

Assessing & Enhancing Work-Life Balance: Getting it Right



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Discuss:

Why are you attending this workshop?

If your time in this session was well spent,
what would you leave with?



The Brief

Present on personal development with particular reference to work-life balance; review how you are doing, & how to enhance your life when you want more balance or focus.



My Focus for Today



1. Work-life balance can be *tough*, but it ain't impossible
2. Getting the balance right is really *worth* it
3. For things to change means *you* have to make some changes
4. *Happiness* is the ultimate goal / outcome.

Definition



The expression *Work-Life Balance* was first used in 1986 in the USA (although has been used in the UK from the late 1970s by organisations such as New Ways to Work, & the Working Mother's Association) to help **explain the unhealthy life choices** that many people were making. They were *choosing to neglect* other important areas of their lives such as family, friends, & hobbies in favour of work-related chores & goals.

A.K.A. - *Work-Life Interference*

Aim: Low conflict...high satisfaction!

Discussion: *In Balance*

- Consider a time when things were in balance:

Who noticed first?

What were the signs?

How great was it?

What were you doing?

What did you do to get on track?

Who helped you get in good shape?

How long did it last?

What ongoing impact does it have on you?

What did you learn? (*about: yourself / others / change*)



Search for Balance

(CareerOne, 2008)
(n=1129)

- *Most Important*

1 Work-life balance

2 Quality of employer

3 Salary & incentives

4 Opportunity for career progression

5 Workplace culture

6 Reputation of company

7 Flexible remuneration packages

8 Workplace facilities.



Search for Balance

(CareerOne, 2009)

(n=855)

- *Happiness*

14% completely happy

58% mostly happy

26% not happy.



- *Stress Factors*

59% unrealistic **expectations** about **workload**

41% management

28% workmates.

Search for Balance

(CareerOne, 2009)
(n=855)

- *Would change job for -*
 - 1 Money
 - 2 Better career opportunity
 - 3 Better Work-Life Balance.**



Psychology is about CHANGE

The problem for
most people
is not *information*,
but
*motivation &
commitment.*



Stages of Change

Pre-contemplation (no intentions)

Contemplation (ambivalence / considering)

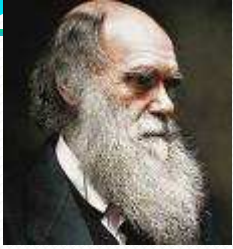
Preparation (commitment / plans)

Action (new behaviours)

Maintenance (working consistently over time)

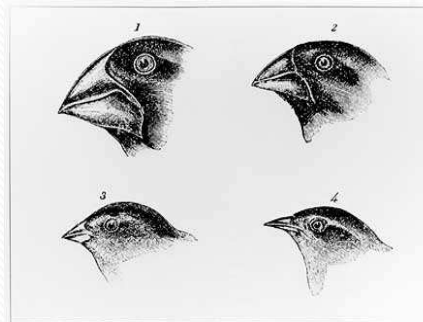
Termination (self-efficacy, 100% confidence).





Charles Darwin

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones *most responsive* to change.



Harmony in life



- You can not tell the shape of a violin by the sound...whether it's a traditional style, asymmetrical, trapezoidal, or whatever...they all sound exactly the same
- Even with an inconsistency of wood thickness a *Stradivarius* sounds great
- Like us, who are all differently formed & developed, we all have the **potential** to do well.

Context for Work-Life Balance

- We work more, have more demands, are more competitive, & have less security
- With minimal free time, we are torn between the pressures of employment & personal life
- We need to earn a living, but we also need *quantity* time for our partner, family, friends & ourselves.



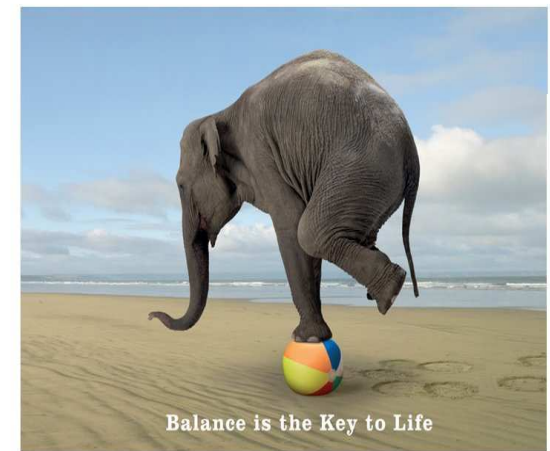
Context for Work-Life Balance

- We make unhealthy choices & neglect important areas of our lives
- We experience burnout due to stress & overwork
- We get to breaking point & experience a range of physical & emotional problems as a result.



