

# **Finding Balance In A Tilted World**

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## THE STRUGGLE

I was recently talking with one of my entrepreneur friends. He has started three businesses in the last several years—a budding entrepreneur. He was relating some of the joys he has experienced in those enterprises: a sense of freedom from the corporate world, pursuing his dreams and passions, setting his own schedule, controlling his destiny and a large potential for financial rewards.

However, he did mention a few downsides: little to no outside accountability, lack of consistent capital, feelings of loneliness, no steady revenue stream, feeling disconnected from others who don't understand his drive to succeed, constant struggles to survive and a severe lack of work-life balance. Sound familiar?

I think most entrepreneurs struggle with similar issues, especially balance. There are many reasons they can give for their lack of life balance and low satisfaction: "I have too much work to do. I just need a few more hours to finish this project. I need more money. I have bills to pay. My business depends on my hard work. My family needs more income. I am solely responsible for developing, marketing, selling and servicing my product or service."

Any or all of these reasons may be true, which might lead entrepreneurs to find great difficulty in managing the two sides of entrepreneurship—balance and success. How often do you struggle with working longer hours than you know you should to try and secure the next sale? How many times has your family and friends tried to pull you away from your office this last month? Take a moment and count up the actual hours you have spent working this last week or month. There is always the temptation to do a little more, work a little harder, talk to one more potential customer in hopes of making one more sale.

What specific things are you doing to take care of yourself: physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Many entrepreneurs overlook these vital areas of life in search of professional success, yet these areas are full of potential for sparking the creative, outside of the box thinking that leads entrepreneurs like yourself to discover life changing products and services and find a new perspective on your business venture.

## ASSESS WHERE YOU ARE

Take a moment and write down these 8 life areas:

- **friends & family**
- **fun & recreation**
- **physical environment & home**
- **romance & significant other**
- **fitness & health**
- **career**
- **finances**
- **personal & spiritual growth**

Next to each area assess where you currently are. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being “completely dissatisfied” and 7 being “completely satisfied” mark how currently you are satisfied in each area. Add up the totals of all eight areas before reading further. The scoring is at the end of this article.

## **DEVELOP A PLAN**

As you look at your current level of satisfaction what patters or themes do you see? Where areas are you the least satisfied with? The most?

For you who recognize a change is in order, here are a five simple steps to help you start finding the work-life balance that leads to success:

1. Choose 1 area that you are dissatisfied with and would like to see some immediate improvement in. This should not be your worst or best scoring area, but somewhere in the middle. Take a couple minutes and write down in detail what balance would look like for you in that area.
2. Now, get out your planner and make a note to yourself one week from today. In the note, write down:
  - the area that you want to improve your level of satisfaction in
  - the “score” where you are now and the “score” you want to be at the next week
  - 2 things you are going to do to move yourself towards that goal over this next week
3. Tell someone about your goal and ask them to hold you accountable—whether it’s a friend, a mentor, or your coach. It’s easy to make “new year, new leaf” promises to yourself, but more difficult to follow through with unless you know someone is holding you accountable to reach your goal.
4. Set up a time to talk with your accountability partner the next week. Did you reach your goal? If not, talk about what kept you from reaching it and what will you do differently this next week. If you *did* reach your goal, congratulate yourself. Do something simple to celebrate your achievement.
5. The final step is to go back to step 1 and do it over again.

Creating life balance is never easy and it’s never complete. There will always be room for improvement. The point is that you can make your life more balanced by taking small steps in the right direction. Like most worthwhile things in life, creating life balance is a process, not an event!

## **SCORING RANGE**

8—16	Wow! Things must be pretty rough right now.
17—30	Average score of many small business owners
30—45	There are some very satisfying and very dissatisfying areas in your life
45—56	You recognize the importance of life balance to life success

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