



Reprinted from the June/July 2012 issue of BIC

# Six key steps to better work-life balance

Thomas J. Denham of Careers in Transition LLC points out four typical signs that indicate your work-life balance has gone amuck:

- Feeling you are merely trying to get through the day
- Barely making it to the end of the week and feeling completely exhausted by the time you get home
- Feeling you are on the merry-go-round of life and just waiting to get off
- Feeling you are falling behind and never catching up in the game of life

Denham goes on to say if you put yourself on a “continuum from a 10 being ‘perfect balance’ to a one meaning ‘total chaos,’” where would you fall most of the time? Think about it. How would you fare? Is it time for a change?

In reviewing the six steps to better work-life balance, keep in mind some steps will work better than others for you and your lifestyle. The critical test is in the implementation and the results you achieve as you go forward down the path of restoring balance to your life.

1. *Assess and set goals.* Patrick J. Denham tells us “balance comes from answering a series of questions about yourself on a regular basis. For example, am I clear about my personal, professional and play goals?” If you are not crystal clear, you are going to get mixed results in accomplishing some modicum of work-life balance. Determine your priorities, perhaps your top five, and rank them. Next, develop a game plan to achieve your goals on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

2. *Manage your time.* In using your time effectively, it’s important to know what’s important and what can wait. Cut back on activities/commitments that are unproductive and add no value. Though it may sound heartless, there may be people in your life who, for various reasons, you need to walk away from. Continually ask yourself when managing your time — what’s the cost?

3. *Leave work at work.* Make a conscious effort to separate work time from personal time. When you’re at work, work. When you’re with your family and friends, focus solely on them. Technology has caused the line between your work life and personal life to become blurred. Know when to unplug. At any given moment, consider who or what is more important.

4. *Learn how to say “no.”* Catherine Pulsifer, author of “We Never Seem to Have Enough Time,” wrote, “We need to maintain a proper balance in our life by allocating the time we have. There are occasions where saying ‘no’ is the best time management practice there is.” Whether it’s a boss asking you to head up a special project or your child’s teacher asking you to coordinate the class holiday program, remember it’s OK to respectfully and diplomatically say “no.” When you quit doing the things you do only out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you’ll be able to make room in your life for those activities that bring joy and meaning to you.

5. *Nurture yourself.* Eat healthy, include some type of physical activ-

ity in your daily routine and try to get enough sleep. Make an attempt to set aside a time each day for an activity you enjoy — even if it’s only 30 minutes.

6. *Evaluate on a regular basis.* Dawn Dugan, a [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) contributing writer, reminds us “achieving work-life balance is a never-ending journey, and your needs will be different at different times in your life.” She goes on to say, “Set aside some time once every other month or so to

**“May you find the balance of life, time for work, but also time for play.”**  
— Catherine Pulsifer

reflect on your current balance, what you would like it to be and what the plan is for arriving there.”

Achieving a healthy work-life balance isn’t a one-shot deal. Establishing work-life balance is a continuous process as you, your family, your interests and work-life change. Periodically, evaluate your goals and your priorities. In doing so, ask yourself what you should stop doing, start doing, continue doing, do more of, do less of and do differently. Next, make changes, as necessary, to make sure you’re keeping on track.

**For more information on Dr. White’s programs and publications, visit [www.successimages.com](http://www.successimages.com) or call (225) 769-2307. ●**

Dr. Shirley offers ...  
Résumé tips for transitioning military  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDBjYpKN6w8>