

Creating Balance in Your Personal Life: What's In Your Personal Scorecard?

By: Pat Lynch, Ph.D., President

How much balance is there in your personal life right now? How much is there compared to last year? How do you know? How do your family and friends know?

I often use variations on the above questions with clients to help them focus on important aspects of their businesses and develop effective measures of progress and success. These questions are equally useful when applied to one's personal life. How would you answer them? If you are not able to do so, the tool described below may help.

Balance is achieved when there is alignment among the components of an entity, whether it is an organization or a human being. In business, a tool called the balanced scorecard was introduced (Kaplan & Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard*, 1996) to help organizations focus on four key areas: customers, employees, finance, and internal processes. (For further discussion of this tool, see the article *Building Balance in the Workplace* on my web site.)

This concept can be applied in many contexts, including one's personal life. Over the years, I have found the practice of aligning key life elements to be an effective way of creating and maintaining balance. The four areas in such a personal scorecard are *physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual*. Within each area are one or two measures that indicate progress toward desired goals. Although it's possible that each area is of equal importance, typically they are not. Consequently we assign a weight to each area in the form of a percentage, with a minimum of 10% per area, to total 100%.

The benefits of using a personal scorecard include the following:

Clarity: we are compelled to examine our lives to determine what we want and how each area supports us in getting there.

Simplicity: there are only two or three measures for each area.

Accountability: we have measures to identify our progress and stay on course.

Focus: having only a few measures enables us to concentrate on what's really important.

Though feeling that all parts of our lives are in balance is important at any given moment, it is critical to believe we have that control in times of adversity. In identifying effective measures of progress to attain balance, I have found it useful to look realistically at what clients normally do. Based on that information, we determine the desired actions or states, then devise appropriate measures. First we identify some common actions that lead to misalignment in each area. See if any of these behaviors resonate with you:

Physically, people tend to ignore signs of wear and tear on their bodies, overindulge (e.g., in food, television, computer or video games), stop exercising, and generally deny the body's warning signals.

Mentally, people tend to buy into their worst fears, ignoring evidence to the contrary, listen to the inner task master who criticizes and second-guesses their decisions, engage in non-productive "what if" scenarios, and live in the future or the past rather than the present.

Emotionally, people tend to ignore their feelings, live entirely in their heads rather than listening to their hearts, stifle or ignore their inner child, and stop engaging in enjoyable activities.

Spiritually, people tend to ignore their inner guidance, stop regular spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, meditation), and stop trusting and following their intuition.

To counteract these destructive tendencies and bring all key aspects of our lives together in a balanced way, here is a sample personal scorecard to consider:

Sample Personal Scorecard

<p>PHYSICAL</p> <p>Get at least 7 hours of sleep each night Exercise at least 30 minutes four days/week Eat three balanced meals each day</p> <p>Weight: 25%</p>	<p>MENTAL</p> <p>Make evidence-based decisions Engage in positive self-talk daily Create realistic expectations Test assumptions</p> <p>Weight: 30%</p>
<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <p>Listen to your heart Be kind to yourself every day Face your fears and doubts Do at least one fun thing every day</p> <p>Weight: 15%</p>	<p>SPIRITUAL</p> <p>Follow the lead of your inner spirit Act on your intuition Listen for guidance every day</p> <p>Weight: 30%</p>

Whatever measures you choose for your personal scorecard, make sure they work for *you*, that they enable you to answer the “How do you know?” questions posed at the beginning of this article. People have found that using this tool provides focus and clarity, as well as a way to help create and maintain balance in their lives.

Why not see what it can do for you? ➔

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