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Balance of Life

Dear Friends:

Mary and Susan were friends for years. They grew up together and attended the same schools. They were now both in their 40's, and both had great careers. They both had a similar upbringing - same education, same family values, similar support and financial position. But there was one main difference. Mary never seemed to have enough time. She watched her life long friend Susan. She had similar responsibilities and interests. Susan had a career, she had three children, she had her hobbies, one of which included golf. Over lunch, Susan was telling Mary about the golf game that she played last weekend.

"Susan, where do you find the time to play golf?" asked Mary. "I never seem to have the time, now with the children older and doing there own thing I thought I would have time to play golf like we did when we were in college."

Susan looked at Mary and laughed, "Mary, we both have the same hours in a day. You do have the time to play golf!"

With a sigh Mary replied, "That's easy for you to say. I never seem to have time. My work takes so much of my time. I am in the office at 7:30, I leave at 6:30 in the evening. By the time I get home and have dinner, it is 8:00! And, then I usually have a briefcase full of work. The weekends are full of more work. Just to keep up, I have to put in the hours. You know what it is like!"

"Of course, I know what it is like," Mary said. "But what would happen tomorrow if you got sick? Who would do the work?"

"Sick. Who has time to get sick! exclaimed Mary. "But if I did get sick, someone else would do the work, I suppose."

"You know something, Mary, I used to be like you. I worked night and day and of course on weekends. When I got home I was exhausted but I would push myself and read my children a bedtime story. By the time I went to bed, I would be more than exhausted. The boss I had was very demanding. She was there early in the morning, late at night, and she always worked weekends. I felt I had to do the same - I needed the job to help support my family - just as you did. But then I had a change of bosses. The man I worked for was older and much wiser, I might add! Of course, I continued to work the hours I had been working. One day he came to my desk and passed me a card that had a quote on it which said, 'What I do today is important, because I will never have today again' - then he left.

I sat there stunned. I suddenly thought of what was important to me. While my work was important, I realized my children were more important. I also realized that time for me was important. It was 4:30, the official closing



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time of the office. I straightened my desk, felt a twinge of guilt about leaving, but I forced myself to leave. I was home by 5:00. My children and husband were surprised. I had a wonderful evening. It was not a chore to read that bedtime story that evening."

Mary was looking at her friend thoughtfully and then questioned Susan about the work she had left on her desk.

Susan replied, "I never thought this possible, but I actually accomplished more the next day than I had in weeks. As I was leaving the next day I stopped at my new boss's office and thanked him for the quote. He told me a story about advice his dad had given him many years ago when he was working night and day. He referred to it as 'Balance of Life'. His dad told him to keep balance in his work, in his family life and in time for himself. He explained to me, while all aspects of our life are important, without a balance, you become addicted and like all addictions you lose -

- no balance with your family - you lose them

- no balance with your work - you lose your perspective and you actually lose focus on the important aspects of your job.

- no balance with yourself - you forget who you are and when you retire you have nothing! Or worse than that, if you lose your job through a company sale or downsizing you lose your identity.

He went on to tell me that who we are is NOT what we do to make a living. Who we are is a balance of our family, our work, ourselves! It truly was the best advice I ever received."

Mary took a drink of her tea and tearfully looked at her friend, "But I would never get my work done if I left at 4:30!"

Susan looked thoughtfully at her, "When you go to work on Monday, look at what you have on your desk. Make a list of everything you have to get done and beside that list write the impact of not doing it. Then focus only on the top three items that have the most impact. Do that everyday for a week. At first, you will find it difficult to leave. But, after awhile, you will find that you will have more energy, and you will be more focused in your work because you have BALANCE! There are times when we have to lose balance - a special project at work, or a family matter at home - but consciously focusing on balance keeps everything in check."

Mary smiled at her friend, "Thanks for talking with me. We have been friends for so long. Thank heavens I have balance with your friendship! You have convinced me. I will leave the work in my briefcase this weekend. On Monday, I will make the list first thing. Perhaps next weekend, I will have the time to go golfing with you!"

'Nuf Said.

Larry Herman, DC Adam Kritzberg, DC
Jan Herman, DC Josh Rosinski, DC Joe Brady, DC