



How BALANCED is Your Life?

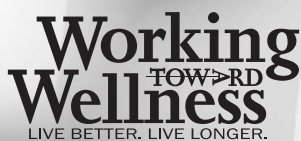
Answer the following questions to gain some insight into your own personal work-life balance challenges.

Every one of us has multiple roles that we play everyday: employee, co-worker, spouse/partner, parent, sibling, friend, and community member, to name just a few. Each role requires time, energy, and commitment. When the demands between work and non-work life are too great or one role is made more difficult by participation in another, conflict can happen. When there is conflict, the work-life balance is upset.

- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Do you feel that you spend too much time at work? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Do you miss out on quality time with friends because of work? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Do you sometimes skip planned breaks at work (e.g. 15 minute breaks, lunch/meal breaks)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you have trouble finding quality time to spend with your spouse or partner? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Do you feel that you need a hobby or something positive to do that allows you to relax and unwind? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Do you bring your job home with you too often? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7 Do you feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities at home (e.g. household chores, child care, elder care)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8 Do you feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities at work? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9 Do you have difficulty communicating with family? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10 Do you have difficulty communicating with friends? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11 Do you miss important family events because of work-related responsibilities? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12 Do you have any unused vacation days left at the end of the year that do not carry forward to the following year? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13 Do you have trouble communicating with co-workers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14 Do you have trouble communicating with your supervisor? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15 Do find yourself spending too much time on things that you don't value or that are not very important to you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be experiencing some level of conflict. Take a moment to look at the strategies on the reverse side of this page to give you ideas on how you can begin to make changes in your life. Focus on the strategies that address the particular sources of conflict identified by the questions.

See reverse side for personal strategies to help you create more balance in your life. ►



It is important to remember that achieving balance will take time and effort. It requires that you make choices that have costs and benefits. There is no single right way to do it. Everyone will have a different approach based on their individual set of circumstances and priorities.

Managing Multiple Roles

The following personal strategies have assisted many employed Canadians in achieving balance in their lives according to Work-Life Balance researcher, Dr. Linda Duxbury. Can any of them help you?

- Write down your goals or priorities in life and focus on them. If family is your priority then consciously put them first.
- Separate work time from family and personal time. This means leaving work and work-related issues behind when you're with family and friends.
- Schedule time each week for yourself and for the hobbies that you enjoy. Give yourself time to relax each day.
- Encourage and support your partner and ask that they do the same for you.
- Be organized. Plan at least 2-3 meals a week in advance and delegate responsibilities between members of your household. In today's busy world, you can't do it all by yourself and neither can any one member of your family!
- Find a physical activity that you enjoy to help deal with stress and to feel more energized.
- Recognize that the things you cannot change are not worth worrying about. Many people find that their faith helps them to put things into perspective.
- Evaluate your financial picture by asking yourself:
 - a) what you must spend money on
 - b) what you like to spend money on
 - c) what is most important to you.This will help identify changes that you can make to reduce financial pressures based on your priorities.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate...

Having good interpersonal and face-to-face communication skills can enhance your relationships at work and at home. The following tips can help to improve your communication with family, friends, and people at work.

Be a good listener:

- Give the person that is speaking your full attention.
- Do not interrupt until they have finished their thought.
- Do not focus on what you're going to say next while they are speaking.
- Listen for key words on which to comment or ask questions.
- Show that you understand what the speaker is saying (e.g. occasionally re-state the main point or ask questions).
- Identify why you are listening to the speaker. It will help you to determine the most appropriate listening style.

Be a good speaker:

- Use words that show you care about the issue and about the other person (e.g. "this seems to be very important"; "I understand your point").
- Make sure that you fully understand what the other person is saying before you respond.
- Be confident in what you are saying and clearly state what you want.
- Use "I" messages (e.g. "I think" or "I feel") instead of "You" messages (e.g. "You said" or "You never").
- Never make assumptions about the listener's motives.
- Encourage the listener to "take his/her turn" if they want to participate in the conversation.
- Try to generate a variety of solutions to a problem before making a decision.

For more information on creating a healthy Work-Life Balance, check out the Fall 2004 edition of the HealthIssues newsletter and brochure. For electronic copies of these and other great resources on Work-Life Balance issues, visit www.wehealthunit.org



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