

Balance—# 7 of Eight Keys

Balance is keeping all aspects of your life in flexible yet healthy levels. The totality of your lifestyle is proportionally healthy.

In business reports, health magazines and in leadership programs, it is recommended that leaders keep everything in balance. For example, you need to be conscious of maintaining a balanced budget, balanced portfolio, balanced lifestyle, balance your business with your family needs, balance your health, etc. Personal balance occurs, by definition, when mind, body and emotions function in alignment. It is the ongoing adjustments we make to continue moving in a positive, healthy direction. This definition can apply to anything in business. Strong leadership also means “continuing to move in positive, healthy directions.” The difficulty is maintaining this balance in all aspects of your life day after day after day.

The first rule of understanding about balance is that it is virtually impossible to lead and be truly in balance. To lead means to step out into new frontiers. This can't be done and still maintain balance. The instant you step forward to do anything new, you have upset the balance of nature. Stephen Baetz wrote a book called “Change is...” He stated that, “Everything is in motion; some motions are good and heading in positive directions and other motions are not. Some of us resist the changes we face. Others deny that there is any change that has to be made and argue for the virtues of the status quo.”

The key is to daily re-work your plans, change appropriately, so that daily actions are congruent with your overall goals. If you work too much, family and personal health will be difficult to maintain. If you play too much, work will fall by the wayside. It is important to find ways to work hard and play hard in order to keep the necessary balance for a healthy lifestyle.

I heard this story about a man who moved into the neighborhood with his family. A neighbor, being curious, noticed that this man when he arrived



home from work every day would reach into his pocket, pull out a ribbon, and tie it to the tree outside his house. Again in the morning, he would take the ribbon from the tree branch, put it in his pocket and then head off to work. This happened consistently for a number of weeks before the neighbor had an opportunity to ask him about this unusual behavior. The man said to him, “The ribbon is a reminder to me to leave my work at work and my home life at home. This is how I separate things so that I can stay balanced.”

Many of us have difficulty with bringing our issues across the barriers and it makes us less efficient. Our moods impact our efforts in both settings. To be an effective leader, you need to find ways to separate work from home or find the perfect job at home that makes the two congruent. One way or the other, finding congruence in your life that allows you to balance relationships, family, health, work, etc. is the goal.

Remember that “change is constant;” therefore, you have to reset your balance regularly. When home and work get out of balance, it is important to rethink how you allocate your time, energy and thoughts. This is easy to say but hard to do in practice. For more information on “change” read “Dare To Tell The Truth About Change” from Peer Mentor.net. This article suggests that we need to be more honest about our fears with change and that we get it all out on the table in order to be able to deal with change realistically.

As a type A personality (someone who works hard at everything), I must rethink my lists regularly. If you are like this, examine your weekly planner for the times that you have booked in for working out, healthy eating, time for rest, meditation, faith, and time for your family. These times must be as guarded as the Monday morning breakfast meeting with your CEO.

There is a tendency for highly successful people to identify themselves with their job and not their whole self. If you do that, you are engaged in short term gains. It is essential in business to keep your long range goals and vision in sight all the time. In that way you will achieve congruence



with all your day to day decisions as they fall in line with your company's vision. Do not compromise your health, your family, or your spirit for your job. It is short sighted and will lead you to crisis at a later point in your path of life. A healthy person is a better leader.

Keeping a balanced business plan, investment portfolio is equal to keeping a balanced perspective on your life and your significant others. Everyone wants to live well; but you can't take it with you. Living well means having a balanced perspective in all aspects of your life. You need to take control, design a healthy plan and then act on it. Know that you will have to change the plan frequently as new variables enter the picture. You may need to hire a coach or mentor to help you be objective about your plans and goal setting. The best and highest level CEO's have coaches and mentors. Jack Welch from General Electric always had a coach. He said, "I am always looking to improve in all aspects of my business and life."

Since it is so difficult to maintain balance, and most in leadership positions need to keep re-balancing their planners to protect their personal and family time, the goal remains the same—work at it. Work at balancing your lifestyle continuously. This is the "Balance Key," the seventh of "Eight Keys For Success In Life."

