

Top 10 Ways to be a Balanced Leader

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A strong leader is a *balanced leader*. Balanced leaders lead with multiple perspectives and objectives and consider not only the financial impact of decisions, but the personal, social and environmental impacts, as well.

Most would agree that a leader's chief responsibility is to *inspire* and *lead* the organization. To do so effectively, the most successful leaders keep all facets of their life in balance while stimulating higher productivity, morale, and commitment from their people. They have all the necessary technical, management and people management skills along with enthusiasm about everything they do. They have complementary character and behavior traits. They blend passive and active leadership to enhance the overall effectiveness and are capable of making things happen through vision, planning, budgeting, and implementation with the patience to develop the potential of others. They are focused not only on increasing the bottom-line but also using their financial resources to help people and to give back to their communities. They are financially secure so that they are not swayed by inappropriate short-term gains or wrongful acts.

Effective leaders also focus on their own essence and those with whom they interact. They are committed to doing the inner work to develop their integrity, character, strong human values, and to improve the quality of life for themselves and others. They portray strong integrity, credibility, and consistency. They realize that their role as a leader is not simply something they do but is about who they are---their way of being; their state of mind. The more leaders can unleash their own full potential (mind, body, and spirit), the more value they can create inside and outside their organizations.

It is essential for leaders to live with a state of balance for two very important reasons: (1) they need to recognize when an employee is out of balance to help them get back on track; and (2) a leader must be able to create balance in their own life, be a role model, and to be able to shift **internal and external resources as necessary to maintain effectiveness and productivity to meet both personal and professional objectives. A sense of balance can translate to an increased** sense of well-being and more effective leadership skills. It also connects with greater profitability and increased workforce satisfaction.

Often the essence of balance fails as leaders get caught up in the pressures of work. Leaders can improve your on-the-job performance by developing more enthusiasm for work and life while maintaining your life balance. Here's how:

1. BE PRECISE

Do your work with pride. Commit to excellence without erring on perfection. Demonstrate a high sense of pride and integrity in what you do. Be lazy so that you do it right the first time and don't have to keep doing it over. Be the best individual possible!

2. NARROW YOUR FOCUS

Rather than multitasking and working on many projects simultaneously, focus on only one project at a time and put all of your energy into it. Develop your ability to concentrate and stay focused. Use the skill of *multipurposing* as a tool to accomplish similar things using the same energy and time. With multi- purposing you strategically combine things together whereas multitasking has you scattering your focus. Identify 3-5 key priorities that will help your organization achieve its main objectives. Stay out of the politics of the organization and remain focused on your core responsibilities.

3. HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Focus on your past successes and draw strength from these accomplishments. Having a can-do attitude will help you find solutions to even the toughest problems and situations. Use your failures as a learning opportunity; focus on your successes and learn from both your successes and failures. Your self image and what you believe can and cannot be accomplished will be reflected in what is actually achieved.

4. BE SOLUTION-ORIENTED

Focus on solutions rather than problems. Don't make things catastrophic---keep things in perspective. Be seen as someone who seeks out solutions instead of someone who lists all the reasons that it can't be done. Be adaptable and open to change without compromising your integrity or values.

5. ESTABLISH REALISTIC GOALS

Set work and life goals. Be sure that your goals are realistic, specific, measurable, attainable, rewarding and time bound in both your personal and professional areas of your life. Develop action plans to help you attain your goals. Establish benchmark dates to track your progress along the way. Be selective in your goal-setting so that the ultimate goal is attained effectively and not sidelined by the unimportant. Understand what matters most and what will make the biggest difference to you and your organization. Have clear objectives established. Keep focused on the big picture.

6. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

Be sure that you are heard often. Articulate your concerns, solutions, and accomplishments with enthusiasm. Communicate your needs succinctly. As the leader, you have the substantial responsibility to communicate within the organization. It is your role to maintain the organization's focus on its strategic priorities.

7. TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Be a change agent and risk-taker. Be open to experiment with new ideas, methods, procedures, and processes. Focus not only on increasing the bottom-line but also using your resources to help people and to give back to your community. One of the key responsibilities of leaders is to be a role model and change agent for material and financial betterment, too.

8. MOTIVATE YOUR SELF

Be enthusiastic and motivated in all your actions. Create an environment at work and home where people find joy and the best means to express their passion. Inspire and empower others while in the process of doing what you love. Joy and empowerment are states of mind that you can bring to each of your many roles. Be driven by your personal mission: a direction of yourself that fits within a personal philosophy that goes beyond selfish rewards.

9. HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

Seeing the humor in situations will help you have a balanced outlook and make you someone others prefer to associate with. Laughing at a problem or difficult situation will help deflect the stress and tension often associated. Practice patience and tolerance with yourself and others. Establish a long-term view so that you can keep things in perspective without sidestepping important stages and lessons along your path.

10. FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Find ways to focus on the progress you make as you strive to do your best. Let go of trying to do everything perfectly. Look for ways to beat your last record. Be able to learn from your mistakes, adopt new behaviors and become a life-long learner. Be open to accepting criticism and suggestions from others.

About the Author:

Natalie Gahrman is an internationally certified professional coach and work/life expert who works with organizations to underscore the causes of stress and productivity issues and teach their employees how to better self-manage their burgeoning workload – in all aspects of their lives. She delights in helping entrepreneurs, executives, and SuperBusySM Parents balance their work and personal life, achieve better results, and create more fulfillment and congruency in their life.

She is the author of the award winning, ***Succeeding as a Super Busy Parent*** and ***Tools for Creating Success, Fulfillment and Balance in your Work, Family and Personal Life***. Natalie has helped thousands of people at every level of the business manage the complexities of life's challenges through individual & group coaching, workshops & keynote presentations, on-line advice, a monthly column in *Moms Business Magazine*, and her free e-newsletter (which you can subscribe to at www.theprioritypro.com). She is a contributing expert for *Parenting Magazine*, *BlueSuitMom*, *iVillage*, and *MyPath*. She has been featured in a number of articles and on TV and radio in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK.

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