

## Work Life Balance

*"The problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat."  
- Lily Tomlin*

"Work Life Balance" is a controversial phrase because it's debatable whether "balance", if one imagines an equally weighted scale, is really possible (especially for most senior managers and executives). There's no doubt, that the person who sleeps a good 8 hours each night, works for no more than 8 hours a day, and enjoys the remaining time with his/her family and friends is a rarity!

Nevertheless, the concept of "balance" is an important one for our healthy and well-being and working towards an enjoyable and fulfilling life outside work hours is an important and admirable goal. Research suggests that those who do live a more balanced lifestyle are not just healthier, but they also perform better in the workplace (often in fewer hours).

Accordingly, the following strategies are recommended for those wanting to achieve success in their careers AND their personal lives:

- Make time to exercise and cultivate relaxing and stimulating hobbies to offset your busy lifestyle. For many executives, it's recommended such hobbies are non-competitive. For almost everyone, it's recommended that at least some time each week is spent engaging in activities that are deeply relaxing
- Pace yourself – through the day, week, month and year. Take regular, short breaks rather than one long one at the end of the day, week or year
- View these breaks as an important part of your self-care and ideally, as a joy (not as a necessary evil)
- Make your breaks count by leaving mobile phones, PDAs, laptops and other work related devices in the office or switched off. Just as it's important to be "on" when you're at your desk or in the office it's just as important to switch "off" when you're taking a break (this applies even during lunch times!)
- Be a healthy role model for your colleagues and staff – take all your annual leave and once you've left the office, try not to check emails or messages
- Pay attention to how your colleagues and staff balance their lives (a stressed or burnt out employee is not going to be much use) and where appropriate, actively encourage others to take breaks

It's simply not possible to be an effective employee, let alone an effective manager or leader if you're sick and tired. Achieving a level of balance in your life is vitally important for you, and those around you.

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