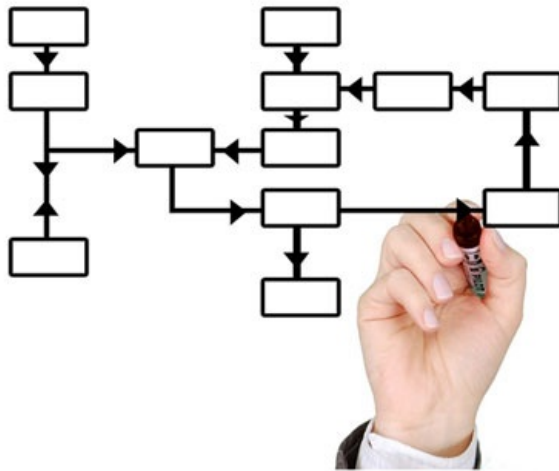


Truths and Tips about Work-Life Balance

Summary: *What does success mean to you? Success can have a different meaning for everyone but for most people, at least for me, it is about finding a balance in all aspects in life, leading to what we have come to know as the pursuit of happiness; or what makes one happy.*



Many people search for the coveted “work life balance” but is it really something you can achieve and keep?

For many decades, people have been focused on achieving the American dream, which means working harder and sacrificing for your family and your future. Now, however, there’s been a large movement towards the concept of creating a balance in your life between your career and everything else - like family, friendships, hobbies and relaxation. The term “work life balance” has been thrown around often and is presented by many workplaces as something they support and give to their employees. But, how realistic is having a consistent work life balance?

Most people fall into one of two categories: they either work endless hours and rarely see their spouse or kids, or they work 9-5 at a job simply to pay the bills and get home as soon as they can. Achieving a balance is possible, however, it’s difficult as well.

First, you often have to make a choice between excelling in your career and having more down time. You can work hard now to have more balance later in your life, or you can create that balance now, but know that things may progress more slowly when it comes to climbing the career ladder. The key is deciding what makes you happier and what you need at this point in your life.

If you choose to work hard now for balance later...

Sometimes, you’re just in a season of your life where you have to work really hard and not spend as much time with your hobbies or your friends. Perhaps you’ve just started your career and that’s the way your industry works, or you’ve just started your own business and you need to do what you can to get it off the ground.

Luckily, working really hard for one or two years can pay off and take you to a higher level where you have more choice in your schedule. When you get to that point, however, you have to be conscious of creating that balance for yourself since you’ve gotten so used to working extra hours. If you find your company or career path will never lead you to such flexibility, consider getting the credentials you need and finding a different job where you have more balance.

All in all, working hard for a few years without balance can get you to where you have the money and the freedom to have a very balanced life, such as working from home, moving somewhere with a lower cost of living or finding a career with more flexible hours.

If you choose to take things slowly to have balance now...

When you choose to have balance now, it may mean that your career or finances develop more slowly. This is where you have to decide what’s best for you right now. If you don’t have the emotional or physical energy to work 70 hours a week, or you have a spouse and/or children that you want to spend that extra time with, you need to find a career where you have the flexibility you need.

Finding this flexibility may mean taking one or two evening courses and finishing your MBA over a few years rather than going full force and finishing in two. It may mean taking a lower paying job at a nonprofit with flexible hours rather than working your way up the ladder in a corporate position. When you jump in head first to anything, you’re more likely to reach your goal faster. But at what cost? Deciding that other parts of your life need some of that energy may mean reaching your goals more slowly, but you also get that balance that you want right now.

Whichever direction you choose, make sure it’s the right one for you and not based on what other people are pressuring you into or based on impressing anyone else. At the end of the day, it’s your life and you need to do what makes you feel the best.