

Work Life Balance



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Some opening thoughts

- I am not an expert in work-life balance
- My life and work are not necessarily always balanced
- You may not find this talk to be inspiring
- My jokes may not actually be funny

Work-life balance

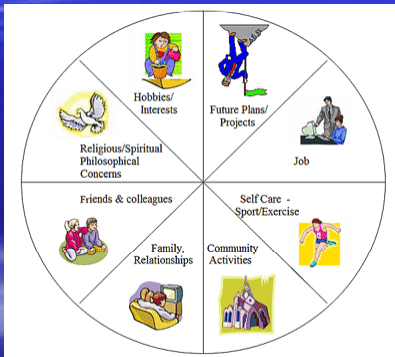


It is probably easier to identify than it is to define

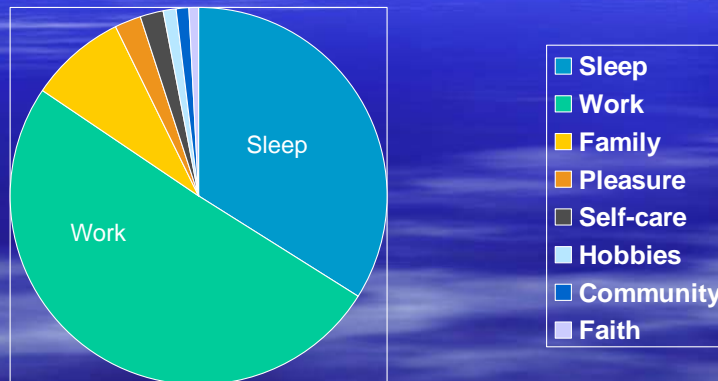
Work-life balance...what it is not

- It is not a permanent state, it is a dynamic and often changing relationship
- It does not mean equal parts
- It will likely change—not only daily, but through the seasons of your life
- One size does not fit all

Work-Life Balance Defined



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Work-Life Balance Defined

Multiple ways to define exactly what work-life balance really means. However, at the core of an effective work-life balance definition are two key, everyday concepts that are relevant to each of us. They are daily **Achievement and Enjoyment**, ideas almost deceptive in their simplicity.

Work-Life Balance: *its essence*



Did you enjoy something today?
Did you accomplish something today?

So how do we get out of balance?

- We fail to live in the moment
- We deviate from our plans—causing us to sacrifice things we shouldn't
- We dwell on the negatives fail to celebrate positives
- We fail to pursue pleasurable things

Work-life balance: *the life part*

The essence of work-life balance is life.

It is the *sine qua non* of the very concept of work-life balance

When we fail to live in our moments, we fail to live.

Live for what you are doing at the time. Keep tomorrow and yesterday where they belong.



If you are thinking about the past or the future, you are missing now.

Stick to your plans

- The monks of Saint John's Abbey follow the Rule of Benedict
- The spirit of the rule can be summarized in the motto
ora et labora
"prayer and work"
- There is a beautiful rhythm to their life
- It is a balance of community and solitude
- They are intentional, they are purposeful in their effort to remain balanced



Sticking to your plans

- Too often we change our plans to accommodate moments... “I’ll just skip working out today so I can get this done” or “I’ll just grab something from McDonalds”
- We fail to stick to our plans, we cut things out that are really important
- We need to treat our primary relationships with the same respect and commitments that we have for work
- If you committed to be home to see your kids off the bus...then schedule it like it was a meeting (put in your iCal)

Deviating from your plans

- It is easy to deviate from our plans to try to solve life’s demands.
- When we do that we lose the balance, we create a shift (often subtly)
- Over time we find ourselves out of balance
- We have eliminated exercise, socializing, time with family, time for our hobbies

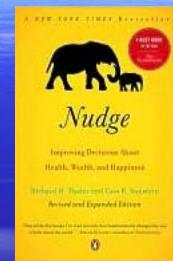
“Don't cry because it's over.
Smile because it happened.”



