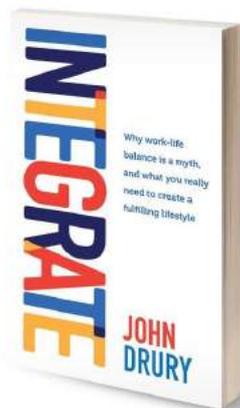


INTEGRATE

*Why work-life balance is a myth
What you really need to create a fulfilling lifestyle*

John Drury



Introduction

'There is no such thing as work-life balance. Everything that is worth fighting for unbalances your life.' ~ Alain De Botton

The first of December 1913 was a much-anticipated day. In an automobile factory in Highland Park, Michigan, Henry Ford's dream of producing an affordable motorcar for the masses was about to become a reality. Through the introduction of a moving assembly line, Ford was able to reduce the production time for each Model T car from over 12 hours to one hour and 33 minutes. Within three years, the cost of each vehicle fell drastically from over US\$850 to US\$300. Over 15 million Model T cars were produced and purchased between 1913 and 1927 by the emerging middle classes.

A new era of industrialisation was ushered in across the USA and the globe. The idea that work could be done more efficiently as procedures were automated and streamlined soon inspired changes across all industries.

The cry for an eight-hour day for workers had been growing louder through the late 1800s. On 5 January 1914, the Ford Motor Company took the radical step of doubling its employees' pay to US\$5 per day and cutting their shift length from nine hours to eight. Over the next two years, productivity and profits rose dramatically. Critics were silenced. Hopes were stirred.

A vision emerged of an efficient, industrialised world of work that enabled increasing prosperity and leisure time for everyone. In a world where even the working classes could own a house and a car and enjoy a good lifestyle, the possibilities for high achievers were limitless.

Fast forward to today

Ian has recently been promoted to Chief Operating Officer for a large multinational company in Sydney. He has responsibility for a division that operates throughout South-East Asia, and he reports to global managers based in New York and London. Ian is highly respected for his technical skills and his dedication to the company. He has worked hard to build his career, spending several years with his young family based in Asia, before returning to Sydney when the eldest of his three children hit primary school age.

Ian is drowning in the increased workload and responsibility. He regularly wakes at 4:00 am in a cold sweat, anxious about the implications of pending decisions. He leaves for work at 5:00 am and arrives home after dark most days. He sees his children for 30 minutes before bedtime and on weekends. When he is home, he is not particularly present due to stress and the constant need to check his smartphone for numerous emails coming at him from around the world. He describes his typical work day like 'being in the midst of a cyclone', with his head down, responding to the demands swirling around him. He does not feel in control of anything. Every now and then he tries to snatch a moment to look up to gain some perspective. He is dreading the extra travel to Europe and USA as part of his new role, on top of his regular trips across Asia.

When Ian reached out to me for some leadership mentoring, he did so as a last resort. He felt like he was failing both at work and at home as a partner and as a parent. He had put on over 10 kilograms in six months because he was continually eating unhealthy food at odd hours, and had no time to do physical exercise. He felt he had no choice but to resign and be demoted to a role where he could feel that his whole life was not totally dominated by work.

Chances are, you can relate to Ian. Do you often wonder if you will ever have a day when you get everything on your list done? Do you panic when you see your phone ring? Or worry that you're never around to celebrate your children's birthdays? Whether you are a small business owner or in a position of leadership in a corporate career, life in the second decade of the 21st century is busier than ever. The technological advances of the last century have transformed every aspect of our working world and our domestic lives. Yet instead of working fewer hours, with more time for family and friends, most of us report the opposite.

I see so many talented and passionate people, like Ian, with good levels of success in life and potential for much more. They are what we describe as 'high achievers'. However, somewhere between age 35 and 55, these high achievers hit a wall. They start to experience what I call 'the curse of the juggle of life'. They start to juggle many aspects of their life, including their career or business, their partner, their partner's career or business, their 2.3 children, two sets of family and friends, and aging parents—all while struggling to stay fit and healthy, safe and financially secure. All these balls are very hard to keep in the air, so is it any wonder that we forget how to relax and replenish emotionally? That our stress levels start to increase?