Is Balance Bunk?

- If we work hard, we can have everything
(*risk*: the cost may be too high)
- If we cut back, we have just enough
(*risk*: accomplish too little)
- The striving for balance is making us crazy!



Components of Life Balance

Areas of
Well-Being &
Wellness



Spheres of Life

PHYSICAL

COGNITIVE

EMOTIONAL

RELATIONSHIPS - FAMILY

CREATIVE - CULTURAL

SOCIAL - COMMUNITY

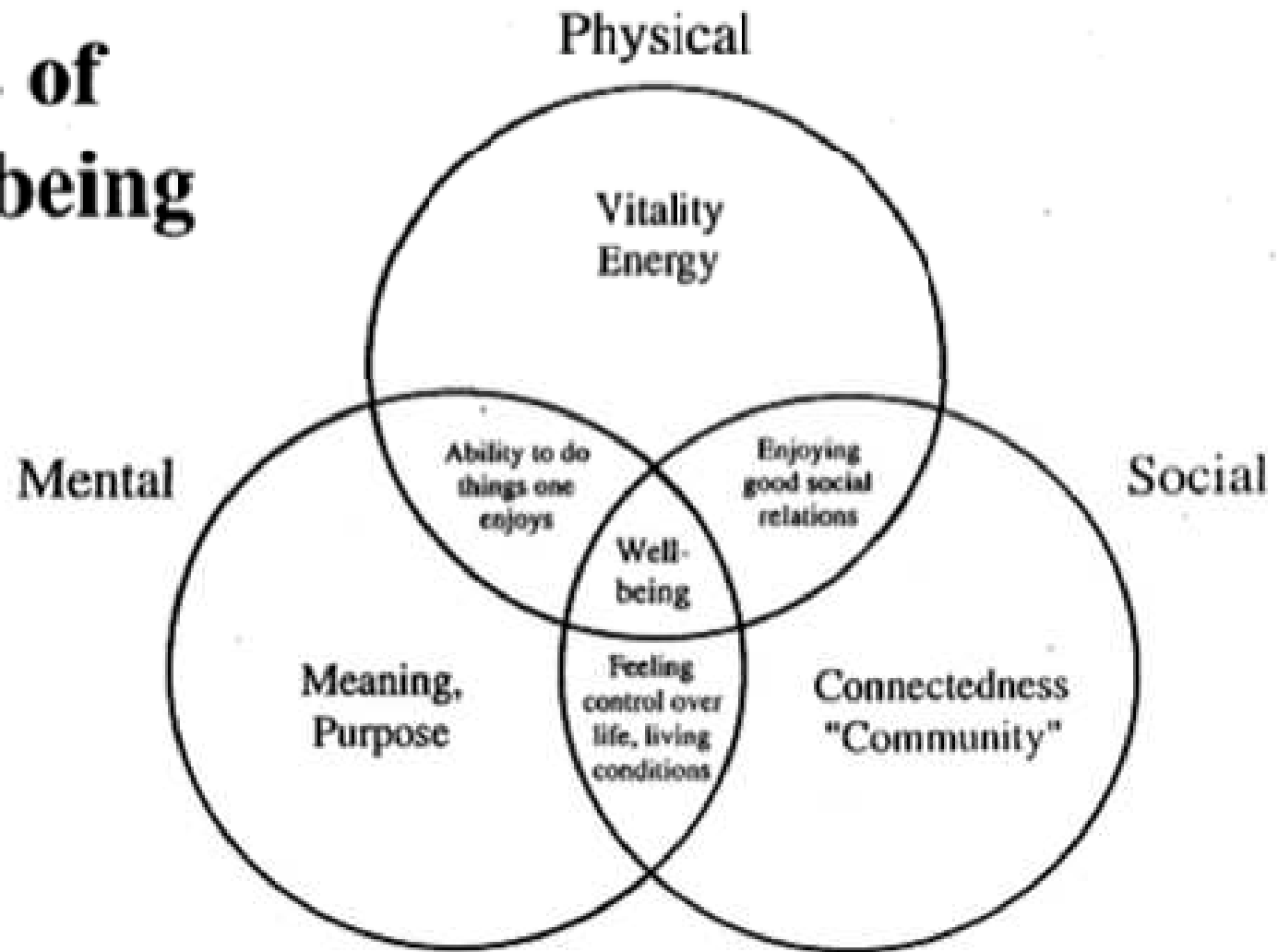
