

Hi everyone. My name is Shawna; thank you for being here for our presentation: The Secret to Work-Life Balance.

People often feel torn between work and time with the family; they feel they don't have enough "me" time. This session will help participants identify various ways to achieve balance in personal, family, and work responsibilities. The conflicting demands of work and home can create stress and zap the time and energy needed to get everything done. In this session, participants will find answers that will allow them to be more effective and more satisfied with both their home and work life.

Some of the learning objectives—determine the meaning of work-life balance; identify the sources that keep you out of balance; explore what happens when we, when we're out of balance; learn time-management strategies for effectively managing multiple demands; achieve balance and discover tips and tricks to do so; and develop an action plan to balance work and life demands.

Our cultural society has become increasingly complex. We are trying to juggle all the aspects of our lives, and the areas in our life often conflict causing us to feel guilty, angry, and frustrated. It can feel like a never-ending cycle where no matter what we do is wrong. So, by taking the responsibilities for the choices we make, we can make, we can be more pro-active rather than reactive. So, defining work-life balance is, does this mean fifty-fifty? It doesn't mean fifty-fifty, eh, not necessarily equal hours; it needs to be more fluid, so it varies, you know, with, eh, with, eh, if you're single, married, children, your career, retirement. And no one size fits all. And, at the core, eh, you know, achievement and enjoyment, does that equal fulfillment? So, kind of think about that. And can all parties benefit? And what are your values and priorities?

So, trying, eh, trying to live a one-sided life is why so many successful people are not happy or not nearly as they should be. So, ask yourself, when was the last time you achieved and enjoyed something at work? What about, achieved and enjoyed with your family or friends? And how recently have you achieved and enjoyed something just for you?

So, what is work-life balance? A comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between and employee's primary priorities of their employment position and their

private lifestyle. Most psychologists would agree that the demands of an employee's career should not overwhelm the individual's ability to enjoy a satisfying personal life outside of the business environment.

Factors that impact work-life balance. Eh, so work, working conditions, flexibility, long hours and shift work, deadlines, lack of training or tools, support structure, relationships, change, time. For your own personal life, family commitments, parenting and childcare, fitness and health, money and finances, social network, and again, change, and time.

For a few moments, I want you to think about these questions listed here. What are you currently balancing in your life? Is it working? And what would you like to change? I'm going to give you a minute to do this.

And then, I also want you to take a moment to list the activities and responsibilities in both your personal life and your professional life. And on a weekly basis, approximately how much time do you spend on each? And again, I'm just going to give you a bit of time.

OK?

So, managing our roles in the family life along with our role at work is all about a balancing act. Our society is made, is made of different types of families, and these are three types of families that are listed on this slide and that stand out the most, eh, eh, most common ones. Dual career couples with children, single parents, or individuals or couples without children.

And here are some questions that will give insight into where, eh, where there might be possible stress depending upon your family situation. So, I encourage you to look at where you are, which, eh, which family situation you are in, and look at the questions, and try answer some of those questions.

OK?

So, we can learn a great deal from nature that can be applied to our quest to balance work and life tasks. Nature must restore balance, and you can take advantage of the lessons from nature. To begin, we first must make an effort to

identify areas that are out of balance in our lives so that we can go about making worthwhile and long-lasting changes. So, a quote by Lao Tzu: "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." So, every living thing needs to grow. Growth only happens in an ecologically balanced environment. When balance is disturbed, plants and marine life start to die, and action is necessary to restore balance.

Are you feeling unbalanced? When we become unbalanced, there are signs to signify the changes. These signs can be very visible to others. However, do we ourselves notice the change? So, some of the things that you can think about is taking, eh, paying attention to your attitude, your interactions with people, effectiveness in personal life and at work, your creativity, and your leadership. How have they changed?

And the following suggest, suggestions and coping strategies will help you work through problem areas. So, monitor your energy level and emotional state—this will require you to make a conscious effort to know when your energy levels begin to affect your emotional state. So, step back, identify and focus on the areas in your life that are draining your energy level. Eat energy and brain foods—so, studies have shown that what you eat affects every aspect of your health, energy level, and general wellbeing. Your energy level and emotional state can be directly linked with the types of food you consume. Foods that are considered energy brain food provide a more balanced energy level opposed to the highs and lows when you consume foods that are high in fat or sugar. Pace yourself— so, for some of you, this is easier said than done; pacing yourself, again, requires you to make a conscious effort. By pacing yourself, you can get more accomplished because your energy levels tend to be in a more balanced state. Build problem-solving skills—so, developing and building problem-solving skills provides you with ways in which you can tackle even the most difficult problems with a clear head. While some problems require simple decisions, others are challenging and take careful thought and consideration. You may be forced to choose between two equally good options, or you may have to pick between two choices that both have drawbacks. In brief, there are four basic steps to problem-solving. And, so, the first one would be to recognize that the problem exists, the second one would be defining the problem, the third is generate some solutions, and, then, the fourth one is to decide. Lighten the situation with humor—so laughter is said to be the best medicine. A sense of

