

Beyond Balance in Work and Life — Three Self-Care Suggestions

by Ruth Schimel PhD, Career & Life Management Consultant, Author

Unfortunately balance in work and life can be elusive and largely unsustainable. Even finding it for a while will not expand the time which cannot be retrieved. Instead, experiment with what's appropriate proportion in your activities through authentic choices and self-care with healthy sleep patterns.

Take several minutes every week or so to confirm or modify top priorities related to your personal and professional interests. This process will help avoid becoming disoriented by the dangerous four-letter word: *more*. That's *more* in the never-ending *do more, get more, be more*.

More is a dangerous criterion because it's open-ended. How do you know what's enough? Choices and drives may be distorted by the vagueness of "*more*." You could be distracted from what's important and what you truly want.

To avoid such detours and distractions, experiment with the self-care suggestions below in order to enrich your quality of life with improved meaning and value. For authentic focus, certainly adapt them. As you attend to what satisfies you, you'll likely find out what is enough. That process could also limit artificial, automatic actions.

Sleep for the body and soul: Scientific research proves adequate sleep boosts abilities to fight illness, sort and store information, learn, sustain healthy appearance, and even protect your genes. All that contributes to soulful behavior that supports caring relationships that demonstrate empathy and generosity of spirit. Remembered dreams can also point to intriguing interpretations and choices.

Inadequate sleep can contribute to weight gain, in fact. For most people, six to eight hours nightly are optimal. Perhaps try occasional short naps in the early afternoon when unable to get your necessary sleep. Napping design for cognitive improvement. 3-minute read <https://wapo.st/3Z3Er5w>

Make effective choices: Before doing anything significant, just ask one question: How will this action contribute to what I want for my life and to people I love? Your answer can provide direction and motivation.

Consider your choices in relation to appropriate proportion of commitments: Recognizing that unanticipated matters can always intrude, decide in advance approximately how much time and attention you can, want to, and will give to particular activities each week.

Though not mutually exclusive, categories may include:

- family and close friends

- community
- health
- learning
- psyche and spirit
- finances
- cultural activities
- social activities
- work
- play

Use your choices to commit appropriate time on your calendar. For efficiency and enjoyment, find two-fors such as exercising with a colleague, family member, or friend. Another example is learning an engaging skill you'd enjoy for work. Keep in mind that quiet, modest experiences may be just as meaningful as the "big bangs."

Here are some suggestions for exploring how you could do work that's so engaging it feels like play and play at things so delightful that you want to work at them.

- Describe briefly one idea for finding or creating such a sweet spot in your life:
- Discuss your idea with a few people who would be fun to include in the process. Who are they? When will you start?
- What one action will you take to follow up, individually or collaboratively?
- How much time will that take, realistically? How and when will you schedule it?
- What main one or two resources, tangible or intangible, would you need to proceed? How would you get them?
- Other actions in your interest that come to mind for moving beyond the illusion of balance in life are:

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