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**Getting Life Balance ... At Last**

**By Susan Dunn**

**Getting Life Balance ... At Last by Susan Dunn, MA, Emotional Intelligence Coach**

There's a lot of talk these days about life balance. For many of us, life is out-of-balance - too much work, too little family, too much sitting, too little exercise; too much sugar, too little green vegetables; too much stress, too little relaxation.

If you go to a "life balance coach," you'll probably be told to make a pie chart of your life, and to start removing things that are stressing you.

It may be suggested you change your job or career, change your partner, get more day care for the kids, hire a maid, get more exercise, eat more carbs, set priorities, rearrange your schedule, or move around other external things.

These are important, but it's treating the symptom, not the cause. There's a better way to get life balance that lasts longer and has a deeper impact on your life. It requires that you make some internal changes.

After all, you will never be able to remove every source of stress in your life, nor would you want to. Consider for instance that your husband is currently cause you stress. Maybe he's just had a quadruple bypass or you're worried he will. Maybe your wife has gotten a promotion and is very on edge lately and difficult to be with. There is stress in the relationship, but is this a reason to throw your partner out, like "toleration"? A person is not a "toleration," and your primary relationships are not "obstacles." And if you need an extreme example of this faulty line of reasoning - consider how much stress that little ole newborn baby put into your life!

But not only can we not get rid of all our stress, we wouldn't want to. It is widely reported in psychological literature that every organism (including we humans) seeks what's called "equilibrium."

Like Goldilocks and the Three Bears, we don't want too much, and we don't want too little. We want it just right! Subjects who have spent hours in a sensory deprivation tank are miserable, just like the adrenalin-junkie on the

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corporate merry-go-round.

The ideal is to have just the right amount of stress, change and emotion in your life - not too much, not too little, and just right. And all the time. Ha!

What happens, then, to our "life balance"? We look inside, not outside. There is no way we are going to be able to control external things. Just when you settle down for a relaxing evening at home, the neighbor's fire alarm goes off, and fire engines start arriving. Who knew?

What can bring you balance, is to develop your emotional intelligence, which includes such competencies as resilience. This bolsters your ability to handle the stress you can't eliminate from your life, or wouldn't want to. Also, by determining your values, and setting priorities

according to them, you can bring purpose into your life, which has a balancing effect in itself. How many times have we heard someone say, "They don't pay me enough to do this job," whereas there are people volunteering all the time at non-profit agencies undergoing similar stress who experience it positively, because it's got meaning to them and what they want to be doing.

Emotional competency also includes Authenticity and Intentionality. Once you know who you are, you are far less likely to get involved in doing things you don't want to that will turn into obstacles and needn't have been taken on in the first place. In other words, you learn to say "no".

Intentionality relieves a lot of stress. It's saying what you mean and meaning what you say, and making it happen.

It's similar to "If you don't lie, you don't have to remember anything." If you know you will do what you say you will do, and others know this too, think of the paper work (and worry and accountability energy) that will be saved.

Lastly, by studying emotional intelligence with an EQ coach, you can eventually learn to modulate the emotions that are coming in. You may still want to be caretaker for your aged mother in your home, and you will experience it as far less stressful, because you've learned to manage your emotions, hers, and the rest of the family's.

Life balance is too important. Don't stop with surface things. Don't just try and rearrange external things. Work on your emotional intelligence so you experience your life and emotions in a more balanced way. Most individuals recognize immediate results in their life, both at work and at home.

©Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . I offer coaching, distance learning, and ebooks (<http://www.webstrategies.cc> ) around emotional intelligence for your continued personal and professional development. EQ matters more to your relationships, health, happiness and success than IQ, and it can be learned. Looking for a compatible new partner? Try here: <http://tinyurl.com/2lyea> .  
Mailto:[sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for free ezine.

## What Balance Looks Like For You

By Angie Dixon

Recently, in an online group, we talked about "balance" and an article one member had read decrying the demise of balance altogether. We all had different ideas about what balance is and how to reach it, and I realized, after a number of posts, that we were all right.

I believe it is possible to "achieve balance in our lives." What I don't believe is that the way you create balance is going to match the way I create balance. I don't believe that dividing my time 50/50 or 25/25/25/25 is right for me, though it may be for you.

How do YOU create balance? Easy. Find times when you feel like things are going exactly as they should, that everything in your life is perfectly in alignment, and that you're doing what you need to do, when you need to do it. That's balance. Then "creating" balance becomes RE-creating it. Once you know what to do, you can do it again. And again.

When you're struggling to find what's next out of the middle of a dozen or more things, when everyone feels downhearted and discouraged because they're not getting enough of your time even though you're running between chores and family as fast as you can, you're not in balance.

Imagine your life as a series of circles, arranged around an inner circle. The inner circle is you. If you're just running the bases and touching each circle with your toe as you go by, you're not in balance. But if all those circles are close in to your inner circle, touching or overlapping not only you but each other, chances are you're in balance.

Balance comes when you're doing what you want to be doing, when it needs to be done. It's not about fifty percent of your time being home and fifty percent being work, or any other formula. It's about doing what is important at the time.

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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