RELIGIOUS - SPIRITUAL

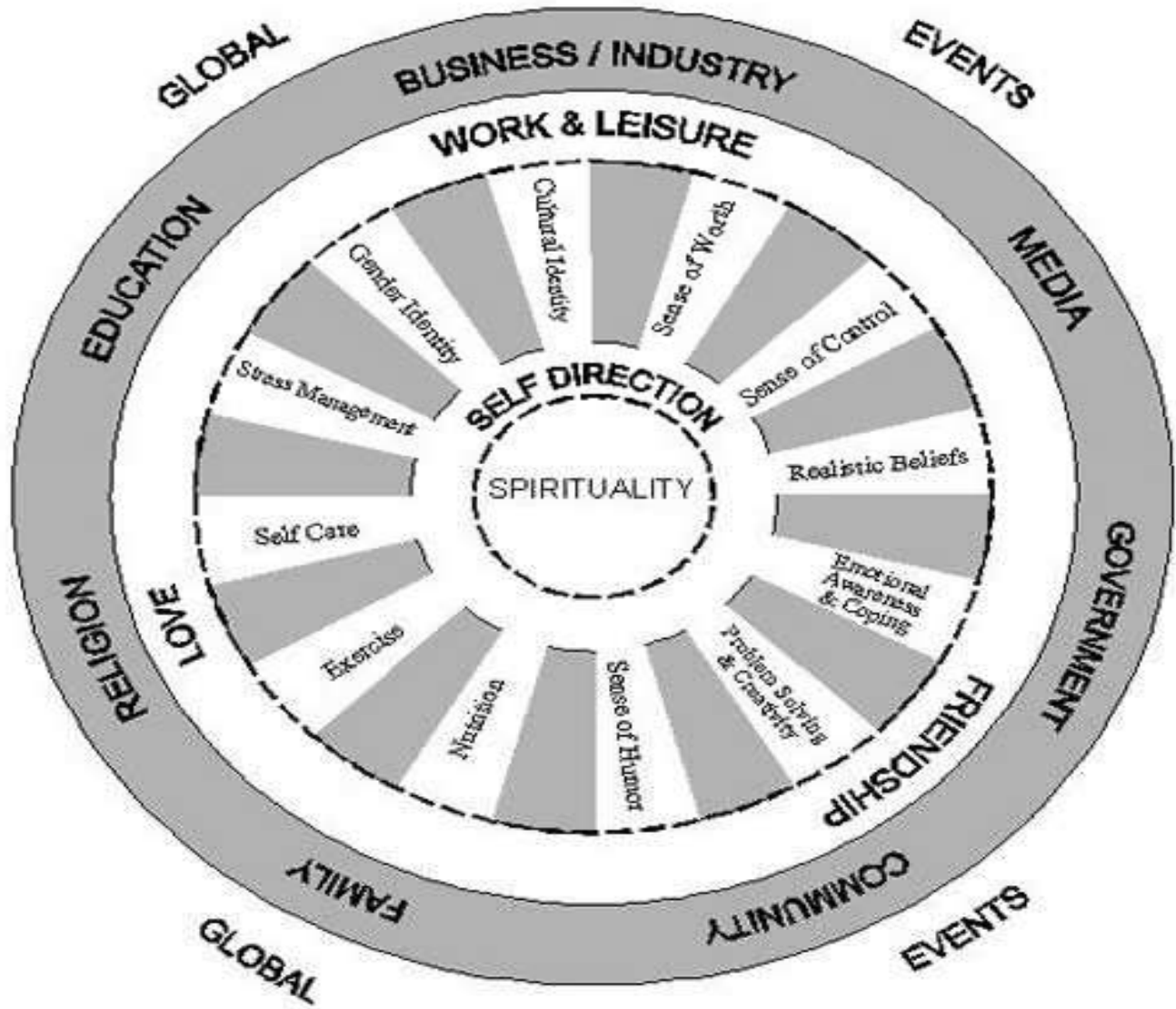
WORK - CAREER

FINANCIAL



Fields of Well-being









Components of Balance

- **Work** - paid, voluntary, home duties, study
- **Personal development** - self esteem, emotions, thinking
- **Social** - family, friends, groups
- **Spiritual** - rituals, values, beliefs, heart
- **Physical** - exercise, sport, diet, health
- **Relaxation** - leisure, rest.

