



**Reclaim Your Time
and**

Finding Balance

Reclaim Your Time and Live a More Fulfilling Life
Special Report



Finding Balance: Reclaim Your Time and Live a More Fulfilling Life

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Special Report

Life Balance: Am I there yet?

Do you remember going to the circus? There would be three or four acts going on at once. The lady on the flying trapeze caused you to hold your breath, wondering if she would reach the bar before tumbling to the net. Elephants paraded around the ring with beautiful women doing acrobats on their backs and snouts. The clowns on the unicycles would ride in and out of all the circus acts playing jokes on the other performers. And the tightrope walkers made you sit on the edge of your seat watching in anticipation. Everywhere you look while at the circus, there seems to be a central theme – Balance.

Life can be like a three-ring circus. Your attention darts from one event, one person, one crisis, and one demand to the other while trying to keep things in balance. And at the end of the day, you still feel your pulse racing as you long to settle down and regroup -- just so you can start again tomorrow.

When you see or hear the term “life balance”, what do you think of? What does your internal voice say to you? Do you get a nagging feeling that yours is like a circus? Do you think to yourself, “Who has time for balance? My life is too hectic to take time for that!” Or are you one of the lucky few that think, “I’m sure glad **my** life is in a state of balance!”?

For most of us, life balance is an elusive concept that we recognize far more easily when we are out of balance than when our life is “in sync.” A popular bumper sticker says it best: “My life is like a traveling circus!” When we see that, most of us can relate to the image.

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Sure, we all have those rare moments in life where we feel peaceful, fulfilled, and balanced. But most of us yearn to have those moments come and stay a while longer.

This special report is designed for people who desire more balance in life. For people who are not satisfied to live in constant chaos. For people who want to choose to have more contentment and less anxiety. For those people who want their life to be less like a circus.

In this special report, we'll explore:

- The definition of life balance
- The benefits of leading a balanced life
- Taking stock of your life
- Tips for creating a more balanced life

This report will give you more clarity of what constitutes life balance, an easy way to assess your current state, and some actions steps for achieving more balance starting right now.

If this sounds like something you could use, then let's not delay another moment and let's get to it!

Life Balance – What is it?

Just as the term 'balance' implies, **life balance is an ever-changing, dynamic process – it's something that you're always working toward, something that's always in motion.** Life balance is not a destination, it is not permanent. It's not something you achieve and then you are done. It's an ongoing process that requires constant attention and adjustment.

Work-life balance is the vibrant relationship between two important elements of life - achievement and fulfillment.

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Achievement is primarily about “doing.” It includes working (the kind we get paid for and the kind we don’t), maintaining a desired lifestyle, and checking off things on our “to do” lists.

Fulfillment is about “being,” such as feeling satisfied about our relationships and contributions. Fulfillment is the sense that our life has meaning – it is the sense of satisfaction we get when we experience things that have great meaning to us.

And while work life balance is a goal we all have in common, everyone views it differently. What seems balanced in an area of achievement for one person, may not seem balanced to another. For example, the leader who loves to chart the course for his team and lead them toward a destination can have a great sense of accomplishment at the end of a day. Her partner who has spent the day teaching children the alphabet may have an equally strong sense of accomplishment.

The same can be said for fulfillment. One person may find a morning in the garden fulfilling while another person would view that as another frustrating chore. The second person may find the same morning more fulfilling by coaching a little league baseball game.

Regardless of how you define them, achievement and fulfillment are the two ingredients of life balance.

Life balance can seem impossible, like a goal that is never achieved. But take heart, it does not have to be an elusive dream. It is doable, and maybe without as much effort as you think. What is required to achieve your ideal state of balance is to develop a heightened sense of awareness that your balance is always shifting.

In his book, *Off Balance-On Purpose*, Dan Thurman discusses the skill of the funambulist (that’s a big word for tightrope walker). As the tightrope walker moves toward the goal,

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balance is only momentary. And with each step the funambulist must make adjustments to regain his balance in order to reach his goal.

We each have our own tightrope of life. We strive to move through life with purpose, fulfillment, and balance. With each step we take, instead of worrying about falling off the rope, we benefit from looking forward and moving toward our goals. That requires continuous adjustments – sometimes slight and sometimes major.

