



**THINKING
 IT THROUGH**
 TED SUN

Evaluate your work priorities, then reflect

Do you have work-life balance? In a changing economy and workplace full of electronic devices that cross the boundaries into your personal life, is it possible to obtain a healthy work-life balance? Before getting into how to create this balance, we must first define it.

To most people, balance is about having enough time for family and work. If you took the time you wanted to spend with your family, is it likely that choice would cause your work to suffer? Would that choice stress you out?

I recently consulted with a successful professional. I asked him if he ever had a day when he didn't turn on his computer. His answer was no.

He now has a task to spend one day a week where the electronic tentacles of work cannot reach him.

Aligning values

The concept of work-life balance is tough to imagine for most Americans today. While the rest of the industrialized world has reduced the number of working hours, a recent study showed the percentage change in hours worked in the United States has increased 20 percent between 1970 and 2002.

During the same time, other industrialized nations such as France, Germany and Japan have all decreased hours worked by 23.5 percent, 17.1 percent and 16.6 percent respectively. How does this relate to the hours you work?

Consider another perspective about balance. The traditional concept of balance is an external idea. It is dependent upon other environmental factors such as work, the boss and the family. This allows for blame – "It's not my fault, my work is always demanding more than I have." This is a no-win situation.

Consider balance from an internal perspective. All that happens around you in your environment is a reflection of your inner self. Your intellect is one of the most powerful systems you possess.

Within this system, you have

REFLECT: *Identify your passion, make time to learn and understand your emotions*

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the power to create the reality you desire.

Once you create an internal balance, everything around you will fall into place.

One of my workshops is on organizational alignment. Participants are asked to create a set of specific values (family is usually at the top of the list). The participants are then asked to write down how many hours do they spend working.

This is not just hours spent in the office, but also the time spent checking e-mail messages from home and doing other off-site activities. Then the participants are asked: How do those hours align with your value of family?

Creating internal balance

Here are three steps to help you create a

better balance. They encompass a new way of thinking and being. It incorporates theories from emotional intelligence to systems thinking.

These steps are among many that have proven to transform many executives and organizations.

- Identify your passion. Passion is one of the greatest drivers of human life. It gives meaning to the simplest actions and events. It puts smiles on people's faces and hearts. Without passion, life is not worth living.

Identify your passion visually with images of what excites you. Place them at a location that you'll see often. This is also one of many systemic medicines that relieve stress, and it's significantly cheaper than any medication you can buy.

- Make time to learn. Learning does not mean reading 20 books every year. Learning is about taking action with new information to create self-knowledge.

To accomplish this, start and end your day with some reflection time. Review what you've accomplished and will achieve tomorrow. Make sure this is in writing. This technique is especially effective in enhancing one's self confidence.

- Engage in emotional intelligence learning. The majority of your education incorporates only analytical intelligence, or IQ.

Consider the spokes on a wheel. If you have one spoke that is well-developed and much stronger than others, would your wheel be able to maintain its shape as it rolls through life?

In order to achieve any form of balance, your EQ must be further developed on a conscious level. Take simple actions and seek the underlying emotion that drives the logic.

Eighty percent of human decisions are made by emotions, while only 20 percent are based on logic.

Balance is not a duality of work and personal time. Instead, balance is about an inner peace that facilitates completeness.

The three steps I've described give you a start on getting there. When you enter this journey, you'll find that life can be perfect, just as you imagined.

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