

Living on Purpose: Achieving Balance Between Work And the Rest of

Your Life

By Della Menechella

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Many of us get so caught up in day-to-day pressures that we often find ourselves reacting to external demands rather than designing lives that really fulfill us. While in today's economic environment we face many stresses in our jobs, it is still possible to create balance between our work and personal lives. The following are some ideas to help you do just that:

Determine What is Important to You - When we don't know what is important to us, it is very easy to let external demands determine our actions. The result can be that we feel our lives have lost their purpose. When we know what really matters to us (i.e., career, family, friends, health), these critical areas become the barometer against which our decisions are made. For instance, if you feel that being with your family is important, you might decide to cut back on some of your professional meetings so you can spend more time at home.

Define Acceptable Performance Levels - Contrary to what many of us super achievers believe, not everything we do needs to be done perfectly. Sometimes 'okay' is good enough. Choose those things where excellence is the only acceptable standard and then decide which tasks can be less than perfect. When I attend certain meetings, my associates laugh when they see my binder with its massive amounts of paper sticking out from all ends. I shove whatever pertains to the meeting into the binder so I can pull it out when I need it. Could I be more organized? Absolutely, but the extra effort is not worth it to me. However, when it comes to getting my programs ready, I am meticulously organized. I write notes for everything I need and check off each item after I place it in the appropriate folder. Before I leave for an event, I triple-check to be sure I have everything. When it comes to my programs, I only accept excellent performance. With other things, I am willing to cut myself some slack.

Combine Activities - Is it possible to combine activities so you are able to enjoy two or more important aspects of your life at the same time? My best friend is a business owner. Each week we meet for lunch and discuss ways to make our businesses more successful. On Saturdays, my husband and I go to the gym together. We enjoy each other's company while we get our bodies into shape. Combining activities saves time and allows you to meet multiple goals with reduced stress.

Meditate and Exercise Regularly - You may think that you cannot possibly fit meditation and exercise into your already overcrowded schedule. However, taking time to meditate and exercise on a regular basis can do much to reduce your stress and improve your productivity. Studies have

proven that people who exercise regularly are usually more creative than those that don't move much. This means that their ability to find creative solutions to their challenges is enhanced. They also have the energy to do the work that is required. Meditation also increases energy and creativity and reduces stress levels. The few minutes it takes to engage in these activities will pay big dividends.

Delegate, Delegate, Delegate - Think about all of the things you do. Which of those activities can be delegated to others? Are there team members who would gain important skills by taking on some of the tasks that you are now doing? If so, give them the opportunity to learn by delegating the tasks to them. Can your family members help you with certain activities? I used to make every dish for our holiday meals. Now other people help create the dinner by bringing something that they have cooked. We get to sample a variety of foods and I have the time and energy to enjoy my guests.

Learn to Say No - Just because someone asks you to do something, does not mean you have to say yes. I realize this is more difficult to do in your job or business, but we can often assert our power of no in our personal lives. If someone asks you to do something, think about whether or not you can really handle the extra pressure at this time. If you can and you want to do it, then say yes. If it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back, then answer with a guilt-free no. Do those things that are important to you and bring joy into your life.

So as you continually try to balance the various aspects of your life, refer to these ideas. They can help you gain greater control and allow you to feel more fulfilled in whatever you are doing.

Della Menechella is a speaker and trainer who helps organizations achieve greater success by improving the performance of their people. She can be reached at 732-985-1919 or menech@dellamenechella.com. Visit www.dellamenechella.com for other free articles about how to achieve peak performance.

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