

# CAREER HEALTH

## The Modern Balancing Act: Achieving Work/Life Balance

By Hallie Crawford, MA, CPCC

Tired of teetering out of control? Do you feel overwhelmed by your work, home and family responsibilities? Are you frequently stressed because you can't get everything done? If your life seems like a circus ...juggling work, home and family responsibilities - you're not alone. Many people just like you feel like their life is leading them, instead of them leading a purpose driven life and choosing where they spend their time. So, who's running the show? Is it your Blackberry, your laptop, your boss - or you? If your answer is something else than you, it's time to get back in the driver's seat!

Life balance is a buzzword these days for good reason. It's a chronic issue that comes up in conversation because quite simply, life has become harder to manage. With email, Blackberry's and everything else demanding our attention it's no wonder we get bogged down in to-do lists and wonder at the end of the day where the time went. We're expected to work faster and more efficiently, plus we're more accessible than ever because of new technology that allows us to work or communicate from anywhere. Information comes at us faster than ever. And this trend shows no sign of stopping.

The problem with your life being out of balance is...

· You're not focusing your attention and time where you want to, and not living the life you want to live.

· It feels like your life is on autopilot, like someone else is driving the bus and you are not in control.

· When you feel pressured to handle so many tasks and have so many demands on your time, you lose creative thinking and effectiveness - not to mention becoming physically exhausted.

The flip side of this issue is that we all want greater fulfillment in our lives and careers than ever before. It's no longer acceptable to punch a time clock at the same job for our whole lives and wait until retirement to have fun. We want fulfillment and balance now. I've noticed through my career coaching practice that while people are craving greater balance they are having more trouble achieving it.

So what can you do to create balance in your life today? Here are some tips:

Step One: Make a list of the different areas of your life where you're not spending as much time and energy as you'd like. Come up with at least 3 areas that need work in terms of your time and attention.

In each of these 3 areas, identify one action step you can take in the next week to improve in that area. Will you make a commitment to call one friend in the next week, or spend time with at least one family member? Make the action step simple, realistic and give yourself a deadline. Taking one step in each of these areas will create greater balance in your life. Continue to do this every week until you develop a habit of attending to the areas of your life that are important to you.

Step Two: Learn to balance work and personal time. If work is one of those areas that's taking over your life, try some of these techniques to better manage your work time and attention.

a. Turn off your blackberry, phone and/or email when you need focused time to work on a project.

b. Set your email to only check emails when you press send/receive, not every time an email comes through. Having the email buzz at you whenever you receive a new message is incredibly distracting.

c. Turn off your voicemail or email chime on your phone. Make a commitment to only check your voicemail and email twice a day at certain times.

d. Prioritize your tasks on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Consciously choose where you focus your time and energy.

e. Plan ahead. When you know a big project is coming up plan for how you need to spend your time and delegate other tasks as necessary. Don't wait for crunch time to re-arrange your priorities.

f. Set boundaries:

i). Decide how late you are willing to stay at work each night, and how frequently this will happen.

ii). Before you dive into a task, determine how much time you can and will spend on that task. Set a goal for yourself; you'll be more likely to achieve it.

Your action steps don't have to be complicated; they simply require time for self-reflection and a true commitment to implement. When you create greater balance in your life you will experience: greater fulfillment, effectiveness, and productivity. You will be less stressed and won't get sick as often. And most importantly you'll be leading the life you want to lead!

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## Water Therapy

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morning. If you have a glass right there you are more likely to drink it and hydrate your body.

4. Always pair your meal with a glass of sparking water. Water is a great complement to any meal and it helps feed your appetite.

5. Use a filter. Some people dislike the metallic taste that water can have, a water filter or bottled water will hydrate your body without the metallic taste.

It is essential to understand that drinking too much water can have some unpleasant side effects. Your body is created to only absorb the water that it has lost. Drinking an excessive amount of water could lead to hyper hydration or water poisoning which can trigger heart failure. So, listening to your body is essential. If you are thirsty it is because your body needs and craves hydration but if you are trying to chug down 10 or more glasses of water each day you might want to reconsider listening to your body's needs and use that as your water gauge.

