



My Work/Life Balance Lessons

By William Harris

When it comes to work-life balance, I think less in terms of "balance" and more metaphorically in terms of that airplane that flies from New York to Los Angeles . I'm not sure that I spend a whole lot of time directly on the flight path, but I cross the "balance point" enough times that at least I know what it looks like. When I need to put in extra hours, I do, and when I need spend quality time with my family I make time to do that too.

I work long hours like most everyone else at Turner, but by staying focused on what's important to me and taking advantage of the technology available to us, I can succeed at work and at home. Here's what I've learned that might help others:

- **Know your priorities.** For me, it's God, family and career in that order. I think it is important to give back, so I teach religious education at my church on Sunday mornings. Spending time with my family is important, too, so I manage my time so that I can coach my two children's baseball, soccer and basketball teams.
- **Take time to recharge.** For me, that means using vacation time for the past 14 years to spend the first week of August with our church group, Operation Appalachia. We travel to Preston County , W. Va. , with about 50 people to perform construction work for people who need help. This has become a true family effort in that I work with my brothers, father-in-law, nieces, nephews, and for the last two years, my teenaged daughter. This has given the two of us a chance to spend time together while she experienced firsthand the value of giving back.
- **Use technology to your advantage.** A lot of the

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Some Perspective

"Good things happen" Daniel Henninger – Wall Street Journal
Let's take a quick but important look at some of those very good things and why and how they happen. (Reading time 180 seconds).

Life expectancy at birth in the US has increased again to record levels. Since 1940 it has risen from 63 to 78 today. The death rate for children under 14 has declined by 45% just since 1980. 25 years ago 21% of 12th graders smoked. Today that number is down to 12%. Since 1967, the first year statistics were available, the real median household income in the US is up 31%.

Somebody is doing something right. In this highly politicized year there are many politicians venting animosities about everything that is wrong and trying to convince us that they can make things right. In a recent article by Daniel Henninger quoted above he suggests that although progress can sometimes be slow, we need to recognize that a lot of good has been achieved, "not by the wave of a politician's magic wand but through many hands at work in this nation."

And most of the world reflects these same trends. Life expectancy since birth has risen by nearly 70% in India , for example, since 1955, from 38 to 64. Although starting from a low base, the average per capita income in that nation, adjusted for inflation, has risen an amazing 15 fold just since 1980.

The reality is there are many hands in many nations doing lots of things right, everyday. And although it may be hard to notice at the moment, you and I, when we positively go about our daily work and our interactions with friends, family and strangers, are assuredly moving our lives and our world forward.

There is a two-lane stretch of pavement in the Florida Keys called Card Sound Road . It is 25 miles of rugged isolation and is located between our home and Miami . My wife and I were driving this stretch in route to taking our two grown daughters to the Miami airport after a long weekend visit.

Half way into this stretch, with no civilization for a dozen miles in any direction, my car overheated, steam started boiling out of the hood and the engine froze up. There we were, surrounded by only mangroves and mosquitoes, broken down.

A quick phone call revealed that the closest AAA Wrecker was 50 miles and an at least an hour and a half away. It was Sunday so there were no garages open for repairs. My daughters were about to miss their flights, and it was 60 miles for my wife and I to get back to our home with no way to get there.

Cars were going by – some gawking – none stopping – but what could they do? I needed water and there was none around. But then a small, older SUV pulled over ahead of us and a pleasant looking man with a ponytail got out and asked "Do you need some help?" I told him I did, but I didn't know what he could do. I knew the closest place to find fresh water was Alabama Jack's, several miles away.

I realistically said to him that it was a long way for him to go and come back. There was a toll both ways, and I wasn't sure the water would even help, depending on the severity of the leak. Before I could even offer to give him some money for the tolls, he said "Don't worry about it, I'll be back." He jumped in his car and sped away.

I tried to call a cab company while waiting but no one could understand where we were. In about 20 minutes our good Samaritan returned. He had found and filled three big empty mayonnaise jars with water. We emptied

paperwork required by Turner uses the web-based TurnerTalk system, so it's easy for me to log-in from home when there's downtime to either get caught up or prepare for the next day.

- **Take a lesson or two from the kids.** Life is supposed to be fun and children know this. When asked to throw out a piece of paper, my son doesn't just put it in the garbage. He runs, dodges imaginary on-coming opponents, spins, and dunks the wad of paper in the waste paper basket. He reminds me that if life isn't fun, then you're not living it right.
- **Stay focused on what's important to you.** When you realize you're not, adjust your flight path, and make the necessary corrections.

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Quotes

Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts inevitably bring about right results.

The law of harvest is to reap more than you sow. Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

Our life is what our thoughts make it. A man will find that as he alters his thoughts toward things and other people, things and other people will alter towards him. The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good. Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom.

James Allen (1864-1912) was a philosophical writer of British nationality. His most famous book, As a Man Thinketh, was published in 1902 and is now considered a classic self-help book. Its underlying premise is that noble thoughts make a noble person, while lowly thoughts make a miserable person.

the contents into my radiator using some paper funnels his wife kept in their truck. I hadn't noticed but his wife was with him as well as their young daughter in a car seat. They had been on their way to Miami to do some shopping.

I thanked them and tried to compensate him, at least for the tolls. He refused. He said, "We'll stay right in front of you until you get to Alabama Jacks." As we limped along I used the cell to find a cab company that seemed to have an idea where Alabama Jack's was. When we arrived our kind stranger smiled, waved, and was on his way with his family to the malls of Miami .

Now Alabama Jack's is an old, unvarnished, open air, bar, restaurant and boat-launching ramp by the side of the road. When we arrived I parked our car out of the way by the ramp. As I raised the hood to re-evaluate our situation I noticed there were two guys leaned back, one drinking a beer in front of the shed by the ramp. They immediately came over and said "What's the problem?" I told them, and they said, "Let's take a look, maybe we can help" Now, I'm a bit of a skeptic and wondered whether this was a good idea. But since I'm mechanically declined and had no other good options, I said "Sure."

Within a few minutes they showed me two split hoses that were gushing water. One gentleman went off to his boat to see what he might pilfer that could patch things up. The other did the same in the dock shed. It was a regular McGyver operation. They ended up bypassing one hose, substituting a boat hose for the other, and after about 45 minutes said, "That should take care of you until you can get it into the shop." And you know what, it did.

And you know, what else, they too, even with great persistence on my part, refused to let me pay them anything for the repair. They said to just pass it on.

Within an hour four people reached out their hands to a family of strangers. As a result my daughters caught the cab and their flights, my wife and I got to sleep in our own beds that night and our car was no worse for the wear. Good things do happen.

So let the politicians moan and groan. Let's you and I just keep making those good things happen for ourselves, those we care about, and once in awhile for a stranger. And the world will slowly and steadily keep becoming a better place for all of us.

Smiles,

Jim Bird, Publisher

Publisher's Note: Thanks to Charlie and Scott and to the husband and wife that never gave us their names. I will continue to try to pass it on.

Etip

At the end of every day take just two to three minutes to dwell on the good things you made happen that day and the good things that happened to you. The work you finished, the problem you solved, the disaster you avoided or recovered from. Maybe the smile you gave or got; the lesson you sincerely tried to teach. As you go to sleep tonight, pat yourself on the back for those things. If it's been a particularly rough day, then just pat yourself on the back for getting through it. Those many good things that we do or try to do, day after day, are what bring good things to our life and the world. Enjoy them.

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