humor can be used, is used in stress reduction, problem solving, team building, and improving communication. Medical research has shown that humor reduces stress, helps people to get a sense of control—and this is vital when stress is putting us down and causing us to be out of balance. The humor is like, a little, a little can be good; too much and it loses its touch. Assess your environment—so, your environment can be a source of stress. Our environment consistently requires us to meet demands and challenges. So, for example, we experience natural disasters; traffic; time pressures; and work, home, and interpersonal demands. In addition, we have to adjust to changes in financial status, job changes, or the loss of a loved one. Although we have some ability to prevent some of these stresses such as leaving earlier to prepare for the lost time in traffic, we have no ability to prevent a natural disaster. So, what areas in your environment cause stress to you? Look at all of these areas in your environment that are causing you stress and pick up some ways that you can ease some of the pressure in these areas. And lastly, exercise regularly—so exercise can help control stress by controlling negative emotions like anger, frustration, resentment, and all that would all lead to stress. Four more ways to exercise, eh, control, eh, four ways to exercise control, four ways to exercise control stress, sorry about that, is it can help you feel less anxious, it can relax you, make you feel better about yourself, and also make you eat better.

Oftentimes, we can become overwhelmed with the variety of work-life and family responsibilities. The following are ways in which you can begin to achieve balance in both your work and life. So, focus on reducing energy drain; identify what you can change and what you can't; align your goals, values and beliefs; set limits and delegate; create new challenges that are aligned with your values; give yourself frequent breaks; and seek support if needed.

And here are in depth some more practical suggestions to achieving balance at home. So, eh, hold family meetings—even with the youngest children, it's helpful for families to meet and discuss the household responsibilities. One tool is a family meeting which is a meeting held in a supportive and encouraging setting, all members of the family participate in this meeting. And lack of effective communication is one of the major areas that cause problems in families. So, not talking or listening to each other contributes to other deeper issues, and, so, family meetings provide an opportunity to avoid problems and foster rich, deep communication. Think of who's in charge of the family meetings. So, it's a

powerful process because parents and children treat each other respectfully during the meeting, and parents are not supposed to dominate or impose their opinions until all feelings and opinions have been heard by each family member. Combine tasks—as a family, look at the various tasks that need to be completed. Make a list and then look at each entry and find the task that may be similar and combine these tasks. This will help you become more efficient and find more time to participate, eh, to participate in fun activities with the family. Rotate which tasks get completed—by providing rotating tasks, look at your list and see if there are tasks that don't have to be completed each week. This will give you and your family an opportunity to complete more tasks as well as making this more enjoyable for everyone. Re-evaluate your priorities—so, we all have our own way of completing a task. Some of us would rather do the task rather than have someone else do it because we know the right way to do it. And, so, by re-evaluating your priorities, try to relax your high expectations, and allow another family member to complete the task. It may not always be exactly the way you would do it, but it gets the family involved and allows more time for fun activities with the kids and other family members or friends. And the last one, plan weekend activities—so, how many of you have actual plans for the weekend other than cleaning the basement? By making plans, you and your family have something to look forward to and improvise with more variety of *[Inaudible: 0:16:21]*

Delegation is necessary for both work and home. However, the ways that we go about it must be different. We must realize that we cannot engage in the same method of delegation towards children the same way that we would do to employees at work. Oftentimes, people mistake delegating for controlling. This is because the person who's delegating the tasks communicates ineffectively. To effectively delegate tasks, the above few steps must be taken into consideration. So, first, the person must determine the task he or she needs help with. Then, when prepared to delegate the task, he or she must choose the right person to complete the task. And, after they find the right person, they must make sure that they ask the person to complete the task and don't order them to do it. This could cause stress between the two which makes for a bad working relationship. Also, they need to make sure that they properly explain their expectations and the results they want from the task. The person that is delegating the task must also make sure that they provide the necessary tools to complete the task and, after the person completes the work, make sure that, as a manager of the task, you

give proper recognition, eh, to the person. So, do not try to take recognition for their hard work. Finally, the one thing that you must accept before you delegate tasks is that it might be done differently. Everyone does things differently, and if you can't accept that, then you may want to rethink delegating tasks to other people.

Listed here are even more practical suggestions. So, this refers to getting some tasks completed during your break or lunch hour during the day such as picking up your prescriptions at the drugstore. This will free your evening so you can spend more time with family and friends. Eh, set some limits. We all want to be there for our co-workers, family, and friends. For some of us, it's difficult to say no, but give yourself permission to say no when needed. There's a big difference in the feel of someone agreeing to do something whether, when they're too tired or they don't want to versus to when they're fully present and happy to be there. You'll have more attention to give your loved ones if you're there for them when it feels right for you. They will feel the difference and so will you. Get support and be supportive. There's nothing wrong with asking for support from your coworkers. It can create a mutual give-and-take relationship by getting support and, in turn, being supportive. And, you can have some added ones here on the slide as well that are quite important too.