Dr Seuss

We humans are loss adverse

Nudge: Improving Decisions
About Health, Wealth, and
Happiness



Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein describe several experiments demonstrating the basic fact that nearly every human being is adverse to loss. What they show is that for corollary experiences our magnitude of negative emotions is larger than our positive emotions

We are loss averse



Some simple questions: *do you*

- Exercise regularly?
- Eat right?
- Surround your self with people you like and respect?
- Live in an area that fits your lifestyle?
- Stay organized?
- Go on vacation annually?
- Sleep enough?
- Work according to your values?
- Make your spouse/partner/children feel valued?
- Pursue your hobbies?
- Confront your problems?

Principles To Promote Physician Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance

Tait D Shanafelt, et. al. Minnesota Medicine December 2008



Doctors at The Mayo Clinic lead by Tait D. Shanafelt, MD looked at developing formal guidelines for creating Work-Life Balance and increasing professional and personal satisfaction

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **Meaningful work** *the sense that the best within you is called upon each day*

For physicians, helping and being of service to others has particular meaning and leads to a high level of personal satisfaction

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **Challenges commensurate with Skills, Interests, and Resources** *taking on a challenge for which an individual is adequately trained and supported offers an opportunity for success and accomplishment.*

However, if a person is asked to do something he or she doesn't feel qualified to do or does not have the resources to do, the situation can be stressful and anxiety provoking

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **Opportunities for Professional Development** *Essential to career satisfaction are the opportunities to further develop personal talents and to gain expertise in other areas of interest such as leadership, administration, teaching, and research.*

For organizations to accomplish this, time and resources must be dedicated.

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **A Culture that Cultivates Professionalism**
professional satisfaction is necessary for physicians to serve their patients to the best of their ability, and the work environment is a critical component.

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **Autonomy and Flexible Scheduling**
The most consistent component of physician satisfaction surveys

It is very critical for physicians to have some control over their schedules

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **A Culture that Values and Encourages Life Outside of Work** *Integral to personal and professional satisfaction is having a well-rounded life. This means establishing boundaries between work and the other domains of life.*

A poor work-life balance affects not only the physician but also his or her family and others. Encouraging and valuing a physician's commitment to family life, community life, spiritual life, hobbies and interests, friends, and colleagues promotes the well-being of the individual, which ultimately affects patient satisfaction and the performance of the organization as a whole.

Principles of Faculty Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance: *seven key areas*

- **A Culture of Wellness** *physicians are driven, focused, and committed to the core value of putting the needs of the patient first*

These characteristics often work against the need to care for oneself physically and emotionally. In this regard, the organization and colleagues "co-conspire" to promote a work environment that insufficiently emphasizes attention to personal health and well-being. Just as an institution offers assistance with increasing productivity (eg, providing electronic medical record systems and email), so too should it promote holistic health and long-term work-life balance. Development of skills related to maintaining balance, reducing stress, managing time, and optimizing one's health should be encouraged.

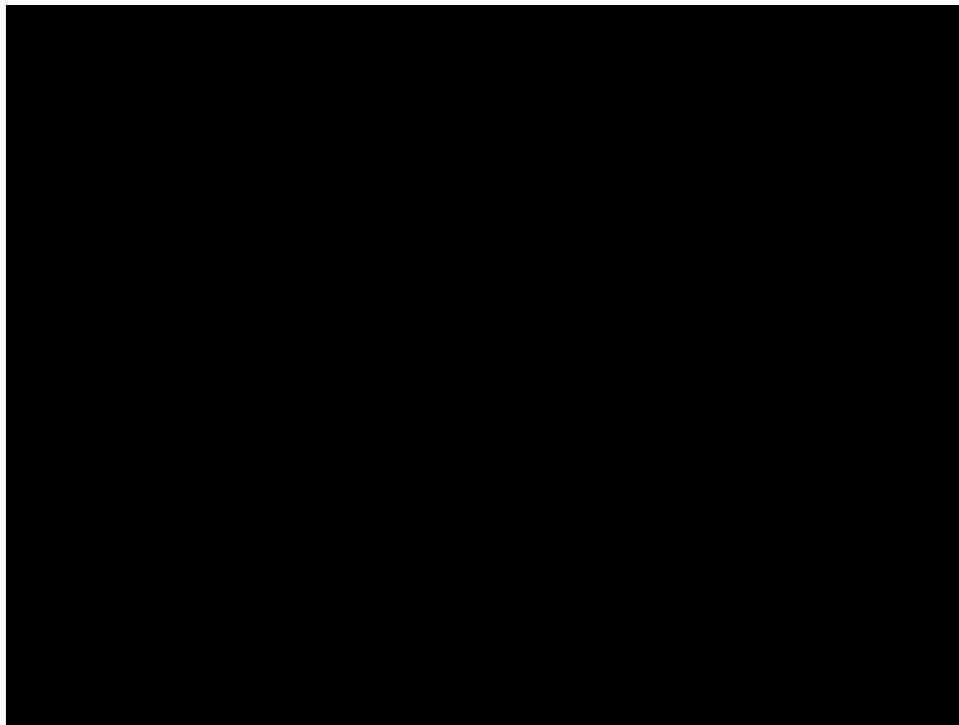
Keys to sustain balance within work and life

