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## COLUMNIST

### Balance Isn't a Myth: 3 Ways for Women Leaders to Get Their Work-Life Balance Back in Check

With the right mindset, the right strategy, and the right information, you can enjoy your personal life and pursue your professional dreams.



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When it comes to succeeding at work and home, many women feel they must work twice as hard - because often they do. However, sustaining a healthy and happy way of life, while not losing your sanity, is possible. You don't have to pull back on your professional goals or pare back on your personal ambitions. You can align your home life and your work life in a more effective way. You can make everything fit.

Balance means prioritizing the various elements of your life, with a sense of peace and confidence that you're making the right decisions for yourself, your career, and the people who matter most in your life.

The problem for busy leaders is there's simply too much to do. The pattern is familiar to most working adults in this fast-paced modern world: Put in a jam-packed day at work and race off to a chock-full evening with the family, friends, fitness, church, charities, personal goals, grown and learning, and hobbies. You can't get everything done--but you can't not get everything done, either. It is exhausting.

For the many women that wrestle with these dynamics, they often turn to two options: Scaling back responsibilities at work to support their lives at home, risking letting go of professional goals, or drive twice as hard to make it all happen, and, in the process, drive themselves into the ground. In which of these situations is the woman, or her friends and family affected by the decision, really winning?

Resolving this dilemma requires three important things: A belief it can be done, a fresh perspective, and a few good, practical ideas for how to get better balance in your life.

First, believe it can be done. The same characteristics that make you an exceptional leader can be an advantage in balancing your life. That might include the following: aligning your personal and professional vision, being decisive about your priorities, taking action planning seriously to create efficiencies, getting clear about your strengths and values, learning ever-better systems and building a personal support team around you, and committing to seeing new possibilities available to you when you keep an open mind.

Find a new perspective. Many of our clients who lead extremely busy lives have been able to settle into a more present and peaceful mindset by applying the skills and strategies that work so well in business to their personal life. You already contain these characteristics and view them as your strengths - simply redirect and apply these assets to reach other facets of your life.

Get practical to get better balance. Planning and prioritizing your time is another way to gain control and balance in your life. Think consciously about how to spend your time, decide which tasks matter most to you and your organization, and then drop or outsource

the rest. By doing this, you can reduce your involvement in low-value tasks. You can actually cut your desk work by an average of six hours a week, shave meeting time by an average of two hours a week, and free up nearly a fifth of your time (an average of one full day a week). By doing this, you make more time for what matters in your life. Imagine you had one full day a week to fill as you seem fit, giving time and energy for all parts of your life so nothing is left behind. Perhaps balance does stand a chance, after all.

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