

Work/life Balance is a Myth....or is it?

Have you ever had a balance between your work and your life outside of work? I've heard many people use the term "work/life balance" over and over again as they struggle to find it. I have heard it most often used when a person wants to work less and spend more time with their family.

Is obtaining, or more importantly maintaining, that "balance" truly possible? And what are we trying to balance between? When I think of trying to achieve a "balance" between work and life, I often feel frustrated that I have to constantly make choices between working and having a life! Does this mean that when I'm at work, I don't have a life? And, conversely, when I am living then I am not working? This sounds a bit crazy to me. Just look at your to-do list for any given day. I bet you have some to-do's that are work related and some that are personal and *both* need to get done today.

Here is a metaphor that comes to my mind when I think of the myth of "work/life balance". Think of a see-saw at a playground where one person sits on either side. As one person propels him/herself up the other one goes down and vice versa. If you have ever been on one, you know how difficult it is to balance the see-saw and keep it steady - it's nearly impossible. Even if you do balance for a fleeting moment, trying to maintain it for more than a couple of seconds is futile. The very fact that the see-saw moves up and down is what makes it fun! Life, is not static. Life is movement, growth, change.

Let's compare the perspective of work/life "balance" with a different perspective called work/life "flow".

✓ **First, imagine work/life "balance"**

- Ask yourself what balancing feels like?
- What images come to mind?
- What are you thinking to yourself?
- What are you feeling when you are balancing?
- How long do you stay in balance?

✓ **Next, imagine being in "flow"**

- Visualize your work-life and personal-life as being in "**flow**" with each other.
- What images come to mind?
- What are you thinking to yourself?
- What are you feeling?
- How long can you maintain this flow?

✓ **Repeat**

- Go back and forth between these two perspectives until you can see a difference.
- Which one do you prefer?

- Which one feels better or less stressful?
- Jot down your thoughts to help you sort this out and log any action items you might want to pursue.

Now, the next time someone tells you they are having a tough time finding the holy grail called “work/life balance” you can offer them a different perspective.

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