

[PRESIDENT'S PAGE] BY JILL BURKHARDT



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# Balance: It Doesn't Mean Pleasing Everybody All the Time

*This month's column was jointly written by Jill Burkhardt, SDCBA president, and Lisa Weinreb, Lawyers Club president.*

**Y**ou hear about it all the time: *balance*. Can we achieve it all, or is that a myth? How do those who appear to be doing it do it? Can anyone really succeed at balancing the demands of career, family, community service . . . and personal sanity? Here's a little secret: You may have already succeeded, and you don't even know it.

Oh, no, you may be saying, not me—for me it's a constant struggle. You may be thinking about last week, when you went to your son's classroom party and he was disappointed that you came in 15 minutes late

And when you make those hard calls—whether to go to the noon committee meeting or your daughter's poetry recital; whether to spend one more hour at work preparing for tomorrow's argument or to meet your spouse for his mother's birthday like you promised—do you make those choices carefully? Do you measure your decisions against your deeply held priorities? If the answer is yes, then you *have* struck the right balance.

Of course, that doesn't mean the decisions aren't sometimes agonizing. And it doesn't mean the decisions aren't sometimes without costs and consequences. Most significantly, it doesn't mean that everyone in your life will be happy with all of your choices. Pleasing others cannot be the sole measure of whether

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you have succeeded in striking the right balance. Balance is just that, the equilibrium of sometimes opposing interests and forces. Your core principles are always your best guide.

and with store-bought cupcakes. You may be remembering the look your colleague gave you as you left the office at 5:15 to make a board meeting. (Little did she know that later you worked at home on your laptop until almost midnight.) You may still be bothered by the fact that you had to say no to chairing that committee because you're acutely aware they haven't yet found anyone else to do it.

Oh, no, you may be saying, not me—I'm constantly feeling out of balance. And I'm perpetually feeling guilty.

So here's a thought. Maybe you have struck the right balance, but it just doesn't look or feel like you thought it would. Maybe you need to redefine your success.

Do you hold yourself to high standards professionally and personally? Do you apply yourself to each task, giving it your all and working diligently as well as efficiently?

Appraise your "balance success" with a long measuring stick. Balance cannot be accurately measured in a snapshot. On any given week, you may find that work is under control but your family may be craving more of your attention or vice versa. Even though you might feel unbalanced, maybe you're just out of balance *at this moment*. Take a longer view. As you look back over the past number of months, were you spending your time and energies in a way that was consistent with your priorities over all? If your answer is yes, then you are succeeding.

Give yourself permission to redefine your notion of balance. Recognize that things might not be perfect, but you are making decisions that make your life work. So let go of the guilt and instead congratulate yourself on your success. ^



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