Human Flourishing, or Wellness, is...

State of being in positive health, comprising a sustainable balance (i.e., mind, body, spirit) as an actively sought goal, and making choices toward a more successful existence that results in an overall feeling of quality of life and well-being (e.g., healthy, happy, engaged, prosperous).





Benefits of Balance

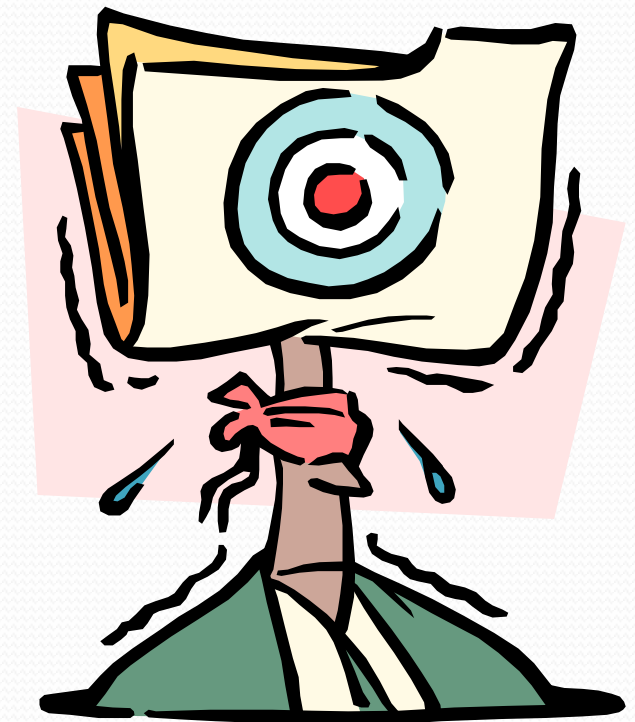
- Reduced stress & prevents burnout
- Increases health, energy & motivation
- Stimulates the immune system & promotes recovery from illness
- Increases *calm assertiveness*
- Encourages perspective-taking
- Promotes self-esteem, social support, connectedness, & happiness
- Increases productivity (bosses are very keen on this!)

Recognising Imbalance

The following may result from, or lead to, an imbalance...

Decreased: energy, motivation, flexibility, connection with others, health, performance

Increased: stress, frustration, worry, negative attitude to self / others / work, alcohol & drug use.





Signs of Imbalance

Psychological Sx

- Irritability, helplessness, anhedonia, apathy, sadness, guilt, worthlessness, poor memory / concentration, sense of failure, cynicism, difficulty making decisions, bottling-up anger, difficulty in letting go & laughing, low self-esteem, feeling let down, pessimism, paranoia, absence of a confidant, impatience, self-neglect.



Signs of Imbalance

Physical & Behavioural Sx

- Changes to - sleep, appetite, indigestion, bowel motions, libido, energy
- Tiredness, nausea, breathlessness, rashes, infections, teeth grinding, sweating, headaches, fatigue, cramps, chest pains, tachycardia, crying spells or desire to cry, restlessness, elevated blood pressure.



Ways to Ensure you Stay Stressed

- Eat & drink anything you want (junk food, caffeine)
- Increase your intake of drugs (alcohol, tobacco, OTC)
- Ignore whatever you read about the benefits of meditation
- Adopt a disorderly haste in your work (be reactive)
- Keep your problems to yourself
- Make every effort not to have fun



Ways to Ensure you Stay Stressed

- Practice nasty, mean, embarrassing, humiliating, hateful behaviours to others
- Be judgemental & do not communicate openly by expressing feelings
- Harbour resentment & complain often
- Don't feel confident in your skills or beliefs to express your opinions or concerns
- Excessively use blame, excuses & denial



Ways to Ensure you Stay Stressed

- Don't develop a support system of any kind
- Become a workaholic
- Avoid the urge to manage your time
- Procrastinate, Procrastinate, Procrastinate
- Don't get enough sleep or rest; push yourself, over-think, ruminate
- Don't exercise regularly; actually, don't exercise at all



Ways to Ensure you Stay Stressed

- Use Feng Shui, Bach Flower remedies, Reiki, crystals, Homeopathy, Reflexology & any other non-proven treatments for relief believing they actually might help
- Remain inflexible, narrow-minded, bigoted, & avoid change
- Keep work & play imbalanced
- Spend no time cultivating self-understanding
- Set no goals & make no plans!

