

Work-Life Balance for Women Professionals



The quest for Work-Life Balance is worldwide and knows no boundaries. A harmonious state within work, family, social life, physical and mental well-being, hobbies and interests altogether impacts your everyday life positively. Having said that, it is equally important to understand at the same time that life is and should be more fluid than just striving for equilibrium of all sorts. Work-life balance has no fixed quantum and varies in sync with the different stages of your progressing life. In fact, it is different for each one of us. There is no fixed formula and trying to formulate one can be unrewarding and unrealistic. Small daily efforts to remain closer to this harmonious state are however, imperative and should be practised mindfully, be it having gratitude for little things in your life, deliberately disconnecting from the digital world, creating and religiously following good routines, having some 'me time', being present in the moment, setting boundaries and so on. The article lays out a few pointers on how to maintain a work-life balance. Read on to reap the benefits...



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To start with this topic, I start with the adage of Philip Green – “It’s all about quality of life and finding a happy balance between work, friends and family.”

In the world of dreams and yearning, there is always a demand of untiring and unquenched effort. I assume here that the readers are both the bread

Women in Accountancy

giver and bread earner. Often in the race of fulfilling one desire, we compromise with the major nugget of our life. We all have a number of roles that we hold throughout our life. Work-Life conflict occurs when time and energy demands for our many roles become incompatible with one another. In the work life balance debate, over work is perceived as the problem. Nevertheless, beyond working time and provision of flexible working practices to enable child care, there is little in the debate about the need to change work *per se*. The debate also narrowly perceives “life”, equating it with women’s care work, hence the emphasis again of family-friendly policy. Here comes the relevance of word “Priority”, which determines the sequence and importance of work in your life.

Ask yourself a few questions and then know whether you are a disgruntled employee, irked mother or some unsocial person with fewer friends around:

1. Whether you feel that something is missing after having a wonderful day?
2. Whether your kids are getting to be spoiled brats?
3. Whether you are physically fit?
4. Whether you are satisfied with what you are doing?
5. Whether something important is unfulfilled and you are always on defending mode?
6. Are your kids getting enough input from you?

Maintaining work life balance to me is maintaining harmony with:

1. Work— Work is the motivation for any professional working, whether in practice or service. But when work extends into family time, it can cause stress which then extends into workforce. One meta-analysis suggests that there is a consistent negative relationship between work family conflict and job satisfaction. There is strict requirement to limit the working hours to the hours prescribed in a week basis. Prioritise your work and then act accordingly. Give freedom to yourself to think beyond your profile as there is more life out too than in office. Encourage work breaks to freshen up the work force. Plan some trips—short or big as per your budget and staff.
2. Family— Working women are perpetually juggling the demands of a career and a personal

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life. Studies reveal that Parenthood remains more difficult for Women than Men. And also women with kids are more in stress and conflict than with the women without kids or the fathers. It is better known that marital and parental status has less to do with a male than female counterpart.

3. Social Life- Beside Family and work presence, you have another presence that is Social one. Where you are a neighbour, relative or a role model to somebody. Often a professional person misses on the social part because of the work pressure, lack of time and other commitments. Social life is equally important for any person to grow as an individual. People around you at times give respect, motivation and love. Ignorance of any section leads to imbalance and then to frustration.
4. Physical fitness— Extended sitting hours are linked to a number of serious health problems especially with the females after delivery. Physical fitness is the predominant factor to stay competitive, alert mind and be energetic. Healthy body is the shelter to healthy mind which finally gives you a quenched feeling. Counteracting the effects of long hours, select any exercise form to stay fit and fabulous—Yoga, Gym, aerobics, Zumba, Folk fitness, Strength training, Boot camping Kick boxing, Masala Bhangra or any

Women in Accountancy

sports of your choice. Organisations too have initiated and started morning yoga sessions for employees.

5. Mental health - Increased number of patients of stress, anxiety and depression has revealed the need for upkeep of mental health. The best way for good mental health is to stay on time, keep calm, relax, and work prior to deadlines and ultimate one is Meditation, any sports or physical activity has also proved to be quite effective in keeping one destressed.
6. Interest- Absorb yourself in some Hobby of your choice may it be anything from painting to sporting. Hobbies motivate and increase the 'adrenaline flow' in the blood stream which is the feel good factor hormone and relaxes the mind fast.

In that, never forget to take the time to update/brush-up the skill and knowledge you possess. There is no thumb rule for anything here but these are some suggestive tools which one can adopt to bring balance to all the facets of role they play.

Harmony with Mind is of utmost importance, as your physical presence without mental presence may be so unimpressive along with the dissatisfaction you carry for not doing your desired task. Secret mantra is the smallest word i.e. saying "No" to the



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not so important task which you can avoid rather than overburdening yourself and feeling guilty of not doing something really important. Do not try to be super women or men – Achieving the elusive “work-life balance” can often feel like an impossible goal, especially for those who strive to give their best to everything they do.

Do more with less concept – Keep moving, pace is more important than to rush and miss.

Many organisations have implemented “Work life balance policy” which is quite lucrative and effective for many employees. Few points which can be considered for making of such policy are:

1. Flexible working hours.
2. Flexible work location.
3. Crèche or child care facility
4. Reducing extended working hours and allowing employees to recover from the negative effects of short periods of working extended hours.
5. Creating a healthy workplace, reduce an employer’s liability and risk of infringing the Health and Safety in any act.
6. Maternity leave policy.
7. Sports activity and recreational centers.
8. Strict limit on working hours.
9. Management’s initiative on timekeeping and encouraging employees to punch out on time.

Studies have suggested that organisations with clear and strong work-life policy attracts more employees, specially females as they feel more comfortable, secure and satiate in such environment. Employee’s retention increases and so reduces cost and increase in productivity. So those working in organisation should promote such a healthy culture suitable for all and those who have employed people must think about the benefits of the satisfied and healthy employees.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, the importance and benefits of work-life balance has been growing in volume and strength. Studies show strong links between work-life balance and reduced level of dissatisfaction, absenteeism and increase in productivity.

A starting point for any firm or organisation is to assess the cost-effectiveness of work-life balance policy, and to identify all the costs and benefits.

“Everything is important in this world, but before everything Living is important, you are important”. ■