

GET REAL

Tactical Tools for Leaders

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How to Make Choices that Drive Professional and Personal Balance

If you're struggling with striking a balance between the energy you give your job and the energy you give yourself or your loved ones, these ideas may help you. The tool I offer here is simple. Instead of trying to change your entire focus, which may be a huge undertaking for you in the short term, **commit to some very small and doable action today that will prompt at least some additional attention in the personal area of your choice.** Here are a few examples:

- On a night when you have to go back to work, instead of rushing and stressing through dinner, give your loved one or friend a call mid day to invite them to meet for dinner to spend an hour and a half of uninterrupted time before getting back to work. Then let yourself look forward to and enjoy the break.

- If you want or need to be alone, make the commitment to stop at a bookstore for an hour or take a novel to your favorite restaurant, or take a walk before getting back to work.

- Make the commitment now that you will not end the day today without spending at least 15 uninterrupted minutes to read with your child from his favorite book or to have a conversation with your teen.

- Isolating yourself? Make a commitment that by the end of the week, you're going to call a friend and schedule one social outing within the next month that places you in a new

environment with new people. — Just one call. Just one plan.

- Make a commitment to turn off your cell phone for a set amount of time this evening making you available only to the person in front of you. Or simply enjoy not being accessible to anyone.

- Order take out and add candlelight to the kitchen table this evening. A shift in your normal environment sometimes provides a shift in your attention.

- Add one "want to do" as you would add a "must do" to your planning system. It may prompt you to take action or at least help you notice that you haven't.

- Note a loved one's special day at work or school in your planning system so that it becomes part of what you think about on that day. It may prompt you to make a call to see how it went.

Applying this tool — small, doable actions towards balance — is a start in the right direction. Of course if the balance issue becomes an acute, unmanageable concern for you and your family over time, it may be time to explore your efficiencies or re-evaluate your professional and personal choices more seriously.

Do you have a specific question relating to an accountability challenge you're experiencing currently? Email me and I'll reply to you on the next business day, with a complimentary response.