Personal Coping Options

AVOIDANT (flight) *Escape*

- Wait (hold your breath)



RUMINATIVE (freeze / faint) *Surrender*

- Wallow (rigidly continue to be miserable thru inertia)

APPROACH (fight) *Attack*

- Action (direct problem-solving).

Energy flows where attention goes...

How to Thrive (not just Survive)

For Happiness, develop a Good Life...

- *Pleasant* Life: Pleasure & Positive Emotions
- *Engaged* Life: Flow, Competence & Mastery
- *Meaningful* Life: Meaning & Purpose
(& outside ourselves)





How to Thrive (not just Survive)

- Identify your strengths (exceptions) & use them to go after your life direction & goals
- Pursue engaging work & outside activities
- Find activities that contribute to others & the world
- Turn negative or hurtful events into happiness or satisfaction with positive connotations or meaning
- Find meaning in pain & suffering



How to Thrive (not just Survive)

- Have an appreciation of beauty & excellence
- Practise gratitude, kindness, love, & altruism
- Focus on hope, optimism, & future-mindedness
- Explore spirituality, faith, & religiousness
- Develop forgiveness & mercy
- Maintain playfulness, humor, zest, passion & enthusiasm



How to Thrive (not just Survive)

- Assume responsibility for your survival (be proactive)
- Don't accept what others define as the inevitable
- Accept that some things are inevitable
- Be hopeful, not helpless (what you focus on you amplify)
- With low mood, appraisals are distorted...therefore you must focus on positives
- Develop a caring approach to self...**being stressed is self-abuse!**
- Recognise when you are choosing to do too much (or being exploited) & be assertive



How to Thrive (not just Survive)

- Use time management approaches to identify use of time & be more constructive with it
- Have clear goals, maintain & **evaluate** them
- Set attainable standards for yourself, & others
- Identify the skills you need to work more effectively / efficiently, & acquire them
- Have the courage to do / say what you believe is right



How to Thrive (not just Survive)

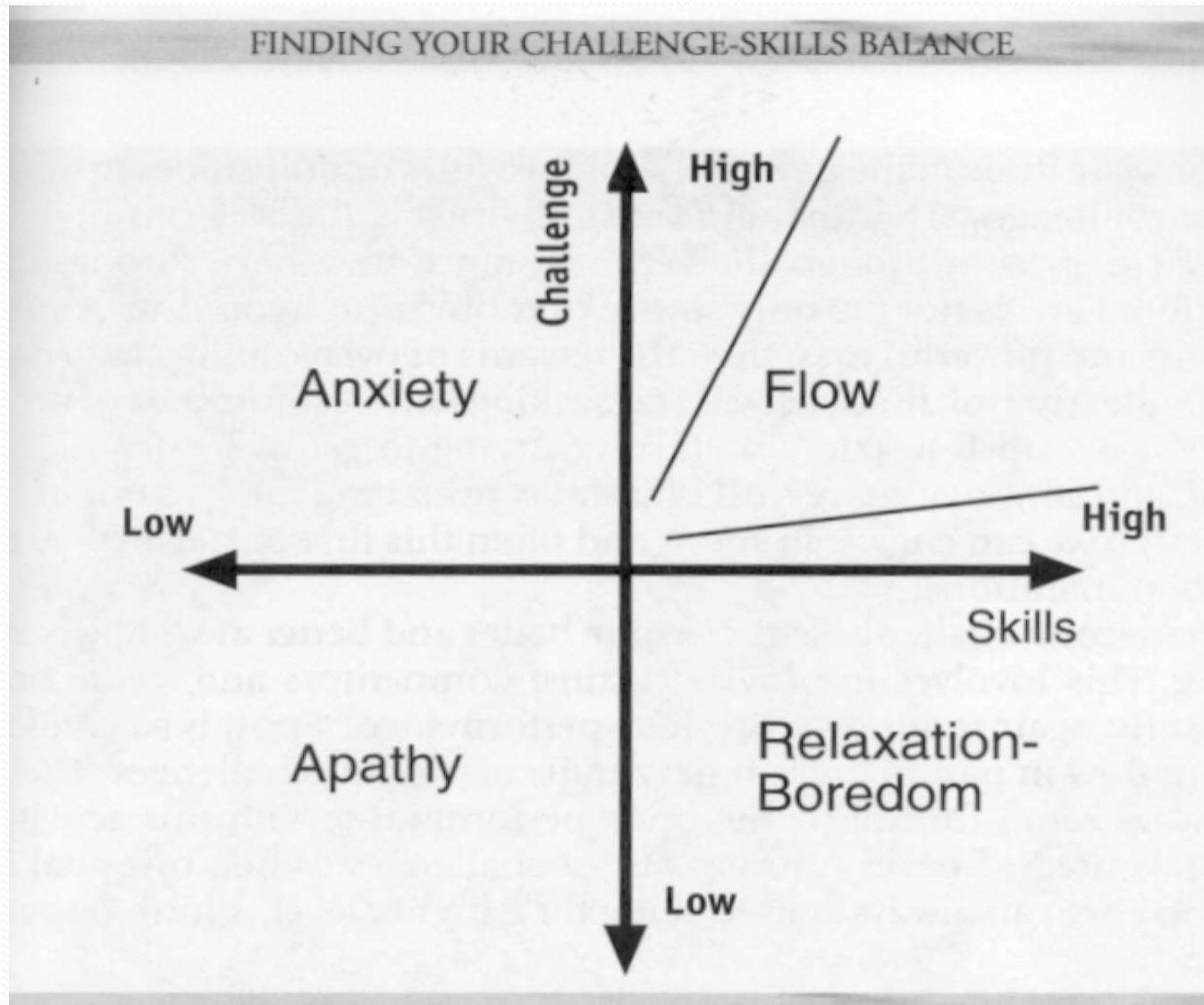
- Cultivate positive relationships with colleagues & boss
- Establish a supportive network both at work & beyond
- Leave work behind when you are not there... distance yourself
- Balance work commitments with responsibilities beyond it
- Take all the time off you are entitled to (bosses are not very keen on this one!)
- Take care of (& spoil) yourself with nice things



