



Editor-in-Chief

Featured author



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Performance Power! Volume 1 - Issue 2

Workplace Learning Solutions
"Real Solutions for Maximum Performance"

A word from the editor - Bridget C Lewis

Hot off the heels of our April issue which highlighted the benefits of time management, we're going to focus our attention this month on another hot topic—**Work-Life Balance**.

What is the first thought that comes to mind when you hear the term "work-life balance"? Is it the fact that you seem to spend more time with your co-workers than you do with your family? Or might it be that you just never seem to make it to your child's big game, or ballet recital, or band concert?

Is it that dinner is often picked up at the McDonald's drive thru, or Saturday mornings no longer mean lazy mornings in bed? Is it that your 4 year old is beginning to use terms like 'strategy' and 'performance' and 'bottom line'?

Whatever the thought, if you're like me you probably agree that somehow you feel like your life is upside down and you desperately need a fix to put things back in perspective.

This month, **Workplace Learning Solutions' Performance Power!** newsletter has partnered with Edward Aldama, author and professional life coach to provide us with a helpful process for evaluating our own balance and quick fixes that can help us achieve our desired level of satisfaction and joy with every aspect of our lives.

As you reflect on the many ways you will regain balance in your work and personal lives, below are some activities and events for the month of May that might get you off on the right track.



Happening in May:

[American Bike Month](#)

[National Military Appreciation Month](#)

[International Nurses Day—May 12](#)

[Teacher Appreciation Week—May 3 - 7](#)

[National Pet Week—May 2 - 8](#)

[Japan's Golden Week - April 29 - May 5](#)

Kentucky Derby - May 1

Cinco de Mayo - May 5

Children's Day in Japan and Korea—May 5

Mother's Day—May 9th

Memorial Day Actual—May 30th

Memorial Day Observed—May 31st



Happy Teacher's Appreciation Week! May 3 - 7



... Take some time to think about how satisfied (you are) in major (life) areas.

“What was the last piece of music that I heard that made me feel like dancing?”



“Find a place where you won't be interrupted for a few hours.”

Finding Balance in Life - by Edward Aldama

Most people would agree that finding balance in life is important for achieving happy relationships and maintaining a positive attitude. As human beings we are blessed with the capacity to appreciate a wide variety of experiences. We can explore the world and learn new things, experiment with our creativity, develop special relationships, and change the circumstances of our environment.

But sometimes we get caught up with our day to day routines and lose sight of the opportunities life has to offer. We get busy with too much work, too many obligations, and yes, sometimes too much recreation. Paying too much attention to any one area of our lives can lead to a narrowed vision of life and cause us to feel as if something is missing. That is a signal to check the balance in our life.

One of my favorite ways to find balance in my life is to take some time to think about how satisfied I am in seven major areas. By reflecting on each area and asking myself questions, I can explore the amount of energy I am devoting to each. I know my life is in balance if I can find joy and satisfaction in each area.

Here are the seven areas and a few questions that I use for exploration:

Special Relationships

- ◆ When was the last time I spent special time with my family members?
- ◆ Was the experience fulfilling and joyful?
- ◆ When was the last time I spent time with my closest friend?
- ◆ What special experience did I share with my spouse in the last week?

Social Interactions

- ◆ When was the last time I expressed appreciation to a co-worker?
- ◆ Have I taken advantage of opportunities to contribute to a committee?
- ◆ How active am I in my community clubs, or civic organization?

Leisure Activities

- ◆ What have I read recently that brings me joy?
- ◆ What was the last movie I saw, just for fun?
- ◆ What was the last piece of music that I heard that made me feel like dancing?

Health and Fitness

- ◆ Am I joyfully consistent with my chosen exercise program?
- ◆ Am I recognizing the benefits of stretching regularly?

- ◆ What foods am I eating on a regular basis to support good nutrition?

Career and Service

- ◆ What was the last activity or project that I really enjoyed spending time on?
- ◆ Each day, do I celebrate the progress I am making towards my business goals?
- ◆ What activities do I participate in that support and help others to be successful?

Wealth and Finance

- ◆ Do I joyfully acknowledge the money that comes to me?
- ◆ Am I saving money on a regular basis to prepare for the future?
- ◆ What actions do I take to consistently manage money wisely?

Spiritual Development

- ◆ When was the last time I took quiet time for meditation?
- ◆ What was the last thing I read that truly inspired my spirit?
- ◆ When was the last time I spent time with others who share my spiritual beliefs?

Now, let me outline a simple exercise that will help you to explore these areas of life for yourself.

Before you begin, keep in mind that while it is important to devote time and energy towards each area of life, it isn't necessary to have equal amounts of activity in each area to create balance. Think of the each life area as providing a special and unique contribution to the whole. An example of this is to think about the ingredients for a cake recipe. The varying amounts of each ingredient contribute to make a great tasting cake. However, if you were to use equal amounts of chocolate, flour, eggs and salt, the cake would not turn out right and taste awful.

Find a place where you won't be interrupted for a few hours and then, using separate sheets of paper for each; write the name of the life area at the top of the page. Below that write the question: What things am I doing now? Skip about half way down the page and write: What things do I want to add? Continue until you have a worksheet for each area.

Starting with the first sheet, take several minutes to think about that individual area. What are the things you are currently doing in your life that bring you happiness in that area? Write down as many individual activities or actions as you can. Don't try to judge the activities just write them down. Take your time, don't rush through it and be honest.

Next, think about some of the things you aren't

doing but you would like to do. You may have thought of some things while you were completing the last section. Write them down. It may help to think of times when you have said to yourself, "When I get more time I would like to..." fill in the blank.

