. The company is not necessarily punishing people who choose to have families and a life outside of work.

From the company's perspective, who would they rather promote?

- the person who did everything asked of them and then continued to stay at work and did even more
- the person who did everything asked of them and then immediately left to spend time with their family/friends/romantic partner

You have to choose what is important to you. If climbing the ranks within the company is more important, then you will spend your time accordingly. If spending time with your family/friends/romantic partner is more important, then spend your time accordingly.

Self care is important

You must not neglect taking care of your physical and mental health.

If you neglect care of self, you will likely operate at less than 100% efficiency and the time you invest in work/school/relationships will not be as productive.

Examples:

- You don't get enough sleep. A friend invites you out. You choose to accept your friend's invitation instead of sleep, but you are a bit 'out of it' and are a drag to hang around. Maybe it would have been better to decline your friend's invitation and get sleep.
- Exams are coming up. You choose to skip a meal and minimize sleep to study. You end up getting sick. Your performance on the exam suffers. Maybe it would have been better to eat properly, sleep well, and study a bit less.

Self care is important

When I tell you that your physical and mental health is important, I'm encouraging you to choose to invest your time into activities like exercise, sleep, and relaxation that will boost your physical and mental health.

Sometimes this means choosing not to complete your homework to 100%.

The natural consequence of this is a homework grade that is less than 100%.

When you can readily embrace this natural consequence of prioritizing your own physical and mental health over your homework grade, you can enjoy the quarter with less bitterness, more joy and better health.

Beware of “fruitless” entertainment

Entertainment and fun activities are important for your mental well being. It's important to have fun.

I love hanging out with people I like, watching TV, movies, sports, playing board games, video games, going on hikes, browsing the Internet, reading a book, listening to podcasts, etc.

Participating in an entertainment activity should be a break from work and should give you mental energy so you can return to your work in a good mood.

Some activities, and even hanging out with certain people, can have the opposite effect - they drain you. Some video games, apps, and social media sites are designed to be addictive - giving your brain immediate dopamine pleasure hits while you use them so you play round after round or continue scrolling forever (and keep coming back) ... but after spending hours of doing the activity, you don't feel good about yourself.

Be mindful and selective about your entertainment activities.