

The Why, What and How of Better Balance

In a world where the professional and personal demands of our lives often collide and compete, we long for more balance.

Work-life balance is a common plea of overworked and overwhelmed employees. Many organizations recognize that addressing this critical need will attract and retain healthier, happier employees and increase productivity and profits. While they can offer help through flexible work hours, telecommute options and nearby childcare, it's up to employees to evaluate what balance means to them and take action to improve that balance.

Perfect balance will never exist and chasing after it only contributes to the frustration and dissatisfaction we sometimes feel. Instead, it's the small, conscious choices we can make each day that lead to less stress and more success.

Before you can begin to strive for more balance, decide *why* you want it. What would you do if you had more time, energy and other resources? Spend more time with your family? Get healthier? Advance in your career? Knowing the why will keep you motivated as you make changes and develop new habits.

Then, identify and prioritize *what* you're balancing, such as your career, family, home, relationships, finances, health, spirituality, personal development and fun. Are you nurturing each of these areas in a typical day, week or month? What needs more attention? Where are you doing well? What might you do differently to get better results?

Finally, consider *how* these three smart **Work-Life Balance Wisdom** strategies can help you manage your mindset, energy and time.

To enjoy better balance, I commit to:

1) Put Me on My "To Do" List.

When it comes to better balance, energy management is just as important as time management. Making empowering changes and maintaining healthy habits take vitality and commitment. When you're not strong, you will tend to slip back into your old routine. That's why it's so important to make conscious choices every day to take care of yourself and use positive affirmations.

Want to improve your work-life balance? Start with the basics, including eating healthy, drinking plenty of water, being physically active and getting enough sleep. Then, go deeper by choosing to associate with people who live healthy, balanced lives; enjoying a hobby; expressing gratitude; and finding the time to relax and recharge when you need it.

2) Create the Space.

Clutter distracts and confuses us. It drains our energy and keeps us out of balance. While most of us think of physical clutter, like a messy office and overstuffed closet, there's also technical clutter, like your over-reliance on your cell phone and too much time on the Internet, and emotional clutter, like unnecessary obligations and toxic people in your life.

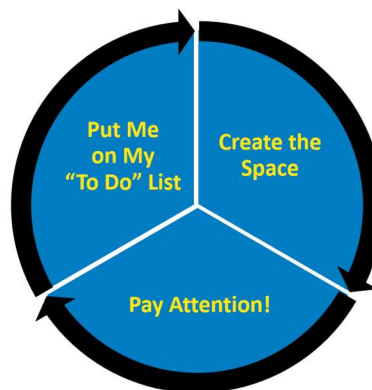
Want to improve your work-life balance? Make a list of all your ongoing commitments, from your professional and personal memberships to committees on which you serve that are not directly related to your job responsibilities. Rank them on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of importance and consider dropping or delegating anything less than a 7. By cleaning out the clutter of unnecessary obligations—as well as other forms of clutter—you'll think clearer, have more energy, and be open to helpful people and ideas.

3) Pay Attention!

Staying present is about enjoying what is right now, instead of lamenting the past or worrying about the future. By being more mindful, you can reduce stress, show more compassion to yourself and others, and increase your satisfaction with your work and life.

Want to improve your work-life balance? Most of us hop from one accomplishment to the next, never savoring our successes or “catching the gifts.” Think about how you can catch the gifts of a job well done, a genuine compliment from a colleague or at the start of a well-earned vacation. And, catch the gifts of lessons learned from your mistakes. That’s the best way to keep from repeating them.

Even one of these strategies can improve your work-life balance and, together, they complement each other. Start with the one that resonates the most with you and then add another until they all become habits that support your success.



Corporate leadership speaker Tricia Molloy is an expert on developing a positive mindset to reduce stress, achieve goals and enjoy more work-life balance. She’s the author of *Working with Wisdom*. Through conference keynotes and employee development programs, Tricia inspires professionals to be more positive, proactive and productive. She also coaches professional women who crave more success at work and in life. Learn more and sign up for the Working with Wisdom newsletter at www.triciamolloy.com.