



Drop the juggling act

Stop trying to
balance your life
and just live

everyone spends their time constantly searching for the ideal work-life balance. However, in practice, it very rarely happens. While searching for the perfect balance, are you happy and content in yourself? Possibly not, and this is because juggling different aspects of your life is a constant journey of trying to achieve the desired outcome. Instead, working should be seen as a part of your life and you should decide how much of your life you wish to spend working, and everyone's answers to this are different.

Karen Meager and John McLachlan are the authors of Real Leaders for the Real World and Time Mastery, and founders of Monkey Puzzle Training and Consultancy

Constantly looking for the 'perfect' balance often causes a lot of stress, anxiety and conflict within ourselves – the total opposite of a happy and content life. Instead of trying to create harmony between aspects of your life, consider creating a personal rhythm that works for you by taking a step back and analysing exactly how you do things.

What may not be obvious is that very small changes to routine and planning can make big differences. The first step to creating harmony in our lives is to consciously

think about how we spend our time and what is important to us. For example, if you believe heavily in helping other people, it's very easy for this to take over and sabotage your rhythm.

Different strokes

Sit down and think about how you actually split your time, and you will most likely find yourself fitting into one of the following four categories:



- **The Compartmentaliser** Sets boundaries between work and home life and sticks to them, perhaps too rigidly.
- **The Work Lover** Loves their work, but because of this, they sometimes have problems winding down or switching off at night.
- **The Equaliser** Conscious of being fair and accommodating to everyone, sometimes at the expense of their own happiness.
- **The Crammer** Says yes to everything and believes they can fit it all in. This often results in letting people down or being disheartened when things don't go to plan.

There is no right or wrong category to fall into – everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses.

Modify your approach

Below are three small, actionable changes you can make in order to help promote rhythm in your life.

1 Understand your energy limits

Essential to understanding our personal rhythm in life is knowing what gives us energy, what motivates us and what we shy away from. Each one of us is different when it comes to understanding our energy sources; some thrive on speaking to new people and attending parties, while others prefer sitting down and watching a good film. When you understand what drives you, you can do more of these things and less of what drains you. Think about the below questions. Do you prefer:

- constantly rushing or taking your time?
- exercising or relaxing?
- having a strict structure and routines or being free?
- being around new people or people you know?
- being surrounded by hustle and bustle or peace and quiet?

2 Create healthy routines

Creating routines cuts thinking time, meaning you have more time and energy to focus on the important things. A popular routine is to have weekly meal plans to save time thinking about what to cook every day. Having said that, routines aren't healthy for everyone. Some people prefer variety in their lives, and if this works for you and brings you pleasure, then keep it. Otherwise, try creating routines to cut everyday hassle.

Very small changes to routine and planning can make big differences

3 Don't rush

When looking to change the way you do things in life, don't rush. Effective change will involve small and gradual changes that avoid drastic moves, because it is not just you who needs to adjust – changing your work-life balance can affect those around you, and they will also need time to adjust to this change. Instead of suddenly finishing work at 5pm after two years of working until 7pm, gradually tell yourself to go home half an hour earlier until the time works for you. It is important to start with a goal that you know is achievable, rather than aiming for unrealistic ideals.

Before you make any changes and move away from the idea that you must have a work-life balance, self-awareness and motivation are essential. Pick a few, simple changes that you believe would improve your happiness and introduce them slowly to help let go of the need for balance and let life flow.

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