In quadrant one, we manage and produce. So, we act on the things that are urgent, and we give attention to the things that are considered important. These things usually relate to our high-priority goals. The quadrant of necessities—reactive tasks that need to be done often at the last minute. Crises, firefighting, and looming deadlines are typical examples. In quadrant two, qualities are emphasized. However, many of us fail to give attention to this area. Activities in this section consist of long-range planning, anticipating and preventing problems, enhancing others, and increasing our skills. This is the one to aim to spend more time in. The more you expand this quadrant, the more you reduce the other three. In quadrant three, we tend to focus too much on activities that appear to be important but really are not as important. These activities usually consist of too many unnecessary phone calls, meetings, emails, and unexpected visitors. This is a section that we need to focus on reducing the activities. So, learning to say no and delegate. And, in quadrant four, we tend to fill this time with junk; this is considered the quadrant of waste. Activities in this quadrant consist of junk mail, television, useless chatting with coworkers, and a quick tip for that is just to

start being more aware of when you're in it. And, some final thoughts, the best judge of which quadrant you're in is you. As your awareness improves, you enhance your ability to choose how to spend your time. So, one, list all the activities and projects that you feel you must do. Try and include everything that takes up your time at work, however unimportant. And two, put each activity into one of the four quadrants. I'll give you a bit of time again to do this one.

OK.

To illustrate the importance of prioritizing, I will read through the jar of rocks example below. I want you all to close your eyes and picture as I walk, eh, you through it as I will read the script, OK? So, in the middle of a seminar on time management, recalls Covey in his book *First Things First*, the lecturer said, "OK, it's time for a quiz." Reaching under the table, he pulled out a wide-mouthed gallon jar and set it on the table next to a platter covered with six sized rocks. He asked the audience, "How many of these rocks do you think we can get in the jar?" After the students made their guesses, the seminar leader said, "OK, let's find out." He put one rock in the jar and then another and another until no more rocks would fit. And then he asked, "Is the jar full?" Everybody could see that not one more rock would fit and so they said yes. "Not so fast," he cautioned. From under the table, he lifted out a bucket of gravel, dumped it in the jar and shook it. The gravel slipped into all the little spaces left by the big rocks. Grinning, the seminar leader asked once more, "Is the jar full?" A little wiser by now, the students responded, "Probably not." "Good," the teacher said. Then, he reached under the table to bring up a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar while the students watched, the sand filled in the little spaces left by the rocks and gravel. Once more, he looked at the glass, at the class and said, "Now, is it full?" "No," everyone shouted back. "Good" said the seminar leader who then grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it into the jar. He got something like a quarter of water into that jar before he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the jar is now full. Can anybody tell me the lesson you can learn from this? What is my point?" An eager participant spoke up, "Well, there are gaps in your schedule, and if you really work at it, you can always fit more into your life." "No," the leader said, "that's not the point. The point is this. If I hadn't put those big rocks in first, I would never have gotten them in, which is the importance of prioritizing." OK?

So, some final tips. Make time to be alone. It's very important to find time just for you and then to enjoy the alone time. Alone time doesn't mean lonely time. Know your passion. Know your passions and what you enjoy doing. Nurture the things you love doing or create new hobbies—anything that will make you feel you have time for yourself. Learn to let go. This may be easier said than done. By letting go of your demands and expectations for your life, you can make peace with the way life is and enjoy it. Trust that no matter what happens, you and your family will be OK. Know that not everything in your life will turn out as you want to, and often doesn't, but what you can let go, you begin to have a better understanding of what really matters in your life. Allow for change. So, you per usual saying, eh, change is inevitable, eh, change is exhilarating, change is hard, change is always good for some people and always bad for others. By allowing for change, you begin to embrace the notion that change is something that will happen. So, make the most of it rather than allowing it to be the cause of undue stress. Keep communication open. So, successful partnerships such as family, friends, and work relationships cannot function without open communication.

So, consider the following questions as you develop your action plan, eh, to balance work and life demands. What current strategies are working well? What strategies need to change? What resources can I draw from? And what are three things that I can do immediately to increase my sense of time management? I'm just going to give you some time to write down those questions. Put a couple of answers to them.

OK?

Final thought by Doctor Kathleen Hall: "We have overstretched our personal boundaries and forgotten that true happiness comes from living an authentic life fueled with a sense of purpose and balance."

So, when is it time to talk to a professional counselor? Emotions feel unwieldy, eh, using drugs or alcohol to cope, reckless behavior, decreased work performance, interpersonal difficulties, disrupted sleep, appetite changes, or suicidal thoughts. So, if you feel like you or someone else are having some of, of these symptoms, it's important to think that maybe it's time to just get a little bit of support from our counselors. And we, your Employee Assistance Program, are

available here 24/7., And, so, please feel free to just give us a call so we can talk further, eh, about what it is that's going on for you.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for being present. I hope that you gained a lot of information. You all take care.