- Faith
- Family
- Humor
- Nature
- Reflection
- Challenges

Some closing thoughts

- Too often we fool ourselves that future will be better if we can just get through this moment
- You are where you are, keep tomorrow and yesterday where they belong
- The level of difficulty of what physicians do increases and the consequences of failure more severe, but the rewards richer

One of the most important things we can do to handle stress within our jobs is to embrace and accept stressful cases. Use these cases to tell the story of why we are physicians, share them with others. Let them form your narrative.



Angela

Angela is 17 and is 37 weeks pregnant and initially presented to an outside hospital complaining of a headache.

After waiting for a while, she was simply told it is a migraine, and it will resolve.

Two hours later, Angela returned to the emergency department continuing to complain of a headache and because the movie she was watching with her boyfriend had become blurry. When she arrived, she vomited and became dizzy. They performed a head CT scan.

The CT scan revealed a massive subarachnoid hemorrhage with evidence of significant cerebral edema and midline shift. She was sedated, intubated, and airlifted to Abbott Northwestern Hospital

The neurosurgeon conducted a quick exam. She had nonreactive pupils bilaterally. She was nonresponsive to noxious stimuli. He determined that she was not a candidate for emergency surgery.

According to the fetal monitoring strip, the baby appeared stable. However, the perinatologist estimated we had only 20 minutes until baby's condition would likely deteriorate.

We decided to take her to the OR for emergency cesarean section. In route to the OR, Angela's heart rate started to slow down and her blood pressure began to drop.

I started chest compressions as we rushed her into OR 7. She was transferred to the operating table. She was connected to the ventilator and ventilated with high concentration inhaled anesthetic. Her abdomen was splashed with betadine.

The perinatologist made two passes with a scalpel.

41 seconds later, a healthy 6 pound, 4 ounce baby boy was born via cesarean section.

After the baby was born and Angela was stabilized, I accompanied the neurosurgeon to the family waiting room. We addressed her mother, father, and boyfriend.

We told them that Angela had a significant and a non-survivable intracranial bleed. I informed them that she was stable and that we were using drugs to keep her blood pressure and heart rate stable, she had a breathing tube in place and we were breathing for her.

After the operation, Angela was transported to the ICU. Her parents, boyfriend, and new son were at her side.

Two days later, after family and friends had gathered to say good bye she was declared brain dead.

At 9:45 that night, Angela was transported to OR 10. General anesthesia was induced.

Her eyes, heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, and small intestines were harvest by surgical teams from the University of Minnesota, the Mayo Clinic, and Northwestern University.

Over the next 36 hours, eight patients received life-saving organ transplants.

Three days later, I attended Angela's funeral at a small Lutheran Church in Cambridge, Minnesota.

It is the only patient's funeral I have ever attended.

At that time, my wife was 5 months pregnant with our 3rd child

This case is part of my narrative, it helps me remember why I became a doctor.

It is a reminder of the tension in
medicine that exists between

Despair and Hope

There certainly is stress in my job, but I love what I do.

Being a physician is both a pleasure and an honor.

And at the end of the day, there is
always more joy, than sadness.

Use the tools you have to maintain a
balance between what is important in
life and what is important in your work

We all have cases that remind us why we
do what we do

This is one of mine

Thank you