Most of us today feel overwhelmed, as though we are surviving rather than thriving, struggling to manage the boundaries between work and the rest of our lives. Many of my clients have a level of anxiety that underpins much of their world. Some wonder if they really have what it takes to cut it in this crazy 21st-century, 24/7, 365-day-a-year marketplace.

It is my privilege to work as a business mentor with many people who have come under 'the curse of the juggle of life'. As you will see from the case studies and examples in this book, they are usually very successful small business owners or high-flying executives and leaders who work for large corporations. In the midst of living 'their juggle', they find it increasingly difficult to gain the perspective to see how to make any changes to do anything better. They find it extremely uncomfortable to acknowledge they are pushing their limits. Some feel as though they are going through the motions, living their busy lives, while others have quite simply hit the wall. Some scream, 'I don't want to do this anymore!' and some feel they have to make a heart-breaking choice among their family, their health and their dreams of business success. All are struggling, and all are unsure where to find the answers. That is where this book can help.

The strategies outlined in this book are based not just on my experience of working with high achievers from all walks of life, but on my very own personal experience, too. Ten years ago, I was the busy CEO of a large community organisation. My passion to succeed drove me to work long hours spending myself on behalf of the organisation and

the thousands of people we were serving. Great success came at a great cost to me. After several years of just functioning, I hit rock bottom with burnout, causing great pain to myself and those close to me. After a year or so in survival mode, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth, which enabled me to find ways to regain control of my life.

Work–life balance is a myth

The most talked-about and well-publicised strategy recommended to manage our frantic lives is ‘work–life balance’. This term originated sometime during the early 20th century with regard to improved working conditions and shorter working hours. It was meant to describe the idea that there should be reasonable balance between work and the rest of our lives. It implies that like a seesaw, there is an optimum point of balance that will work for each of us.

So what would you think if I told you this is all a myth? That work–life balance doesn’t actually exist? And that in trying to chase this dream we are actually making ourselves sick?

Most high achievers are passionate about their business, their careers, and their success. Yet passion and drive are the enemies of balance. By definition, if you are passionate you are going to always be out of balance. Passion means you are likely to find it difficult to turn off your brain when you leave work. Passion means your mind will often be solving business problems in the night or when you are driving the car. High achievers are often made to feel guilty by the concept of ‘work–life balance’. They might even be viewed as workaholics by the majority of people for whom work is a job: just a means to income. A 2013 Gallup Report indicates that up to 70% of the American workforce is disengaged at work, i.e. less than passionate. (For more information, see <http://www.gallup.com/services/176708/state-american-workplace.aspx>.)

The concept of ‘work–life balance’ may have been well intended, but it is unhelpful in the 21st century. It pits work against life, creating an unnecessary conflict. Work is part of life, not against life. There is no seesaw that needs to be in balance. Rather, each of us has a whole life, every segment of which needs to be integrated in such a way that we can prosper and flourish.

Work–life integration is the answer

Work involves such a large part of our lives. For high achievers, work is usually fuelled by passion and is a hugely fulfilling part of life. Work is connected to purpose, not just a means of making money. When passion is involved it is easy to spend time and energy working, or thinking and planning about some aspect of work. It is easy to become engrossed and lose all sense of time. The challenge becomes how to ensure that our work does not consume us in a way that hurts our health or the people we love. For example, for me right now it is easy to sit at a computer in my home office thinking and writing for three to four hours without a break, and with increasingly poor posture, so that by day’s end my neck and hips are stiff and sore. Some days I become so engrossed I can forget to pick up a child from school or not notice it is raining and washing needs to be brought in from the line.

