



Current Issue, May 2009

### My Work/Life Balance Lessons

By Bridget Smith

My work-life balance is better at the moment than in the past for two reasons. First, now that I'm married, I'm no longer spending a lot of time planning our wedding. Second, I'm floating between job sites temporarily while waiting for a project to start in July. Things will get more intense when the new project kicks in, but until then, it is definitely easier for me to find time to train with my husband for the Pittsburgh Marathon in May. We're also planning to run the Marine Corps marathon in Washington, D.C., in the fall, to raise money for the Tug McGraw Foundation.

While there are always going to be some long days and situations when I have to work on a weekend, I've learned how to manage the day-to-day challenges to protect my work-life balance. Here are some of the things I do that work for me:

**Manage your life the same way you manage projects.** When I was planning the wedding and hosting bridal and baby showers for others during that period, I used my project management skills. Figure out what you need to do and when it needs to be done, and create a plan to meet your deadlines. Once you determine what steps you need to take, ask for help and delegate when you need to.

**Make time for yourself.** I find time to run because it's good for my health and it's a great stress reliever. Sometimes that means running downtown at 5 p.m. and then going back to work, but I feel better because I've had that exercise, so it's worth it.

**Combine activities.** My husband and I have raised about \$7,000 for charity by running marathons and participating in other types of active challenges, like the National MS Society's "Pedal to the Point"

### Defining Success...A Worthy Journey

**There are events in each of our lives that expose how fragile our best laid plans and life itself can be. For many it has been the recent economic events. For others it may be an unexpected personal tragedy or close call. Destinations that we had so long strived for can suddenly disappear from view. When that happens, it can serve as a valuable wake up moment to re-evaluate not only your path to success but your definition of it. (Reading time 180 seconds)**

Imagine two people progressing through life. Bill sets personal and career goals and steadily accomplishes one after the other throughout his years. Shelia sets similar goals, but takes much longer to reach them, missing some all together, especially some of her financial aspirations. Which one has had the more successful life?

The answer to that question, as well as a more important one, whether you find success in your own life, depends on how you define it. In my decades of studying success one of the most valuable definitions I've discovered comes from Earl Nightengale. He believed that "Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal."

Nightengale encouraged thinking of this worthy ideal as your destination, your next port of call. His good advice, going back over 50 years, was that you should make your destination as clear and specific as possible. Once clear, if you were progressively moving towards this worthy destination, you would, by his classic definition, be successful.

As meaty and meaningful as this definition is, it is missing an essential specific: the importance of the journey to success. How do we live life every day during our progression towards the destination?

This journey is so critical to our definition of success because most of the destinations we set for ourselves are finite. They are points on our journey that we arrive at and pass through. Complete my education; move into a new house; get the promotion. The day you graduate, or move in, or get the new title is a small point in time. Shortly afterwards, hopefully following a bit of celebration, you start moving towards another destination.

As a result, more than 90% of life is in the journey and less than 10% is in the arriving itself. Since our daily journey, not the destinations, make up most of our life, a complete definition of success needs to take the way we travel it into account.

With that in mind, let's return to our opening question. Would it matter that in reaching almost all his goals, Bill has consistently made himself and everyone around him miserable along the way? Or that Shelia, with many less milestones arrived at than Bill, has generally shared a joyous and loving life with all those who surround her? Sure it does. The journey and the goals, not one or the other, are both critical parts of defining success.

It is how you live with and through the challenges and opportunities, the tears and the smiles, that defines success as much as where you arrive at in a given moment. Live through them the right way, make the journey worthy of you, and you are successful. This is also the most likely way to move forward and capture your desired destinations.



competition. We're getting our exercise while doing community service work, which is also important to us, especially when we have a personal connection to the cause.

**Let technology help you.** When we were planning the wedding, my husband and I sent each other meeting requests on Outlook to help us track our appointments. We're still doing that now. I just got a Blackberry mobile phone, too, and wish I had gotten it a lot sooner. It helps reduce my stress when I'm away from the office because it lets me check in and see if anything needs my attention.

**Your to-do list will never be blank.** You can't get it all done in one day. Sometimes you just have to accept that some of the items on your to-do list will have to wait until tomorrow – and then go home.

*Bridget Smith is an engineer in the Cleveland business unit.*

### Quotes

*"The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today."*

*"Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures."*

*"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."*

*"People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost."*

*"Success is getting what you want. Happiness is liking what you get."*

*H. Jackson Brown, Jr. - American best selling writer, author of Life's Little Instruction Book*

So what makes your journey worthy and successful? This is a critical question. Although this is obviously something each of us must decide for ourselves, for most of us a common component of that answer is a positive work-life balance. Previous newsletters have laid out the core working definition of work-life balance as "Meaningful daily Achievement and Enjoyment" in each of life's four quadrants: Work-Family- Friends-Self. As you can see, there is an emphasis on daily, meaning the journey itself.

This achievement and enjoyment definition relates equally well to defining your success. If you ask yourself this question at the end of a day, "Have I achieved something today and have I enjoyed something today?" and your answer is "Yes" then you have had a pretty good day. You have experienced the key components of a successful day. If you can do that every day for the rest of your life, then you will have a pretty successful life - a worthy journey from beginning to end.

By folding the work-life balance definition in with Nightengale's classic formulation we arrive at this definition of success:

*Meaningful daily achievement and enjoyment in the pursuit of a worthy ideal...  
...at work, with my family, friends and with and for myself.*

This definition includes both essential components of success: the journey and the destination.

Whether your worthy ideal is raising healthy, happy productive children, reaching an educational goal, accomplishing career milestones, financial security or creating loving and committed relationships...if it is worthy of you and you pursue it through meaningful daily achievement and enjoyment, you will be successful. You are at that moment a success even though the completion of the goal, the arrival at your destination, is well over the horizon.

Realize too that the enjoyment objective in life happens no more automatically than the achievement does. You must consciously keep enjoyment in the front of your brain as one of your objectives to assure it consistently appears in your daily life. Have it in your plan today to smile at life, celebrate little and big successes, pat yourself and others on the back, and find something that makes you laugh or love.

So take some time to think through whether you have clear ideals worthy of you for your work, your family, your relationship with your friends, and your own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Then begin living success every day. Pursue those worthy ideals through daily achievement and enjoyment with all those you touch and who touch you in life. By fusing achievement and enjoyment together in your daily pursuit you are creating the coin of value in life that defines success.

### E-tip

Remember you are human. And humans make mistakes. So be humane with yourself when you evaluate your journey.