While balance for us may not appear to be as risky as the funambulist, our imbalance can have serious consequences. Therefore, a heightened sense of awareness and continual adjustments is critical. We do that by making conscious choices to spend our “being” and “doing” time in ways that give more meaning to our lives.

Life Balance – What’s in it for me?

Once again, you need to remember that balance is a temporary state and as you move through your day and your life, you will be consistently off balance. Think of balance as your home base. The place you always return to. The place where you restore your physical, mental and spiritual health. The pay-off is huge because when you are in balance, you:

- replenish your energy.
- have a greater sense of possibility.
- are able to cope with life challenges.
- experience less stress and fatigue.
- strengthen your relationships.

Let’s face it, the pace of life can feel as if it is moving at Nano speed. We stare impatiently at the microwave. We are frustrated if our computers don’t connect in a millisecond. When someone wants something from us, they want it now! The world seems to be screaming at us, “Faster, better, bigger!”

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With all the inventions designed to save us time, most people claim that they still do not have enough time or energy to get everything done, and end up moving through life over worked, stressed out, and sleep deprived. Without seeking balance, we can figuratively and literally wear ourselves out.

However, when you live life with an awareness of balance, you are like a highly skilled juggler. You operate at your best. You have the energy you need, you express success and most of all, you simply feel better.

Life Balance – Where Am I Now?

One of the first steps to defining balance for yourself is to assess where you are right now. Right this minute. Here's how you can do it.

Exercise

1. Draw a large circle on a piece of paper or use a lightweight paper plate.
2. From the center of the circle, draw 5 spokes and give each spoke a label: *work, health, relationships, spirituality, and interests.*
3. Put the number zero in the center of the circle and the number 10 at the end of each spoke.
4. Now assess each dimension of your life. For example: If you are 15 or so pounds overweight, you exercise sporadically, and your cholesterol is high, you might give yourself a 3 or 4. On the other hand, if your health is optimal, you are conscious about health tests (breast exams, prostate exam, cholesterol levels, bone density, etc), you exercise regularly, you might give yourself a 9 – or even a 10!
5. After honestly answering each question, then carefully examine the areas where you are strong and areas where you are weak (we all have them).
6. Ask yourself, what is it that I want? Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - “I want to engage in work that is stimulating, purposeful and uses my natural talents.”

- “I want to create healthy habits that supply me with the energy to do the things I **must** do and the things I **want** to do.”
- “I want to maintain relationships that are healthy.”

This means that not only do we nurture others, but we open ourselves to receiving what others have to offer us.

- “I want to pay attention to the spiritual aspect of my life.”

Whether it is a formal religious practice, an inward journey of discovery, or an immersion in nature, there is a universal longing to believe in something that is beyond what we can see and touch. This awareness fills a void that people from all cultures define as a spiritual experience. And this brings balance.

- “I want to enjoy more things that interest me”.

Whether it is fishing, painting, learning, serving mankind, or putting together jigsaw puzzles, we each have a yearning to do something that brings us joy and lifts our spirits.

Life Balance for Me

Now that you have defined broader goals for life balance, it is time to look at the specific actions you will take. Take another look at your balance wheel and decide what you need to keep doing, decide what you need to stop doing, and decide what you need to start doing.

By going through this process, you will begin defining what you value. Here are some things that many people list as important steps to take for personal balance. This will help you to start making your own list:

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- Spend more fun time with significant other
- Have meaningful conversations with my parents or other important relatives
- Don't bring so much work home (either actual work – or the workplace problems)
- Take time to communicate better
- Journal before bed
- Be healthier
- Spend more time on the golf course
- Meditate every day
- Spend time with friends
- Take guitar lessons

Choose Balance

This is where the rubber meets the road. Here's where we clearly define what we are willing to do and what we are not willing to do. Every single one of us has the same 24 hours in a day. And every single one of us has a lot that is expected of us. We all have more to do than we can get done. But most importantly, we all get to choose how we spend our time, and how we spend our life. Choose wisely.

