

Work Life Balance

You are not out of balance. You are out of alignment.

A billion Google results and nobody has solved it yet.

That is because work-life balance is not a time problem — it is an intention problem. This piece reframes the entire conversation and offers a practical path back to becoming a person again, which as it turns out makes you considerably better at the work.

Tony · FitFilliate · 2025

Edwin had been a client for a few years at that point. He came on for a 12-week transformation and stayed to work on the rest of life.

5am on a Monday: "Guys, my life is on fire. If it can go wrong, it is. The business had its best month ever, but things don't look good for this month. My wife hates me, we just got home from vacation, and she hasn't let up about everything I haven't done around the house. At this rate, my next adventure will be months from now, not days."

This email is not uncommon. And it is one of the more useful illustrations of what work-life balance actually is — and isn't.

The Windmill Is Not a Giant

Human nature is to turn windmills into giants and then fight them like Quixote. So the first question is always: is this a problem, or are you making it one?

Human life on average divides into thirds: one third sleeping, one third working, one third living. By the numbers, you are not out of balance — not in terms of time allocated and spent. What you are is out of alignment. This is not a conversation about quantity. It is a conversation about quality, and specifically, about intention.

Most people who report a work-life imbalance share a recognizable pattern: they have stopped living and continued working. Not because work demands it — because other things do not.

Distraction, Not Imbalance

We are more connected than ever, which means work has more access to us than ever. Email, Slack, text, social media — nowhere is sacred. But these things do not steal your time. You give it to them, because something else is not holding your attention.

You sit on the couch with someone you love, distracted by an inbox. You walk to your phone to answer a message rather than mow the lawn. You scroll while your partner tries to tell you about their day.

You are not out of balance. You are distracted. And that distraction is not the fault of technology — it is the result of not having built sufficient intention around the non-work parts of your life.

We spend enormous energy defining who we are at work. Few stop to seriously consider who they are at home, in relationships, in leisure. That identity — the full one — is where satisfaction actually lives. You will always feel out of balance if you are doing work, in any area of life, that you do not find meaningful.

The Ten Areas

To restore order, you have to define the actual areas of imbalance. Life has ten general domains:

Health · Family · Friendship · Intimacy · Finance · Work · Adventure · Hobby · Spirituality · Emotion

Rate your intention in each from 1 to 10. Not happiness — intention. How deliberately are you showing up in each area?

The pattern is reliable. Adventure, hobby, and health consistently rank lowest. Family ranks high in sentiment but low in intention — meaning people care deeply but are not particularly deliberate about it. Work is almost always where intention is highest and where the most energy goes.

Balance is not a matter of time. It is a matter of focus, attention, and intention.

Do Better Work, Not More

The practical fix is counterintuitive: get better at work so it takes less of your life.

Task switching is stealing your time. The subconscious flip between email, calls, projects, and messages costs roughly 70% of productive working time in transition alone. Eliminating unnecessary switching eliminates the energy spent shifting focus. Time-block your schedule. Assign types of work to specific windows and protect them.

Shorten your intervals. Even the most focused attention wanes after a short time. Research consistently shows that intervals under an hour outperform extended sessions. Set a timer for 50 minutes. At 50 minutes, stop. Move. Drink water. Breathe. Do not scroll — disconnect. Then return. It is a Tabata for your brain.

Take the break. The most effective use of your time is time away from work. With clients we advocate a one-month sabbatical annually. Eleven months of work, one month off. It is the best test of your business's

capacity in your absence. More importantly, it is direly necessary for renewing the person who does the work.

The real question

Work is vital to identity. That much we agree on. But the question is: who are you? Work is one part of your identity. What is the rest?

Becoming an adult is simply acquiring the means to become a child again. Life without play is a life without purpose. Do not lose sight of who you are by what you do.

That is balance.