Optimizing Work-Life Balance
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Course description
Juggling takes practice and patience, and even with those two things, disaster can still occur. The same is true with work-life balance. There will be times when you drop the “family,” “health,” “friends,” and “spirit” balls. They will get scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, and sadly, sometimes shattered. This course will help you mitigate the damage.

The bouncing ball
• You are required to spend a certain amount of time and energy focused on work.
• Whether you enjoy your job or not, it depletes your time and energy resources. Because of this, you have less to give to these other items:
  • Family
  • Health
  • Friends
  • Spirit
• Your natural reaction when something is thrown at you is to catch it, sometimes even at the risk of dropping something else.
• You do not have to sacrifice other aspects of your life, in order to be successful.

Analyze
• Where do you like to spend your time?
• Where should you spend your time?
• To answer these questions, create lists of the following:
  • Your career goals
  • Loved ones
  • Times when you felt proud of yourself
  • Your hobbies
  • The things that use up most of your time

Prioritize
• Notice where your lists overlap.
• If you see discrepancies between what makes you happy and where you’re spending your time, your work-life balance is out of balance.
• This becomes a time-management issue.
• Your goal then is to commit time to the priority aspects of your life.
Compartmentalize

• Think about work as a “day job”.
• Don’t confuse who you are with what you do.
• “Work” should be an isolated thing that does not define you or control other aspects of your life.

Broaden your mind

• We are more complex than our job titles.
• Try to get in the habit of asking different questions when getting to know someone.
• Try asking these questions:
  • What are your favorite hobbies?
  • Did you grow up around here?
  • What are you currently watching on Netflix?
  • Do you have children?
• If someone asks you the default “what do you do?”, try answering it with hobbies, rather than your work.
• It’s important to maintain an identity outside of your occupation.

Isolate work hours

• Isolating your “job” can be more difficult for those who work from home.
• The more you blend domestic duties with work duties, the more difficult it will be to keep a division between them.
• When the lines between work and home are blurred, it’s hard to shift your mindset, but you’ve got to do it.
• Create a clear boundary for “work” hours and “everything-else” hours.
• Set a start time and an end time.
• Set a daily “Out of office” notification, letting clients know when to expect any responses.

Do what you have to do

• Sometimes you’re stuck in a job that demands more than you can control.
• Sometimes you’re in the midst of a project that requires all your attention and energy.
• When in those times, “Do what you have to do.”
• Don’t do so blindly. Acknowledge that you’re going to be neglecting the other items that you’re juggling.
• Mediate the consequences ahead of time.
• If you’re headed into a time-consuming season:
  • Warn your family.
  • Adjust your schedule.
  • Do what you have to do to accommodate it.
  • Plan for time in the future to care for any items you’ve neglected.
  • Recruit support from loved ones to fill in areas you may be neglecting.
  • Don’t just let the balls drop.
  • Do all you can to cushion the landing for when something slips.
1

Have you ever analyzed where your time goes, percentage-wise? If so, did you like your findings?

2

Create your lists, as mentioned in this course. Are you “out of balance”? List three improvements that you can make.