Basic Choices

Let's look at some common issues that people have and some choices they can make:

- “When I am working, people interrupt me constantly with their problems.”
 - Choose to close your door. If that's not possible, acknowledge the person and tell them you will get back to them when you finish your current project. You can then focus on your work and afterwards give full attention to the other person.
- “Sometimes I need to work late in the evening but feel guilty when I don't spend time with my child.”
 - Explain to your child that you will be working for 1 hour, and then you will take a break to do something they like to do for _____ minutes. You can

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give full attention to both and reduce the anxiety caused by neglecting one for the other.

- “I can’t find time to exercise.”
 - This is a classic. 30 minutes and a pair of shoes. That’s all it takes. Make the choice to set your clock earlier. Ignore your e-mails first thing in the morning. Load your I-pod so that you can listen to inspirational messages, energy boosting music, or a great book (fiction or non-fiction). Meet a friend and nurture your friendship while you solve the problems of the world.
- “Nobody helps out. I have to do everything myself.”
 - Choose to ask for help. Have very honest (not whining) discussions and explain that you are not capable of carrying the load. Children need to learn responsibilities. Companions need to learn to be part of the team.
- “I’m bombarded constantly with text messages, voice mails and e-mails.”
 - Choose not to be available 24/7. Texting is a habit that very often disengages us from our work or the people we’re with.
 - E-mail is one of the biggest time wasters of most people’s day – on and off the job. Choose to quickly scan e-mails and only open the ones that need your attention. Store the others for when you want to sit down and just “hang out” at the computer.
 - Choose NOT to answer your phone. If it is important, they will call back or leave a message. And you can return the call later.

Letting Go

One of the hardest lessons for any of us to learn is a lesson that jugglers know all too well. The secret of juggling is a willingness to let go of the ball in one hand so that the hand is free to catch another ball heading its way. Like the juggler, we can only achieve balance in life if we are willing to let go. We must each choose what we need to let go of. Here’s a quick list of things that people tend to hold on to:

- Perfection – the perfect mother, partner, boss, employee
- Need to control other people

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- Past hurts and resentments
- Traditions that are more stressful than enjoyable
- Work habits that get in the way of our success
- Negative thoughts about others
- Negative self talk
- Being right

By choosing to let go of these types of things, we free ourselves to be more at peace. And the more at peace we are, the easier it is to find balance.

Not taking responsibility and blaming

We hear so much talk about not taking personal responsibility for the circumstances in our lives and blaming other people or things. It is easy for people to blame others for where they are in life and for the lack of balance they experience. You can look around and make excuses for why your life is in a constant state of chaos. But, the bottom line is this – you’ve the ability to make choices to move you toward or away from balance. And often the small, incremental choices are the ones that pay enormous dividends. It is the small, yet consistent choices that we make every day that determine whether we are living a balanced or imbalanced life. Take responsibility for your balance and try making a few small choices to move you in that direction. You will be amazed at the results!

Check list for life choices

The requests for our time and talents are endless. We must skillfully choose where we invest these very precious and personal resources.

Barb Wingfield, professional speaker, developed a check list for life choices. The list she created is a great example of some of the questions we all need to ask ourselves before deciding to commit to anything new. It’s also a great way to evaluate where we are currently putting our energy.

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Here are some of Barb's questions. Use them as a kick start to create your own questions.

- Will I see results?
- Is there low frustration?
- Will it be fun?
- Is there flexibility?
- Will it help build long term relationships?
- Will it make a difference in the long run?
- Will I learn along the way?
- Is it the right thing for me to do right now?

You can make better decisions by creating your own check list for life choices and posting them somewhere that you can easily see them. Share these questions with the people who are close to you. They can help remind you of the kind of outcomes that you strive for in your life.

A Balanced Life

In the book, *The Candy Bombers*, Andrei Cherny writes about the choice that Hal Halverson made when he started a tradition that later earned him the name, Candy Bomber. Halverson was a post WWII pilot who took food to people in Berlin who were starving due to the blockade. One day he decided to see for himself the people who benefitted from the food and coal that he and his unit delivered.

He spotted several children, barefoot and hungry watching the planes land. After visiting with the children, he was struck that they had not begged for a thing. This was something that was common in the other war devastated areas he visited. As he walked away from the children to return to his plane, he reached in his pocket, felt a couple of pieces of gum and decided to return to the children and give the gum to them. Realizing that he did not have nearly enough to go around, he promised that he would return the next day and drop gum and candy from his plane. The children would spot his plane by

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the wing he dipped in their direction. They were to stand on the ground and catch the handkerchief parachutes that were filled with candy.