How to Thrive (not just Survive)

- Identify job stress factors, & activate change
- Postpone major life changes
- Resolve personal conflicts
- Continue to do the things you enjoy
- Control your work
- Be healthy, exercise & meditate regularly
- Seek help (family, friends, eap, gp, priest, psychologist).

Engagement: Challenge-Skills Balance





Tips for Work Balance

- Know your role / responsibilities
- Accept limits (time, energy, skills)
- Take proper breaks (energise)
- Manage workload (prioritising / delegating)
- Slow down
- Talk with colleagues (get support & opinions)
- Cultivate a sense of humour, fun & creativity
- Learn to say *No*



Tips for Work Balance

- Think ahead & set achievable goals
- Maintain interest / curiosity in work; stay fresh by learning & problem-solving
- Focus on the positive aspects of work & your personal life (recall these often)
- Learn *The Serenity Prayer*.

Serenity Prayer

Grant me the Serenity to
accept the things I
cannot change,

Courage to change the
things I can, &

Wisdom to know the
difference.



Courage...



...is not the absence of fear; it is the making of
ACTION in spite of the fear:

Commitment + Doubt + Action = **Courage**



Do, or do not. There is no try.
(*try* means you think it's out of your control)

We usually *overestimate* the likelihood of something bad happening & *underestimate* our capacity to cope.

Life's *Sat Nav*



The process of making life changes could be like my car's GPS / street navigation system...it needs only 2 bits of data: Where are you? Where do you want to be?

NOT... did your mother love you; what happened when you were 6; what are you afraid of; tell me about your crazy boss...

Changing Your Life

Structured Problem Solving

- List your problems (write them down)
- Identify the problem that is causing most distress
- Generate some options to help
- List advantages / disadvantages of each option, taking account of resources (e.g., strengths, people, \$, time)
- Identify the best option to deal with the problem
- List the steps you need to carry out this choice
- Implement the choice & **evaluate** the outcome.



Traits of Happy People

- Self-esteem (positive self acceptance)
- Optimism (being hope-filled)
- Personal control (choose their destiny)
- Extroversion (outgoing, involved, friends).



***CHOOSING* leads to Happiness**

- **C** clarity goals, direction, purpose
- **H** healthy living (not sick or tired)
- **O** optimism (positive about self, future, world)
- **O** others (all important relationships)
- **S** strengths (innate qualities/attributes)
- **E** enjoy the moment (have fun, be grateful & appreciative).



Outcomes of Imbalance

- Burn out
- Rust out
- Compassion fatigue
- Vicarious traumatisatisation.



Euphoria → Happiness → Calm → Vulnerability →
→ Anxiety → Panic → **Despair!**

Fatigue Phenomenon

- **Grand Adventure**
- **Ambivalence / Fading Dream**
- **Hanging in...transcendence!**





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