

Book Review

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Name of the book	: Work and Life Balance
Publishers	: Harvard Business Review
Contributors	: Stewart D. Friedman, Perry Christensen, Jessica DeGroot, Fernando Bartolome, Paul A., Lee Evans, Felice N.schwartz, Michael S. Kimmel, Mahlon Apgar IV, Harry Levinson.
Date of Publication	: 2000
Paper Back	: 231
Language	: English
Cost	: \$19.95

This book is mainly designed to bring in the necessary information to the managers and the professionals to deal with the fast moving world. The book is divided in to eight articles and the content emphasizes on the importance of balancing work and life. There has to be parity in working pattern and lifestyle is what the book states.

ARTICLE 1: The end of the Zero-Sum Game

According to this article, there is a competitive priority between work and personal life, if an individual does better in one arena, he/she will surely face disappointment from the other end. The author concludes the article with a suggestion that every manager should exercise the concept of self-assessment as it very essential to clarify the clashes within an individual.

ARTICLE 2: Must Success cost so much?

The second article from the book specifically talks about how does success affects ones' personal life and the executives who have understood to balance work and life are successful in life as they know the mantra which is adapting well while change in jobs, finding right jobs for themselves and handling the career disappointments better. At the end of the article, the author suggested that job rotation is an integral part of a job but after understanding the comfort ability of the executive. A manager should never interfere in the personal lives of the executives but in certain situations like going for a field visit from the organization, the manager has to consider the personal constraints of the executives.

ARTICLE 3: When Executives flow out

The third article of the book hits on the core aspect of work and life balance stating that the exhaustion, irritation and physical attributes of an executive can be handled by a manager by simply burdening them less with work for a stipulated time. The author, in the end, mentions that the managers in this condition should turn the executives towards their hobbies in the form of extra-curricular activities which will not only improve the manager- executive relation but will also improve the overall productivity of an executive.

ARTICLE 4: The work Alibi (When it's harder to go home)

Article 4 of the book summarizes about how individuals make excuses about not being able to give time to their personal lives because of work which is actually a big excuse for covering up the fight. The author at the end of the article tries to give a solution to this problem by saying that it's never too late for an individual to understand that there is no competition between home front and their work. Quality work will help them save time and spend that saved time with their family which will solve major issues and fights.

ARTICLE 5: Management women and the new facts of life

Article 5 of the book speaks about how difficult it is for an organization to raise a women manager as compared to a male manager because the women have to look after the home front too. The maternity leaves taken by the women manager also hampers their carrier. The author ends the article by writing - "with changing times, the perspective of the society is also changing." The women of our society have consistently proved to be good administrators as they are managing home front and their jobs together. Hence they are multi-taskers.

ARTICLE 6: What Men want ?

Article 6 of the book touches the aspects of masculinity rather than the always trending topic of what women want. With the changing world, men also need to redefine themselves for the fact that they need to be empowered. The new redefined men need to understand that there's no harm in taking up parental leaves (which is the policy of certain companies) rather than taking sick leaves for spending time with their new born. The author concludes the article by suggesting the managers to be a bit more inclined towards understanding the male ideology of being family oriented rather than carrying the image of being tough and more responsible.

ARTICLE 7: Changing where and how people work ?

Article 7 of the book emphasizes on the importance of having a flexible and an adjustable workplace rather than having a traditional workplace where employees work generically and don't experience anything new. This type of the working environment will bring out the better productivity out of the executives. The author in the end quotes that as there needs to be parity between authority and responsibility for better functioning of the organization, similarly there has to be parity between work and leisure for better productivity. Any imbalance in any one of the following can cause the organization to collapse.

ARTICLE 8: The Second Career

Article 8 of the book concentrates on one of the very common dilemma every manager goes through while riding the flight of irritation and frustration and that is to choose a second career. This option is never easy

as it requires the individual to leave the current job, pay checks and the authority. The author concludes the article by saying that any manager should never take this decision until and unless they are quite sure about their aspirations or have enough knowledge and faith on starting up a new venture all together.

Each article in the book emphasizes on how an organization should move itself to understand the behavior of the executives/managers so that the organization does not lose an executive who is hardworking, competitive and output generating just for the temporary over-burdened, exhausted and pressurized attitude.

The book also states that the brilliant managers are those who connect better with their executives and help them to overcome all the hurdles in life, be it professional or personal. The book has one article which lightens up the point of calling the training of women managers more costly as compared to male managers of the organization. I partially agree with the statement, as the role of the women in the society is considerably changing. Women taking leaves to look after their home front have reduced and in the case of maternity that's the biological gift of nature to women and her body seeks some rest after that. Also, women leaving their jobs because of their new born have been slowly and gradually reducing because of the support from families and husband.

In the evaluation of the book, the content of the book matches up to the name of the book. The book needs a bit of revision, considering its perspective towards the women managers. I would also want to draw your attention towards how this book makes us realize that leaving your job to pursue your passion is not always necessary, it can be done along with the job and the support of the manager of the organization.

We, as working generation, spend most of our waking hours in the organization, so treating the organization and likewise as a family becomes very important.. a practical family.

I would want to conclude my evaluation by saying that balancing work and life is important and inevitable in today's world as people are so stressed these days for being career oriented and their personal life doesn't get any time. I believe, excluding anything out of both of them is not important at all because both the arenas are an integral part of an individual's life. Prioritizing both of them correctly is essential for a happy balanced life. This process will require understanding from home front and support from the organization. I believe an individual who has given their all to the organization should be given needed support in case of requirement so that the factor of irritation, hatred, quitting the job doesn't arise. If an individual sits extra hours in an organization during the conference, he should be given flexibility to leave an hour early for his child's Parent's Teacher Meeting. With this kind of understanding it will be a win-win situation for both.