

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TENSIONS: USE THEM IN DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

Tension usually implies a strain of some kind. However, the word has Latin and Sanskrit derivations that imply a more positive interpretation: to stretch or extend. This earlier meaning suggests that tensions can be used to expand; instead of avoiding them, consider how you may use each tension to enrich your life.

To do this, review the tensions you notice among your values, among other sources. There are at least two ways to use them. First, you may think of separate activities or other uses of your time that represent each end of the spectrum of a particular tension. For example, if you have a tension between being a “one person show” and collaborating with others, identify what you want to do that ensures both are included in your worklife.

In addition, you may want to explore how you can integrate each tension, giving yourself a two-for-one. So if you have a tension between collaboration and independence, one way to combine them would be to lead a team. The question to ask yourself is: “What can I do that allows me to be both _____ and _____?”

To develop alternatives for including or integrating both ends of an appealing spectrum of possibilities into your life, do some brainstorming with yourself below and/or with your board of directors. Try doing this for the most important four tensions you have identified. Then, experiment with your ideas, starting with #1.

Tension #1 is:

Ideas for including it in my professional and personal life are:

Tension #2 is:

Ideas for including it in my professional and personal life are:

Tension # 3 is:

Ideas for including it in my professional and personal life are:

Tension # 4 is:

Ideas for including it in my professional and personal life are:

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