

Title:

Four Facets Of Work/Life Balance

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Summary:

I recently came through a week of very hard work, chaotic energy and long hours. As I reviewed my goals and progress for the week, I realized that I couldn't remember much of anything that happened during that week. It was all a muddled blur in my mind, one day blending into the next. I do believe that hard work is good for us. However, if we don't also include periods of rest, quiet contemplation and recreation, what are we working so hard for? We must also make time to enjo...

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Article Body:

I recently came through a week of very hard work, chaotic energy and long hours. As I reviewed my goals and progress for the week, I realized that I couldn't remember much of anything that happened during that week. It was all a muddled blur in my mind, one day blending into the next. I do believe that hard work is good for us. However, if we don't also include periods of rest, quiet contemplation and recreation, what are we working so hard for? We must also make time to enjoy the fruits of our labor.

They say "a woman's work is never done", but this holds true for men also. Work in general is never done - which is a good thing really, because if there is no more work to be done, there is no more progress to be made. But constant work without play makes for a very dull existence. The key is balance. It is a difficult thing to achieve for many, myself included. For most of my life I have either been going 100 miles an hour, or stalled completely.

So how do we create balance in our lives? I believe there are four key areas of our lives that require (yes, require!) daily attention. By the way, they are listed in order of importance.

God/Spirituality - taking time to center yourself and commune with God (whatever your interpretation of God may be), is crucial. Prayer, meditation and quiet

contemplation are so important to our overall health. It doesn't matter what religion you practice, it matters only that you make time to honor your spiritual self and your connection to the Divine, every single day. First thing in the morning is best for most people, since it can help you adopt a positive mindset for your day. Or you may prefer the late evening hour before bedtime, to help you de-stress from your day. You don't have to spend hours on this, 30 to 60 minutes is plenty.

Self - each of us needs time every day to work on our physical and emotional wellness. This is time we can use for exercise, journaling and self-exploration, and hobbies. Again, it doesn't have to be massive amounts of time, but at least some time for exercise and self-care is necessary. Women especially are good at taking care of everyone else and neglecting themselves. Don't do that! You cannot fully give to someone else when you are empty yourself. Make yourself a priority, and make time to care properly for yourself, physically and emotionally. Trust me, you will be a much happier person and be able to give that much more to those you love.

Spouse/Family - This is actually two categories, but they do tend to blend together. Time together as a family is so important, and it is something that is sadly beginning to happen less and less in our hurried society. Here are some ways to help that. Make it a priority to have dinner together every single night. No distractions or television blaring in the background. Have a "family day" or "family night" where you spend one evening or perhaps one weekend day together doing something fun as a family - and this doesn't include camping out around the television. Go to the park and have a picnic, visit flea markets or garage sales, or during the winter you can build a snowman or go sledding or ice skating. Time spent together having fun is the most important thing. This goes for you and your spouse also. Have a weekly "date night" where the two of you spend time alone together, without the kids, and without distraction. Relationships require maintenance to keep them strong. Make it romantic and rekindle the flame that once brought you together. :-)

Work/Business - are you surprised I put this last? Most people today put work first and forget the rest, but doing so creates a sense of constant duty and drudgery. Work is important, but it's not the most important thing in life. If you make the other three categories your first priorities, your time spent working will be much more productive. You won't feel so burned out and stressed out, and you will accomplish alot more than you would otherwise.

One of the most important things we can do to become more balanced in our lives is master the art of Mindfulness. It means being fully present in every moment, giving our full attention to every task. This can be difficult for many of us,

because as we are performing one task, our mind is already moving ahead to the next task, and the one after that. This means that at any given time, we are performing multiple tasks at the same time. One we are performing with our hands, and the others in our mind. What a way to feel exhausted and overwhelmed.

Try focusing only on one task at a time, and I think you'll be surprised at how much more you can get done, and with less fatigue at the end of the day. It takes practice though. At first you may need to consistently bring your attention back to the task at hand. Your mind may want to keep wandering, as it is used to doing. That's okay, simply bring it gently back to what you are doing right now, and continue on. With practice, you will be able to master this and feel much more centered and calm throughout your days.