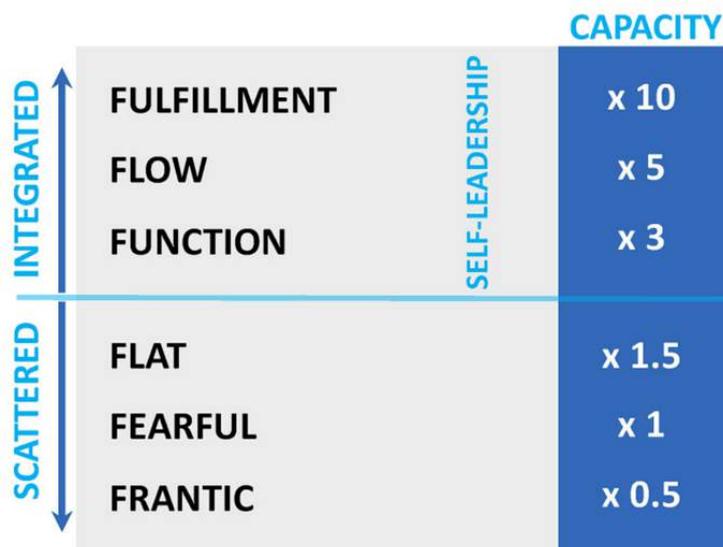
Like every other important area of your life, your work needs to be integrated in such a way that it serves the whole of your life.

If your business or career is a passion then this book is written specifically for you. In the following pages you will learn ways to take responsibility for your whole life that will enable you to pursue your passion as well as build a great lifestyle with and for those you love. It is not about curbing your passion in order to achieve some kind of balance. Let me explain how.

Scattered versus integrated

Where do you see yourself in Figure i?

Figure i: Scattered versus integrated approach



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This figure refers to high achievers at various levels of capacity. People functioning at low capacity are often doing so because their lives are *scattered*. For whatever reason, things in their life have spiralled out of control. Highly intelligent and successful people can go through such periods, usually when they have ignored some aspects of their personal life. Let's face it—most of the problems that undermine or sabotage a career or a business are more likely to stem from unaddressed issues in your personal life.

A high achiever with a **scattered approach** will be:

- **FRANTIC**
This describes the poorly organised person who is always reacting to issues as they arise. He is often late for appointments. His desk is a chaotic mess. He seems to attract personal crises that regularly overlap with work. Overall, he is unreliable, always pushing out deadlines. He has little capacity to influence others except to enlist their help to reduce his overwhelm.
- **FEARFUL**
This is the person who is working harder than she expected to build her career or business. She is also juggling increased responsibilities of a young family, a husband who is pursuing his career, and mortgage payments on their recently upgraded family home, as well as trying to stay fit and connected with her friends at the netball club. She is starting to doubt she has what it takes to make her career and lifestyle work. She feels like she is just surviving, barely coping with the challenges and stress. She feels she is at the limits of her capacity and is not sure what she can do to make anything better. Her future feels very insecure.
- **FLAT**
These are businesspeople and executives who initially did quite well but they have hit their ceiling. Progress has flatlined for a couple of years. They are coping, barely, but appear to be working at full capacity. They feel stuck. The future feels uncertain. In corporate positions, they are being overlooked for promotion and wonder if they should look for a position in a new company. For business owners, sales have settled and profits are being eroded as overheads increase. They wonder if they should quit and look for a job.

The ‘curse of the juggle of life’ can cause even the most talented people to hit their limits, become scattered and lose capacity. They become a bit like a bucket with holes from which much of the expected capacity leaks out and is wasted, causing frustration and disappointment for many.

This book outlines a plan to assist you plug the holes in your proverbial bucket and increase your capacity. This building of capacity occurs as you map out your path and take responsibility in a holistic way for yourself and for all of your roles—not just at work but across your whole life. As your self-leadership becomes more integrated, so your capacity increases.

An integrated approach will lead to:

- **FUNCTION**
These are people who start to practice a more integrated approach across their lives. This will come through some form of personal development training and mentoring. The way forward involves these people gaining a clearer understanding of themselves; clear and supported career goals and plans; clarity around their personal values; and mapping and co-ordination of their whole lives so everything can work together sustainably. Learning to take greater responsibility for self-leadership will spark increased capacity to be productive and to lead others.
- **FLOW**
This describes businesspeople who are becoming quite secure as they continue to grow and learn about themselves. Their capacity to build strong working

relationships increases. Over time they build reputations for getting things done. They learn to delegate and work with and through others extremely well. These people inevitably attract opportunities for more responsibility. Those who are business owners seem to always be ahead of the game finding new growth opportunities for their business.

