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The Key to Work–Life Balance

By Jan Hornford

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It seems we are all seeking work–life balance in our lives.

- * The busy Career Professional working hard to get ahead.
- * The Stay–at–Home Mom who meets everyone's needs but her own.
- * The Entrepreneur who loves her job but often feels engulfed by it.

Sometimes it seems we need to be all things to all people: parent, child, boss, friend, spouse. There are a million demands on our time – all seemingly valid and important. Trying to meet them all leaves us feeling as though we are on a treadmill of activity with no end in sight. So how do we live a life that has balance, peace, time, and still meet our responsibilities?

The Key to Work–Life Balance Is Knowing Who You Are

Yes, it really is that simple. When you know who you are, you know what is really important to you. When you know what is important to you, it is easier to make choices that support you and how you want to live your life. In coaching, what is important to you is called your values. Values do not refer to ethics or moral standards. Values are the essence of who you are. They are the behaviours and activities that bring you great joy or that come easily and naturally to you. When you are engaged in these activities, you feel most like yourself: connected, energised, and peaceful. When your actions, thoughts, beliefs, and goals are aligned with your values, you are living in integrity and will experience a sense of peace, meaning, and purpose in your life. Knowing your values is about knowing who you are.

We often get caught up in doing all sorts of things that we think we should be doing, but that are not very important. We are constantly confronted with multiple possibilities of how to spend our work and

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personal time. There is not enough time to do it all. We often must give up one thing in order to have time to do another. This is why it is vital that you are very clear on what is important to you (your values) and are clear on what you absolutely need to get done for any given week. It is important to recognize the priorities in all aspects of your life. When you know what is most important to you and have clear priorities, then it is easier to make choices on how to use your time. Be honest with yourself about what you can do and what you want to do. Priorities will change day–to–day, week–to–week, and year–to–year. Different things will be more important to you at different times in your life. Be very clear on what is most important to you. Many people may spend up to 35 hours per week watching television. Is this a real priority for you? Perhaps you would rather choose a movie or one really good television show that you enjoy and let the others go. This would free up huge amounts

of time for you to do a myriad of other things. It is good to re–visit your priorities on a weekly basis. What is a priority this week, may not be a priority next week. Sometimes it is easy to be clear on your priorities (attend Johnny's concert) and sometimes it is not so clear.

When you are setting priorities consider:

- * Why am I doing this?
- * Is this something I need to do or is it something I want to do?
- * Or neither? Who else can do this?
- * Is it important that I do this right now or can it wait?
- * Will doing this support my goals and my values?

Setting priorities will help you make conscious and informed choices on how you are using your time. It is all about living with purpose. Spending your time focused on priorities will increase your peace of mind and bring greater meaning and purpose to your life because you are focused on what is really important to you in all aspects of your life.

Coaching Questions

- * Are you clear on what is most important to you? On your values?
- * Are you honouring your values with your choices and actions in your life right now?
- * How do you know?
- * What would you like to have more of in your life?
- * What do you need to let go of to make time for these things?

Take Action

The Key to Work–Life Balance

1. Set Weekly Priorities

At the start of each week think about all of the things that you need or want to do in all areas of your life (home, work, family, self, volunteer). Make a list and then decide what is most important for you to do this week. When you are determining your priorities and activities for the week – base your decisions on which ones will truly honour who you are and will support your values and goals. If that volunteer work you have been doing the past 2 years no longer speaks to your heart and soul, then it may be time to let that obligation go.

Next, schedule time in your week for these priorities. Be sure to also schedule 30–60 minutes in each day for flex time. This time prevents you from over scheduling and allows time for the unexpected, extra time for those things that take longer than we think they will, and downtime to use how you like.

Hold your schedule lightly. It will not serve you to slavishly follow a rigid schedule of to–do's. By setting priorities on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, you build in some flexibility on when you can get them done.

2. Set Boundaries

Set boundaries on how you want to spend your time and honour them. You may choose to make 5–9 pm each evening family time. If you do, be sure you do not return calls or check your email during this time. Perhaps you have scheduled in an hour in the evening to go to the gym. That's great! Do not be waylaid by answering the phone on your way out the door.

Live Your Values – Love Your Life!

Creating life–work balance is really about honouring who you are and what is important to you. It is about choosing how you spend your time based on your values. Values are important because they bring meaning and purpose to your goals and actions. Life is fullest when you access your truth, love, and creativity and live so that you are true to who you are.

If you would like to learn more about identifying your values, fully honouring who you are in your everyday living, or creating time and space in your life for what is important to you. Please visit my website for more information and my free 4 week self– help course:

Living Authentically: Honouring

Your Truth in Everyday Life

Jan Hornford is a Life Coach & Retreat Leader whose passion is to help individuals re–connect with their own wisdom and power and to support them to create the life they want. Her retreats offer the opportunity to experience joyful self–care, connection, and possibility. For more information, please take a look at her website:

<http://www.futureperfect.ca>

Or, call her: 403–313–4064

For more information about the free 4 week self–help course:

Living Authentically: Honouring Your

Truth in Everyday Life

visit:

http://www.futureperfect.ca/living_authentically.html

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

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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

<http://www.discoveringtruenorth.com>

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. Thank you.

What Balance Looks Like For You

Top Ten Reasons To Have A Balanced Life

How To Establish Work Life Balance

You Can Balance Your Life in just 20 Minutes a Day!

The Balance of Balance

Key Secrets to Setting Up Your Own Automatic \$ Making Machine!

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