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Advance Your Workday and More

Making Work-Life Balance Work

Everyone wants work-life balance, but most struggle with it. Some of this is natural, because work-life balance is a moving target that requires constant tweaking. Here are some tips for success. First, define what "work success" means to you. Really pin this one down — do you want to become a supervisor in five years, or is becoming the recognized expert in widget design your goal? These definitions of success are different and require different work-life achievement strategies. Once your work-success definition is clarified, you can discuss work-life balance action steps with those you love. This clarity and team effort will reduce your frustration in seeking work-life balance and help you formulate with awareness the life you want to live.

Writing Your Life Plan

Businesses have a better chance of success with a business plan. Should you have a "life plan" for the same reason? A life plan can help you achieve clarity about what you want and make it more likely you'll achieve the things you desire. And as with a business plan, you can change a life plan at any time. The real value in writing a life plan is taking time to focus and discover. This brings you to what you value most — the "non-negotiable" things you want in your life, such as living near family, owning a home, being near the ocean or mountains, having a spiritual life, or being a parent. These values represent your most precious core beliefs. Next comes planning goals and objectives that sync with your values. These may include education, occupational pursuits, leisure, travel, recreational desires, marital plans, children, finance, and retirement goals. Grab a book on creating a life plan from the hundreds of choices you will find online or at your local library or nearby store. Taking the time to create the life you want will lead you to at least one goal almost everyone seeks — peace of mind.

Increase Your Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is inner drive. It is your ability to do something without being prompted by an external or outside stimulus. It is also the ability to act according to the way you think instead of succumbing to how you feel at the moment. Thinking you should exercise, for example, and summoning intrinsic motivation to do it instead of slouching on the couch is intrinsic motivation in action. To acquire more of this life-changing behavioral trait, follow these steps:

a) When deciding on a goal, come up with as many "reasons" as possible to do it. This is called finding the "big why." The more reasons produced, the more urgency you'll feel.

b) List positive feelings you have for your success. This will multiply the urgency effect.

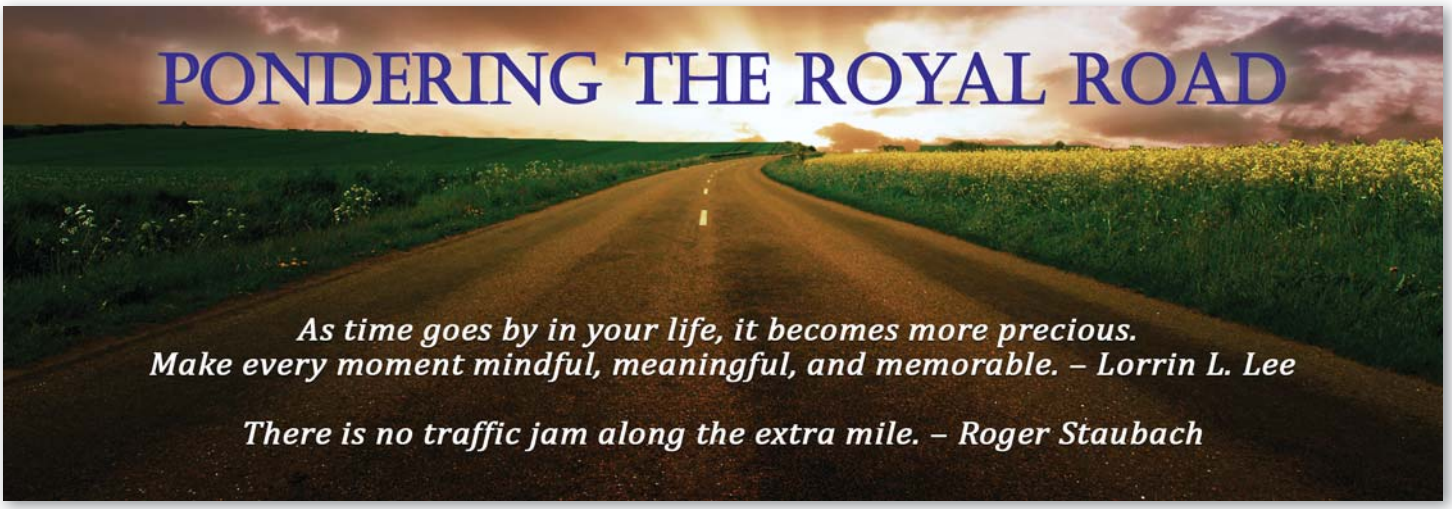
c) Break your goal into small pieces to overcome mental resistance to this new behavior. If daily exercise requires getting off the couch to put on running shoes, write it down as a step. If the very next step is putting your hand on a door knob to leave, write it down. This highly conscious process can start you toward having better reflexes to respond immediately to goals with action steps. That old internal debate of "should I or shouldn't I" will diminish or vanish.

Practice is the key to intrinsic motivation, but acquiring this skill will lead you to the achievements that come from it.

How to Say "No" without Saying "No"

Every resource on time management and productivity discusses having the ability to say no. This assertiveness helps prevent distractions, saves personal energy, reduces stress, and reduces the risk of feeling overwhelmed. If saying no is a struggle for you, here are four other ways to do it:

1. Let others know in advance that you will be busy during a certain time or defined period.
2. Ask whether a certain task can be postponed.
3. Recommend another source of help or person with better capability, more desire, or the ability to produce the preferred outcome for your requestor.
4. Postpone your commitment to saying yes or no to a future date.



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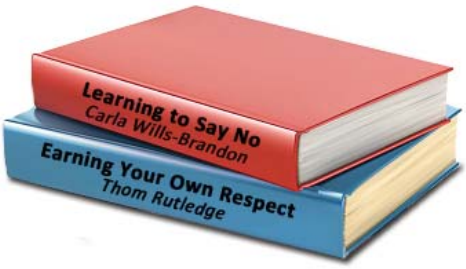

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