- **FULFILMENT (and FREEDOM)**

Business executives at this level usually go onto the most senior roles within their companies due to their ongoing capacity to influence. They know themselves well. They have self-respect and easily earn the respect of others. They live congruently with their values. They are loyal and attract loyalty. They know how to focus their energies on the main things that bring progress. Their practice of self-leadership principles across their whole lives enables them to build successful careers AND great lifestyles for themselves and their families. This is the key to fulfilment. Business owners at this level really do own their business. They have built a highly trained and committed team so the business grows even when they are not there. They enjoy not only fulfilment, but the growing levels of freedom they have always desired. They can use their time and financial success to either start something new or to enjoy life.

A roadmap for self-leadership

Most self-leadership books and programs focus on things I would put under the heading of 'self-management': time management, personal organisation and email management strategies. While this focus on becoming more efficient is important, it is only part of self-leadership and usually the easiest part to work on. Self-management is mostly about doing.

Self-leadership is about 'being' as well as 'doing'. It starts with self-respect, and includes self-care and then flows into self-management.

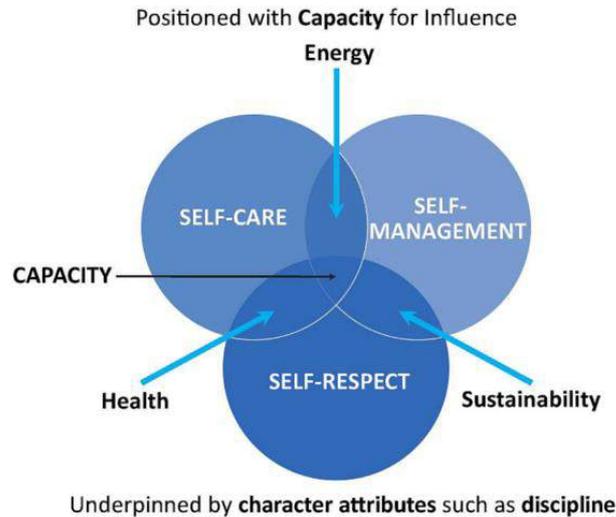
The way forward to increased capacity and greater influence is not about working harder or even more efficiently. It involves hitting the pause button on all the 'doing' so you can take a fresh look at who you are as a person in this season of your life. The way forward involves a journey inward. Some personal growth is required.

Your self-leadership journey involves three important steps, as outlined in Figure ii:

1. develop self-respect
2. prioritise self-care
3. maintain self-management.

Figure ii: Self-leadership roadmap

Self-Leadership is made up of 3 important elements:
Self-Respect; Self-Care and Self-Management



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These three steps form the framework for the rest of this book.

1. Self-respect

Healthy self-respect enables increased levels of security and consistency. It is about learning to be secure enough to celebrate your strengths and accept your weaknesses. Self-respect grows stronger when you are living congruently with strongly held values. It's about learning to set healthy boundaries and not being afraid to say 'No!' It's about doing the work and finding the ways to process life's regrets well. It's about developing the confidence to find your voice and stand for something. It is about learning to honour your word. Self-respect is not only the core of self-leadership; it is essential for easily gaining the respect of others.

Self-respect is the key to **inner health** and security

1. Self-care

Self-care is about respecting yourself enough to be willing to invest in yourself, without guilt. It is learning to know yourself well, in order to understand and work with your own natural life rhythms. It involves developing strategies that enable consistent and appropriate replenishment and renewal. Effective self-care enables a high achiever to always have energy when needed.

Self-care is the key to **energy** and vitality.

2. Self-management

Self-management involves a commitment to doing whatever it takes to be personally organised and efficient. It ensures that the important things get done consistently and promises are kept. Self-management is all about establishing effective disciplines and processes so that you always know your priorities and can pursue them.

Self-management is the key to **sustainability**.

Taking responsibility

Taking back control of your life starts with self-respect. It starts with a decision to develop your own self-respect, because no-one else can do this for you.

To truly change your life, you must be willing to take responsibility for your own situation, without blaming technology, your employer, 21st-century living, the nature of business, your partner or anybody else. It is time to lead your own life.

So, what do you say—are you ready to take back control? Are you ready to integrate your work and life?

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