Halverson later explains that he had no idea why he felt compelled to make such a generous overture to these children.

Cherny gives the following description to that moment in Halverson's life:

Some people's lives are like a feather in the wind, carried from breeze to breeze, buffeted by events.

Others travel a steady path they lay out for themselves or one that their fate or family bequeaths to them.

But then there are others for whom their entire life comes down to an instant that makes sense of all that occurred before and shapes everything that happens after.

Perhaps this decisive second comes only to a few.

Perhaps everyone has one and most just miss theirs.

This is what Hal Halvorsen would later call his "moment of truth," the continental divide of his long life.

A lot of the chaos in our lives is caused because we are simply carried from event to event in life without conscious thought. For some, our lack of balance is due to the fact that we are doing what others expect of us instead of what is right for our life.

And then, there are those of us who have a "moment of truth" and decide to make a different choice that results in a different life.

Sometimes in life a major disruption occurs that causes us to stop and take stock of our life – what we do, what we don't do, and why. We may re-evaluate and make major life

changes. Like Hal Halverson, we have the ability to make instantaneous, small decisions that bring us a greater sense of wholeness.

Listen to your inner voice as it guides you toward actions and choices that result in fulfillment. Life balance is more likely to happen when you listen and respond to your inner voice. Just slow down enough so that you can hear it.

Balancing Acts

Just when you think you get your life together, something will happen to upset the proverbial apple cart. It always has, and it always will. Getting clarity about what balance means to you can make the difference between getting back on track or wobbling lopsided down the road.

Life will constantly give you choices to strengthen your balancing skills just like they circus performers are constantly working to strengthen theirs. The better day-to-day choices you make, the greater likelihood that you can continually return to balance. Taking the time to become really clear about what is important in life will help you define balance on a very personal level. Committing to making conscious choices that support your life visions can give you the balance that you desire.

At the circus, what may appear as a completely chaotic environment from the outside is one that has been well crafted and rehearsed over and over and over. Behind the scenes circus hands are moving with precision. Nothing is happening randomly. Each act is well choreographed and timed. When something is out of order, a little off balance, adjustments are made so that the performance we do will dazzle and entertain.

Like the circus, our lives are an ever-changing, dynamic process. Our lives are always in motion. We are the choreographers of our life and we've the ability to make the choices to create a life that is more fulfilling, more productive, and more balanced.

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Life has more meaning if outer success balances with inner success. Succeeding inside yourself means discovering and expressing our core. The quality of our lives and the quality of our worktime become once and the same.

As people seek more balance, the really tough question becomes, “What do I want?” and “What is balance for me?”

Many people find the concept of “purpose” helpful in answering the balance question. There are three qualities essential to creating balance.

- 1) Your work should be an area of great interest. Working on purpose mean you can get up and look forward to the day with the same excitement that you feel on vacations.
- 2) Your work should contribute to your learning, your growth edge; this means the work should have within it the room for constant curiosity. It must give you room to keep learning, to grow your talents. It should offer you challenges that try you and yet, appeal to you time and time again.
- 3) Your work should be something that serves a real need; you feel that what you are doing matters, makes contribution to life. Nearly every livelihood has enormous potential to serve people, and you’ll be serving people best when applying your talents to some issue or problem that turns you on.

Finally, answer this question for yourself. “When challenged by work pressures, how committed will I be to living my values. . . . walking my talk?”

Hope that you’ve enjoyed reading this Special Report on Balance. Achieving “Outer Success” and “Inner Success” is my own continuous personal growth journey.

When you make a choice, you change the future.

“Deepak Chopra”

About Me

After a battling cancer for several years, and now in remission, Eva Jenkins is returning to VIP Innovations as a Professional Life Coach. “I am so excited and happy to return full-time to VIP Innovations and start the new Coaching Practice. This has been a dream of mine for a long time and now, I am looking forward with excitement and lots of energy in developing this new area of the business. “My mission is to work with a wide range of clients who recognize the importance of continued growth and self-development in achieving their individual goals”.

For more information on VIP Innovations, LLC and the coaching services we offer, you are invited to visit www.vipinnovations.com.

To Your Success,

Eva Jenkins