Continue on with the rest of the sheets. Again, take your time and be honest. If it seems that some things overlap into other areas, just put them in the category that fits best for you at that moment. For example, playing basketball could be listed under Health and Fitness, Social Interactions, as well as Leisure Activities; just put it where you feel it fits best.

When you've completed all the areas review your lists. Decide how you feel about your level of satisfaction in each of the area: Are there areas you may be neglecting, or spending too much time in? Are there some activities you would like to add to your life, or stop doing?

Once you've completed this part of the exercise you will have a new perspective on how you channel your energy, and how it contributes to your satisfaction with life. With this knowledge, you can begin to rearrange some activities and create a more satisfying balance.

Choose an area you feel you would like to improve and plan to add a new activity. You may want to add several activities but, don't go too fast. Adding new activities to your life can be fun but it can also create some stress as you try to adapt to a new routine. Take your time, make one or two changes and then give yourself time to adjust, but most importantly have fun with it.

Using this exercise to evaluate the areas of your life will help you to achieve higher levels of satisfaction and nourish your body, mind and spirit. I hope you enjoyed this exercise and I wish you all the best on your journey towards a happy balanced life.



"Adding new activities to your life can be fun but... take your time .. make (only) one or two changes (at a time) and give yourself time to adjust."

The Issue of Balance - Bridget C Lewis

There are many who think of work-life balance as an issue that matters only to women with families. After all, it appears that this is the demographic who is most apt to verbalize the need for flexibility, manageable workloads and opportunities for telecommuting. Today, I challenge us to view this issue as one of great importance to people in all walks of life as we strive to "live our best lives".

Work-life balance is so much more than the ability to spend more time doing personal things and less time on work. The truth is, as humans we all have the need for balance. As a matter of fact, I am inclined to drop the "work" from the phrase and just call it "*life balance*". You see, we are not one or two dimensional beings. We are very much multi-dimensional, living in a fast paced world carrying a myriad of responsibilities on our shoulders. Work-life balance suggests that there are only two dimensions that need to be in balance - work and life. However, it is my view that work is very much a part of our life responsibilities and for that reason my approach is to view this issue from the perspective of getting a *balanced life*.

Consider the following facts:

- ◆ Balance does not look the same for everyone;
- ◆ Balance does not look the same everyday;
- ◆ There is more to the balancing act than work responsibilities and home responsibilities

Life for each of us will include varying degrees of responsibility for work, family life, building your dreams, community involvement, hobbies, taking time-off, spending time with friends, entertain-

ment, staying healthy, growing spiritually, and this list could go on quite a bit longer. Edward Aldama's article - **Finding Balance in Life** clearly outlines these for us in 7 different areas of focus which need to be harmonized if we are to experience the ultimate joy of life.

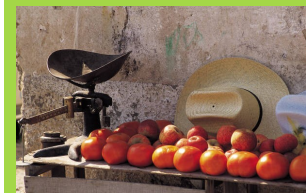
And because the variables are not easily controlled, there is no magic formula that can be seamlessly applied to achieve this balance. This is why [time management](#) is so critical. In the April issue of *Performance Power! Newsletter*, we focused on managing our time effectively. Achieving balance in our lives will begin with our ability to effectively manage our time. Balance does not mean that we will begin ignoring some responsibilities in favor of others. It also does not mean we need to split our time into equal parts. We have to become adept at prioritizing and dealing with what is most important at the appropriate time.

So it really doesn't matter if you're single or married; taking care of young children, or caring for aging parents; working a regular 9 to 5 or putting in 20-hour days as an entrepreneur.

We all need balance in our lives to maintain our sanity and our health, to have the time to dream and work on achieving those dreams and to just simply have the ability to enjoy life as it was designed to be enjoyed. Mr. Aldama suggests a simple exercise to help us identify our individual balance.

What does balance look like for you?

"Balance is not the same for everyone... (it) does not look the same everyday."



Did you know...

May 1 - Elvis and Priscilla were married in Las Vegas, 1967

May 3 - Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister, 1979

May 6 - Babe Ruth hit his first home run as a player for the Boston Red Sox, 1915

May 8 - The Beatles UK album *Let It Be* was released, 1970

May 10 - The first Mother's Day was observed in West Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1908

May 14 - The first Olympic Games were held in the U.S. in St. Louis, Missouri, 1904

May 17 - The N.Y. Stock Exchange was established, 1792

May 18 - The Beatles US album *Let It Be* was released, 1970

May 21 - Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross, 1881

May 25 - Babe Ruth hit his 714th and last home run, 1935

May 29 - President John F. Kennedy was born, 1935

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Just for fun

From our April issue:

Famous Quote: Who said these words?

"Old friends pass away, new friends appear. It is just like the days. An old day passes, a new day arrives. The important thing is to make it meaningful: a meaningful friend - or a meaningful day."

Answer: Dalai Lama

May Teaser:

Where did Mother's Day Originate?

When was the first national observance of Mother's Day celebrated in the United States?

Who was responsible for it being celebrated as a Holiday in the United States?

Check out next month's issue for the answers!



Happy Mother's Day to all Moms!

Workplace Learning Solutions is a professional consulting group that specializes in solving workplace learning and performance issues.


Our mission is to provide "Real Solutions for Maximum Performance."

We believe that companies should provide their employees with the right tools and training to do their jobs well. We also believe there is a direct relationship between a positive and enjoyable work environment and happy unstressed employees.

If you would like to make a comment or suggestion, or if you need to ask a question please contact us at info@workplace-learning-solutions.com

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