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*When your values are clear, your decisions are easy. — Roy Disney*

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*A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and deadline. — McKay*

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*Decide to wear the lifestyle you desire, overseas culturally or into retirement. I do assist beyond investments.*

*We have met the enemy... and he is us! — Pogo*

  
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**“Man’s mind,  
once stretched  
by a new idea,  
never regains  
its original  
dimensions.”**

**-Oliver Wendell  
Holmes**

# VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ Newsletter

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

*Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money.*

*These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.*

*We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.*

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Water Therapy

By Worldwidehealth.com

Water therapy is literally the therapy or relief the body receives from the daily consumption of water instead of medication. 65% of the human body is composed of water. It seems an intelligent choice to replenish the water that is lost through out the day with new refreshing water yet many people barely replenish half of the water lost. Many people count the bottles of soda or juice as water substitute but the truth is they are poor substitutes. So many diseases and issues we deal with are due to poor diet so why not add water to your diet as water is an essential element of your body's make-up.

Drinking water does not require expert help or expert supervision. Water therapy is easy and offers wonderful benefits. Water has the ability to cleanse your body of toxins and unwanted waste through urine and sweat. Healthy water consumption can help maintain the body's temperature, healthy glowing skin and it helps the body expel unwanted waste. Water consumption can help a vast variety of diseases

for example: anemia, rheumatism, general paralysis, obesity, arthritis...

Most people are familiar with the recommendation of “6-8 glasses of water daily” but the better route to follow is “listen to your body's needs”. 6-8 glasses of water is not the magic number of glasses for everyone, the amount of water you need is relative to the size of you body and how much water you loose daily. Listening to your body is the key to staying hydrated. Often people are too busy to remember to drink water so here are a few tips that can act as reminders:

1. Take a bottle. Always carry a bottle of water with you so when your thirst calls you can immediately replenish your body's water source.

2. Add a little flavor. So many people complain that water is too plain. If you relate to this add a splash of lemon or lime to it.

3. Have a glass of water by your bed. Often people get thirsty during the night or first thing in the

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# RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

## A Short Guide to Difficult Conversations

By Balanceatwork.com

Are you avoiding a conversation you know you must have? Quite often it's because you don't know where to start. Here's a checklist of things to consider as you approach that conversation you've been avoiding.

### 1. Talk to yourself first

· What do you hope to achieve by having this conversation?

· What would be your ideal outcome?

· Can you adjust your attitude to expecting a positive outcome?

· What emotions are you feeling about this situation?

· Will you be able to keep those emotions under control?

· What assumptions have you made about the person and/or the situation?

· Do they know there's a problem?

· Is there anything else you need to know before you start this conversation?

· Should you speak to someone else first, or get help?

### 2. Write an agenda for the conversation

· This may be just for your own reference. Look at the points in the next section for ideas on what to include.

· Remind yourself to stay centred and focused with your full attention on the discussion.

### 3. Choose an appropriate time and place

· Ensure no interruptions or distractions (switch mobiles off).

· Privacy is also important.

### 4. Prepare and practice

· If possible, practice with someone else. At the very least run through the conversation – and the likely responses of the other person – in your head.

· Be prepared for a range of possible reactions including tears, anger, blaming and silence.

· Now you're ready for the meeting, so let's look at what's needed for it to run smoothly.

Clarity of purpose: Know why you're hav-

*“The greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.”*

*-George Bernard Shaw*

ing this conversation and what outcome you wish to achieve.

Curiosity and a willingness to listen to everything the other person has to say. You don't know their perspective on the issue and this is your chance to find out. This may require you to put your ego to one side and really listen to what they have to say, without interrupting and disputing their views. Be aware of what their non-verbal communication is telling you, too.

Acknowledge the other person's viewpoint. You can show you understand what they're saying by restating it back to them. To acknowledge doesn't mean you agree.

Take your turn to express your perspective, so that your position on the issue is clear. While it is good to put words to your emotions (for example, “I feel angry that we're in this situation”), avoid acting in an emotional or angry way.

Work together on a solution. You may already have an ideal solution in mind, but it's worth asking first what the other person would suggest. Keep an open mind and if you feel you're being led off-track, go back to the beginning.

