



My Work/Life Balance Lessons

By Peter Davoren

My wife and I have three children under the age of 12. My wife also works outside of the home, so, I can't delegate parenting to her and I don't want to. Not only is this my responsibility, it is something I enjoy doing. To do it well, I focus on four guidelines as I juggle my work and personal priorities:

Don't break promises. Whether I've made a promise to my wife to take my daughter to school or to my colleagues to attend a meeting, I have to stand by that commitment. I take both my personal and professional promises seriously.

Manage time wisely. We know that in the construction business, when the process is well-sequenced, it is more productive and the quality of the end product is better. When I apply this thinking to my responsibilities and plan my time wisely, I am more productive and better able to live up to my commitments. Technology certainly helps. My wife and I both use Blackberries, which makes it easier and more efficient for us to communicate during the day about family matters.

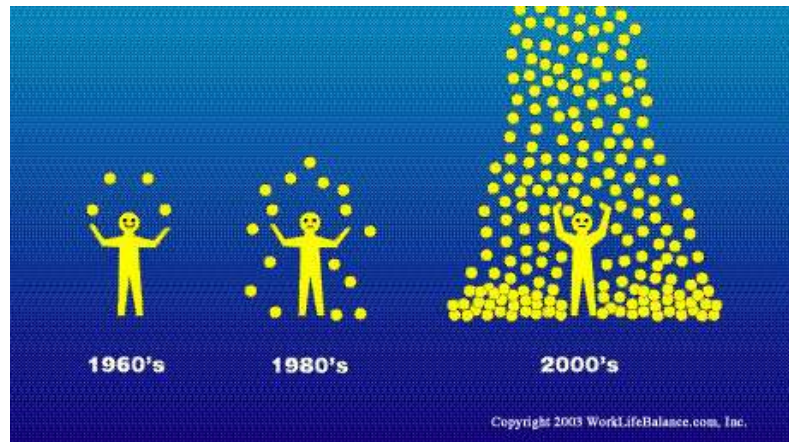
Lose the guilt. I spent a good part of my career worrying about what my direct reports thought of my work-life balance. I felt guilty if I put a personal priority over the company's priorities. I eventually discovered that the pressure I felt wasn't coming from my colleagues. It was coming from me because I was conflicted. I don't feel that guilt anymore because my priorities are clearer.

Remember that you're part of a team. Buildings don't get built by one person.

Current Issue, December 2006

Dec. 2006 - "Stop Juggling"

On a daily basis you are exposed to over 100 times as much information and 100 times as many choices as your parents were a generation ago.



Typically, the way we look at this is, "How do I juggle all these balls?" The answer is, you don't. Just stop juggling. There is a much better way. (Reading time 180 seconds)

Life as a Puzzle

That better way begins by replacing the mental image of juggling with a visualization of life as a big puzzle, with an infinite number of pieces to choose from.

You want to replace the whole idea of juggling with the idea of selecting and connecting the pieces you want to add to your life.

Think for a second about how you put a puzzle together. What's the first step?

Usually it is some type of broad sort, like finding the edges or the corners. Then you do a sub-sort, like finding the edges that are green. And you keep sub-sorting down until you find two pieces to connect, to make the picture look the way you want it to.

The Four Life Quadrants

In your real life picture, your first big sort is to think of your

Families don't, either. They're built by a team who appreciate one another and rely on each other for support.

Peter Davoren is president and chief executive officer of Turner Construction Company

eTip

Give Yourself a Reputation

Whenever you want to change your daily actions for the better, tell somebody about it. If you want to improve your health in the Self Quadrant, tell everyone you work with. "Starting tomorrow I am going to go to the gym three mornings a week before I come in to the office." When you come into work the next day, guess what your co-workers will ask you?

If you want to better connect to your Family Quadrant tell your family members. "We are going to have a Date every weekend for the next month." You have given yourself a reputation that others will help you deliver on. In addition, you should ask them, "How am I doing?" If you are sincere in wanting to connect better to that quadrant of your life, those around you will give you encouragement and feedback. To get that support, choose the quadrant you want to better connect to and GIVE YOURSELF A REPUTATION...now.

Jim Bird, Publisher

Quotes from Abraham Lincoln

"And in the end, its not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

"You can not escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

"Things may come to those who wait, but

life and goals in the four relationship areas pictured below. Can you identify them from the picture?



Although each of our lives are made up of different pieces, we all share these four common relationship quadrants: Work - Family - Friends - Self.

These four areas are the starting point for sorting through the pieces of your Big Picture to create more Value and Balance in and between each.

How well are you connected to each?

Way of Life Goals

When you are sorting and connecting the pieces of a regular jigsaw puzzle, your constant reference point is the front of the box, the Big Picture.

Similarly, you are gathering, sorting and connecting the pieces of your life every day. To make the most of your choices you must have a clear vision, a reference point of what you want your own personal and professional picture to look like.

What is your desired Big Picture of things?

In our training, we call these clear mental images of your life, Way of Life Goals. They answer the question:

Over a lifetime what kind of picture am I trying to put together in each of my four quadrants?

For now, take a moment to think about each of your four life quadrants. Mentally view your Family section. Is it more

only the things left by those who hustle."

"Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was the 16th President of the United States. He was a lawyer, orator, and a Republican politician.

a connected picture or a disconnected pile of pieces?
Now view your Friends section. Have you made good solid connections there lately?

What about the Self quadrant - a clear physically, mentally, emotionally healthy picture...or a jumble of pieces?

And what does your Work life quadrant look like?
For most of us our Big Picture is semi-assembled. It will never be completely assembled because there are new pieces coming at us every day.

But if your whole picture is not fairly well together, if you have major life sections in a jumble, then at best your life will be less fulfilling, and at worst it will be tragic.

To connect better to each of these quadrants you have to keep them in the forefront of your mind.

I can quote you dire stories from major publications as well as client experiences that dramatically illustrate this. Great employees and great managers who became liabilities to their organizations because they were unable to manage and enjoy the non-work sides of their lives.

These were individuals who built their entire lives around work. In doing so they not only hurt their personal lives, but their careers as well.

But this overemphasis on one quadrant is not limited to the work area alone. Losing contact with any of the four areas can diminish your effectiveness in the others.

We not only personally gain by staying connected in little ways to our friends, our work, ourselves, but our families do, too. We are healthier and more complete physically and mentally. As a result we are better parents, spouses, co-workers, friends and lovers.

Look back again at the quadrants of the Big Picture above. Are your pieces well connected in each? If they aren't quite as together as you would like, pick up the phone, set a meeting or make a date with someone...maybe even with yourself.

Why not connect the pieces in that quadrant a little better, right now?

Jim Bird, Publisher

To view the Four Life Quadrants click here: [Big Picture](#)

©WorkLifeBalance.com 2006 - All Rights Reserved

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

WORKLIFEBALANCE.COM