



My Work/Life Balance Lessons by Ark Latt

My work-life balance issues are driven in large part by my position with Turner International, which requires me to travel domestically and overseas at least 20 percent of the time. I make choices and decisions about the four components of work/life balance based on my priorities – family, work, friends and self, in that order – and while I seem to satisfy the first two, I am struggling to do better with the other two, particularly “self.”

For me, work/life balance is about happiness and spending as much time as possible with my wife and eight-year-old twins; they constitute the very core of my work/life balance. Here are a few things that help me succeed with staying focused on what is truly important to me:

Reserve weekends for family.

I used to travel 10 to 12 days at a time, but it was stressful for my family when I was away on weekends. Now I take shorter trips so I’m home every weekend. In addition, I don’t leave for the airport before 10 or 11 p.m. on Sunday and I’m always back in New York by 4 or 5 p.m. on Friday

Call home at predictable times every day, regardless of the time zone.

I focus on work as intensely as possible but I always take time to call my wife and children when they’re first getting up for the day and in the afternoon when the twins get home from school. This sometimes means setting my alarm for 2 a.m. when I’m traveling to call, but this is important to all of us. We look forward to it.

Secure and protect some personal time after work. If I need to work a little more from home to ease the pressure, I’ll do that after I’ve spent time with the kids and had one-on-one time with my wife.

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Avoiding the Cow Piles

With our pervasive media resources barraging us with news, 90% of which is bad, it is important to draw a bright line between what is reported to us and what most impacts us. That is... the daily life we experience around us everyday. Doing so improves our view of life and the joy we take and make from every day. *(Reading time 120 seconds)*

I slammed the palm of my hand against the car radio off knob and said out loud, “I am so tired of this constant barrage of #!@%.” I had been listening to the news.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m an information and knowledge junky. I want to be aware of the important things going on in the world, good and bad. And I understand that the media is in the “bad” news business because it draws an audience. The worse it is, the better for the growing multitude of news outlets competing for our attention. As a result the traditional and new media has expanded from “If it bleeds, it leads”, to putting on serial “news” programs about the most upsetting examples of the human experience.

Guided by the same theme, our competing political parties throw as much of that stuff at each other as possible. As they try and fill the news cycle we constantly get hit in the crossfire.

The sheer volume of this “news” is an unprecedented negative attack on our senses and it risks creating a mental view that there are just mountains of this #!@% surrounding us, instead of the occasional molehill.

Fortunately that’s not true. Our life is not the news.

To keep our life stories and attitudes from mirroring the news, we need to turn off a lot of the media message. We also need to keep the real negatives in our lives in perspective.

After finishing my expletive filled rant at the radio (I was alone) I thought about what most of our lives are really like. There are pitfalls that we need to watch for and avoid. And there are occasional upsets, disappointments and tragedy. But for most of us these are exceptions to our day-to-day life that we need to realistically address...not dwell on.

Sure when you walk through a cow pasture you have to be

I commute with colleagues who are also friends. This is one thing I do for myself, even though it can cost more than taking public transportation. The camaraderie and non-work social time is very important to me.

I feel like I'm doing fairly well with the family and work pieces, so perhaps I can afford to put some emphasis on the third and fourth components now.

Ark Latt is the Operations Manager for Turner International.

Quotes from William James

Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

Why should we think upon things that are lovely? Because thinking determines life. It is a common habit to blame life upon the environment. Environment modifies life but does not govern life.

If you want a quality, act as if you already had it.

It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.

I will act as if what I do makes a difference.

If you believe that feeling bad or worrying long enough will change a past or future event, then you are residing on another planet with a different reality system.

Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.

William James (January 11, 1842 - August 26, 1910), was a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher. He wrote influential books on the young science of psychology and the philosophy of pragmatism.

aware not to step in something. But if you are so focused on the manure that you miss the flowers and brook, clouds and sky, your companions and yourself and the mountains of joy that surround you...the 99% of life that is beauty...well - then you might as well be stepping in the cow piles.

Don't overload on the bad news being broadcast into your life everyday. When something bad does actually happen to you, deal with it rationally, as best you can. Focus to learn any lessons offered up and then *move on*. Move on with the joys of everyday life.

If you sense the media is getting to you a bit, just think of them like the cows in the field. They're pretty harmless as long as you're careful not to flounder in the stuff they're putting out. Just turn them off for a while and make a conscious effort to focus on the wonders and delights around you. Look out the window; take a drive to the country or a trip to the mall.

My children call me cheesy. But whether I'm in an airplane or in a supermarket I marvel at the magic of all that is brought to us everyday by other men and women. When I'm looking down on the clouds as I travel 1000 miles in two hours, I marvel at the people that made it possible.

When I buy a dozen eggs for 99 cents or a VCR for \$49 I'm amazed at the network of individuals and enterprises that can deliver food and toys to me for such a price. It's not really magic. It is the reasoning, and hard work and inventiveness and joy of each human character that makes up your everyday life vista. All that great stuff around you that rarely makes the news. But it makes up your life. Everywhere... men...women and nature...creating magic for each of us.

It's a beautiful pasture out there. Enjoy strolling through it.

Jim Bird, Publisher

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

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