

► Volume 4, Issue 3

Making Your Balancing Act More Than An Act

It is with great interest to note how many times I am asked to speak on the topic of balance. Perhaps it is the fact that I have my own business, am married, and the mother of two young sons that I get asked so frequently? Or perhaps it is like so many other things, we are drawn to speak about those things we most need to learn ourselves?

Over the last couple of months I have been defining balance for myself. My personal definition of balance is "being emotionally and mentally with the person/people I am with physically". You see it is easy for me to physically be with my family and mentally be with my next audience. It is only after a day of balancing office work and the boys that I realize I haven't truly "been" with them. This is confirmed when four-year old Drew tells me that evening he "wants to spend a little time" with me. I then recognize that he realizes I wasn't mentally and emotionally with him during the day.

What is your definition of balance? Try finishing this sentence: "I know I am in balance when..." or if that is too difficult, try: "I know I am out of balance when..." Sometimes it is easier to list what happens to us when we are out of balance than defining what it means to be in balance.

Can we really have and do it all? What are some practical strategies for people who want to have a career and a life? I'm going to utilize the acronym STOP to provide you with some things that have worked for me.

STOP **Set your goals with Significant Others.** I believe that goals are critical to accomplishing what we desire in life. If you are married or in a significant relationship, it is critical that your goals be in sync with each other. Jim and I wrote a family mission statement that outlines our purpose as a family. When the boys are older, they will have input as well. It helps us decide what activities we need to say "no" to and what are our priorities.

Keep your head and your heart going in the right direction and you'll not have to worry about your feet.

Once you have defined your mission statement, you will want to determine your goals. If you do not have long-term

goals in writing, the following questions may help you begin the process:

(1) What is my personal life's philosophy or mission? What do I value in life?

(2) What are the behaviors and qualities I would like to develop over the course of my lifetime? What do I want to be remembered for?

(3) Five years from today, what three significant life events would I like to experience?

Once you have answered these questions, it is critical to check your calendar with your goals. For instance, if you want to be remembered as a professional, what

everyday to become competent? Or, if remembered as being a parent, what are you to make that happen? It is easy to talk about balance, it

is far more difficult to walk your talk of balance.

Glenna Salsbury, CSP, CPAE, my mentor in the speaking business, recommends putting together a Goal Book. Mine is a magnetic photo album which contains pictures and words describing what I want to become and how I imagine my life to be. Glenna believes that the concept of Imagination x Vividness = Reality ($I \times V = R$) works to make our goals come true. If I can vividly imagine and picture my goals, I have a greater chance of those goals becoming reality. I am amazed with how many of those goal pictures have become a reality already! I can hardly wait to start my children on goal books when they enter school.

Application Question: *Have you developed a philosophy/mission statement which guides both your personal and professional decisions? When will you do it?*

STOP **Treat Others the Way They Want to be Treated.** How many of us have wasted innumerable hours trying to change people to become more like us (when in reality that could be scary)? My goal for '94 is to love the significant



others I've been blessed with in my life just the way they are, instead of trying to change them. This is far easier to do with customers because they pay us to treat them the way they want to be treated. Yet, the personal cost to us for not looking out for our family's needs is far greater than the potential loss of a large client. How much different would we treat the people closest to us if we treated them like the internal customers they are?

A couple of suggestions in this area: If you travel, maintain daily contact with your spouse. It lessens the emotional distance. We utilize a small monthly remarkable calendar on the refrigerator to keep track of our schedules. Each of us have a different color marker for our commitments (obviously, the boys have limited activities at their ages). Jim appreciates knowing which city I'll be in and when so he can prepare for "Boys Night" at the Hathaway's.

If you are in a relationship with a significant other, have regular (at least once a month) date nights. Even if your children don't live at home, date nights keep the romance alive. It's important to dress up for your spouse occasionally and fan the flames!

We love Glenna and Jim Salisbury's idea of giving significant others a gift every day. It doesn't have to be flowers (although those are always welcome!) or an actual purchased gift...it can be getting juice out for your spouse in the morning without being asked. The important point is that you must tell your spouse that "this is your gift" for that day. It makes you look for ways to go out of your way to make others feel special.

Application Question: *Do you know the answers to the following questions about your significant others: What is your significant other's greatest concern right now? What is his/her greatest need? What is your significant other's wildest dream? smallest pain? What new vista would s/he like to explore? Perhaps setting up a date night to discuss the answers to these questions would be enlightening and draw you closer to each other.*



Only One of You

Recognize that you cannot do it all by yourself. There is only one of you. Just because you can do something, doesn't necessarily mean you must do it. For example, I have opted not to serve on the boards of several professional and community associations at this time in my life. This is the time for me to spend with my children. There will be a later time for me to serve and give back to my community and profession. I choose not to feel guilty over that decision because it is one that fits my personal philosophy and mission (remember point one?).