Agree and document what will happen next. This will include any changes to behavior, processes or performance. It's also important to agree on when and how you will monitor the changes.

Above all, stay centered, stick to your purpose and be willing to consider alternative outcomes.

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# INNER HEALTH

## Optimism and Your Health

By Harvard Health Publications

A cheerful disposition can help you get through the tough patches that cloud every life, but do people who see the glass half-full also enjoy better health than gloomy types who see it half-empty?

According to a series of studies, the answer is yes. Research shows an optimistic outlook early in life can predict better health and a lower rate of death during follow-up periods of 15 to 40 years.

### Optimism and Blood Pressure

A sunny outlook could reduce the development of hypertension, which is a major risk of cardiovascular disease. Scientists evaluated the cardiovascular risk factors (smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, alcohol abuse, and family history of hypertension) for 616 middle-aged men with normal initial blood pressures and questioned them about their expectations for the future. Over a four-year period, highly pessimistic men were three times more likely to develop hypertension than cheerier souls.

### Optimism and Heart Disease

If optimism can reduce the risk of hypertension, can it also protect against developing coronary artery disease? To find out, scientists from Harvard and Boston University evaluated 1,306 men with an average age of 61. Each volunteer was evaluated for an optimistic or pessimistic explanatory style, blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, smoking, alcohol use, and family history of heart disease. None of the men had been diagnosed with coronary artery disease before the study. Over the next 10 years, the most pessimistic men were more than twice as likely as the most optimistic men to develop heart disease.

### Optimism and Survival

According to two studies from the U.S. and two from the Netherlands, optimism also boosts longevity. The first American study evaluated 839 people in the early 1960s, performing a psychological test for optimism-

pessimism as well as a complete medical evaluation. When the participants were rechecked 30 years later, optimism was linked to longevity; for every 10-point increase in pessimism on the optimism-pessimism test, the mortality rate rose 19 percent. A newer study looked at 6,959 students who took a comprehensive personality test. During the next 40 years, 476 people died from a variety of causes, with the most pessimistic individuals having a 42 percent higher rate of death than the most optimistic.

### Possible Mechanisms

Taken together, these studies argue persuasively that optimism is good for health - but why?

Perhaps optimism is actually the result of

*“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.”*

*-Lao Tzu*

good health instead of the other way around. To counter this argument, researchers adjusted their studies for pre-existing medical conditions and found that these medical conditions did not tarnish the benefits of a bright outlook on life. Moreover, by tracking people for 15, 30, and 40 years, scientists can minimize the potential bias of pre-existing conditions.

Another explanation is behavioral. It is possible that optimists lead healthier lifestyles, build stronger social support networks, and get better medical care. Studies report that optimists are more likely to exercise, less likely to smoke, more likely to live with a spouse, and more likely to follow medical advice than pessimists. Although optimism is not generally associated with a better diet or a leaner physique, and even when results are adjusted for cardiovascular risk factors, a beneficial effect of optimism persists.

In addition to behavioral advantages, optimism may have biological benefits that improve health. A 2008 study of 2,873 healthy men and women found that a positive outlook on life was linked to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, even after taking age, employment, income, ethnicity, obesity, smoking, and depression into account. In women, but not men, optimism was also associated with lower levels of two markers of inflammation (C-reactive protein and interleukin-6), which predict the risk of heart attack and stroke. Other possible benefits include reduced levels of adrenaline, improved immune function, and less active clotting systems.

Finally, heredity may explain some of the link. It is possible that genes predispose some people to optimism, and that the same genes exert a direct effect on health and longevity.

### Blue Skies

More research is needed to clarify the link between optimism and good health since it is likely that multiple mechanisms are involved. Personality is complex, and doctors don't know if optimism is hard-wired into an individual or if a sunny disposition can be nurtured in some way. It's doubtful that McLan-  
dburgh Wilson was pondering such weighty questions when he explained optimism in 1915:

*“Twixt the optimist and pessimist / The difference is droll / The optimist sees the doughnut / But the pessimist sees the hole.”*

Today's doctors don't think much of doughnuts, but they are accumulating evidence that optimism is good for health. As you await the results of new research, do your best to seek silver linings, if not doughnuts.

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