

Work-Life Balance: The Daily Struggle Worth Winning

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D., Forbes Councils Member

Award-winning executive coach, LRI Director and author: [The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership](#).



In all the conversations in the media empowering workers to own their own lives and careers, one topic appears time and again: work-life balance and the dream of having it all.

So often, this topic is met with skepticism. People will say, “No one understands what it's like to try to balance all of the things in my life, especially if they aren't a parent and don't have kids,” or “especially because they don't have the high-intensity job I do” or “especially because I'm an entrepreneur [or a single parent, or the primary earner in my household].” *All* of us have challenges balancing our lives.

There are only so many hours in the day, and there's only so much of each of us to go around.

But that doesn't mean it can't be done.

How do I know? Because I've done it myself, and I've coached many women in leadership at every level to do the same. It really *is* possible to find better balance in your life *while* you're succeeding in your career, to the point that you start to feel like you really do have it all.

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That doesn't mean it's easy, and it certainly doesn't mean everything's perfect. But we can practice and get better at it every day. Despite the obstacles, despite the complexity, workers are making themselves happier and their lives easier by committing to balancing their lives better, and you can, too.

You are powerful, and you're going to get what you want *as long as* you have the intention to succeed.

An Example Of Work-Life Balance Success

One coaching client I had is a shining example of someone who was able to overcome work-life balance issues. Her name is Hannah, and I was her executive coach when she was working in a high-rise Fortune 500 company with a burning-the-candle-at-both-ends kind of lifestyle. She worked 24/7. If she wasn't on her phone, she was in a meeting or in the car going to someplace important. It was unsustainable. When she decided to leave that life, she took a sabbatical, which led to a dramatic transformation.

She took the time off—she went to the beach, joined a cover band, got enough sleep. And when it was over, she said, “I don't want to give this up! I don't want to go back to that life!” So, she started her own company, and she now has a seven-figure business that has received national acclaim. And she's still rocking and rolling, in more ways than one.

You *can* make things happen that you *want* to have happen for yourself.

For me, I'm on a team within a seven-figure business serving clients worldwide, but I work only four hours a day, four days a week. How do I do all that on a daily basis when the emails are coming in and the phone is ringing and the texts won't stop chiming and my calendar is full and this team needs me? Finding a way to manage all those things is a daily struggle, but I think it's one worth winning.

The Secret To Breaking The Struggle: Plan Way, Way Ahead

The real secret is to plan way, way ahead.

A year ago, I decided it was time to write my next book, and I knew that meant I'd need to block out time where I could spend all day writing. I looked at my calendar and I thought, where is the space I can protect? Once I knew when that was, I could schedule book-writing time on my calendar and start conveying that to people or make decisions around it. It wasn't difficult to block out the time because a year out I didn't have any appointments booked—so now the calendar is clear for me to write today because I made it that way last year.

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By the time I actually got there, I was looking at a beautiful, empty, clear day to write.

What about you? Imagine for a moment that you have all the time you need to devote to a project or outcome that is very important to you but you never seem to get to? What would that thing be?

Now, without looking at your calendar, think about what it would look like to make time for that—ideally. Is this a project or outcome you'd work on:

- Every day for a little while?
- With 20% of your time over the course of a week?
- Once a week for half a day or a whole day?
- For several weeks at a time?

If you can get an image in your head about what you'd like to do, then you can take the step of looking at your calendar long-term and strategize about making it happen.

To review:

- Ask yourself what you want when it comes to your time. What would the ideal day look like for you?
- Look at your calendar. Find a day you think you could actually create that ideal day, even if it's just once?
- See what happens. How hard or easy is it to protect that time once the day arrives? Are there interruptions or unexpected events that pull you off track? What would it take to eliminate those or avoid them next time?

Keep trying that, it may feel like a struggle at first, but over time, you'll find the balance you want. That's a daily struggle worth winning.

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Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D., is a Director with the [Leadership Research Institute](#) and an executive coach specializing in leadership development. She strategizes with business leaders to enhance their performance and maximize business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Adobe. She is the author of *The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership* and *The New Advantage: How Women in Leadership can Create Win/Wins for Their Companies and Themselves*. To connect with Joelle, go to www.JoelleKJay.com or email Info@JoelleKJay.com.

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