Because I have young children, I recognize that right now there are only so many opportunities for me to read stories, fly kites, go swimming or ride bikes with my boys. My office will wait, the children will not. That is why I limit the number of speaking and training engagements I accept a year...I want to

give exceptional customer service and value to each of the clients I work with each year while maintaining balance in my life.

Could I make more money? Could I write more books? Could I have more fame? Probably. But I also know that I won't take fame or money with me when I die and I want to be remembered for more than what I did professionally. What do you want to be remembered for? What are you doing to make that happen?

I love Dr. Bernie Siegel's thoughts on success. He says, "The only problem with climbing the ladder of success too frantically is we have to be careful when we get to the top we don't look down and realize it's leaning against the wrong building."

If you have an office in your home, set office hours and keep them. Turn off the phone during mealtimes (isn't the call usually a sales call anyway??). Dedicate blocks of uninterrupted time to get the work completed. Try to leave work at work and enjoy home time when you're at home.

Now that we've talked about the professional side, what about the personal side of there being only one of you. I am a big advocate of hiring a house cleaning service, particularly for working women (unless of course you really love to clean). Cleaning help will not only save you lots of time, I found it freed me up to do more creative things. The money is well spent in terms of the emotional and mental freedom you will feel. I don't know about you, but I am willing to give up a few fast food meals out in exchange for paying someone to clean.

It's important to keep in mind, that if you manage the household, that does not mean that you do all the work. You need to delegate it, just as managers in other organizations delegate to their staff. Our family pitches in to help with household tasks, such as picking up their own belongings, setting and clearing the table, watering plants, etc. I understand that pre-teens can be trained to do their own wash (I can hardly wait!). I'd love to hear other ideas from you on how you've encouraged others to help with the running of the household.

A great find for us about a year ago was Colorado Prime Food Service. We purchase all our meat, poultry, fish and numerous other foods directly from them at a cost savings to us. They deliver the food twice a year to our home and pack our freezer. We always have excellent quality food at our fingertips (I love the convenience!) and we save money at the same time. I grocery shop less and have a 100% guarantee on all the food. They are in most of the United States, call me to check locations or call them directly at 1-800-365-2404.

Application Question: *What non-essential activities are you involved in that may be contributing to your lack of balance?*



Personal Power

In order to not burn out, we must have a place where we can "fill up". Where do you get your personal power from and the strength to keep going each day? Personally, I find it is important for me to start out each day with meditation and prayer so that my focus is where it should be. Perhaps you "fill up" in a different way.

George Gallup, who has been in the polling business for 40 years, has been exploring the depth of religion in the US. He said in his initial probing that "the most committed 13% of believers are the happiest, most charitable, tolerant, ethical and concerned for a better society. They're a breed apart from the rest of the population."

For so long, we only discussed the mental, emotional and physical aspects of our lives. When in fact, to truly be balanced, we cannot ignore the spiritual base of who we are as people. Dr. Carl Simonton of the Simonton Cancer Center believes it is equally important to consider the role of the spirit as well as mind when it comes to promoting health. He asserts, "When we're aware of the spiritual dimension of life, we have access to many powerful resources that aren't available when we limit our focus to mind and body...spirit is life principle...the force that gives us vitality, drives and motivates us and supports our survival."

If we are to become balanced, it is critical to develop ways to rejuvenate ourselves and develop our spiritual foundations. We will live a more satisfying and fulfilling life if we know we are here for a higher purpose--not just to satisfy our material urges and compete with others.

I ask myself this questions frequently: If I were to lose my speaking business today, would I be OK with who I am? How about you? If you were to lose your job/profession, would you be OK with who you are? Too often we get our satisfaction and sense of personal power from our jobs or the amount of money we earn when, in fact, those may be taken away from us without warning (how many people do you know who have been laid off in the last year?). What lasts is what is inside of us, what we have been filling up with over the years -- no one can take our spiritual base away from us...that sense of who we are and why we're here.

Application Question: *What are you doing daily to develop your base of personal power and strength?*

I hope my thoughts on balance have been helpful. They certainly come from my heart and my life. Your phone calls and e-mails are really appreciated. I'd love to hear your ideas on what you have done to balance your life, e-mail me your ideas or call me at 1-800-339-0973.

Satisfied Client Quote of the Quarter:

"I truly appreciated the way you wove your message around the theme of the conference and the issues that had already been brought up in previous sessions. I was amazed and impressed as you visited different focus groups during the day, taking notes and shortly using these gleanings in your inspirational talk. It was just the right way to close the conference -- challenging, engaging and upbeat!"

Michael J. VanDenend, Executive Director
Calvin Alumni Association



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