

So, You Want to Start a Business?

Written by Jamie Wolf

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Seek Balance and Tip the Scales in Your Favor!

Practice Balance, Part 3 of 6

"Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting what you get." Anonymous

"For fast-acting relief, try slowing down." Lily Tomlin

I am continuing the topic of balance. Balance should not imply mediocrity but rather equate to centricity; in other words, consciously choosing – as opposed to settling for - a center point.

Extreme ambition lies at one end of the spectrum while slothfulness or lethargy are at the other end; best to choose somewhere in between. Acute anxiety is a far cry from total apathy; however calm, rational decisions and actions will likely produce preferred outcomes to either anxiety or apathy. Materialism could be countered by a vow of poverty yet compromise is likely more productive. In other words, the conscious and active pursuit of balance hopefully yields clear thinking and action that is compassionate for you and others.

How might one go about seeking balance? What tools or tricks are there? If you, like many, pride yourself on your ability to multi-task, I suggest you acknowledge it's OK to slow down, simplify, and become focused in your efforts. But don't just focus on doing. Focus on being. Focus on being AWARE.

As you give yourself permission to slow down and simplify -

- 1st: be truly aware of all that you do in a day and a week
- 2nd: be truly aware of how you respond to each demand, request, or requirement and decide how you got to this place to begin with and why
- 3rd: be truly aware of your choices going forward.

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Be aware enough of yourself, your time, and your values to say no to things. Be aware enough of yourself, your time, and your values to fully embrace the things you say yes to. Be aware of your heart, your mind, your body, your environment, your family, your purpose, your community, your calling. Be aware of your breath. Inhale. Exhale. Simplify. Slow down. Be aware. Be selective. Be in balance!

Now, close your eyes, envision a blissful, peaceful, joyful, rewarding universe with you at the center. What do you give yourself when you cater to you?

- Is it quiet?
- Is it time to read?
- Is it uninterrupted sleep?
- Is it an hour for your favorite hobby?
- Is it a walk in the woods or on the beach?
- Is it an uninterrupted, delicious meal with a glass of wine and a fire? (Well, not this time of year!)
- Is it time on the couch with your favorite movie?
- What is it and how much time would you like for it?
 - o Would one hour a day, daily or every other day, do?
 - o Is it half a day on a weekend?
 - o Would 20 minutes three times per week work best?

Whatever it is, carve it out! Get your calendar right now while you're thinking about it and schedule YOU time. We live in such a social world, from our families to our work, that "you time" is essential to balance all the external activities that deplete our reserves.

Next, examine your lifestyle to determine if you have fallen into a quantity trap. What are your buying patterns for food, shoes, clothes, makeup, tools, cars, pets, hobbies, travel, housing, socializing, tech toys, collectibles, or other material items? If you're honest, are you overextended in one or more of these areas? Each month reflect back and examine your consumer behavior. (Have you ever watched "Love It or List It" on HGTV and noticed that the main reason people want a new space is because they have SO MUCH STUFF there's no longer room for the people? So they spend resources to BUY more house? Go figure!)

To balance the void consumption may be filling, experiment with choosing quality over quantity. Experiment with delaying gratification. Experiment with thinking about your life as if it were a business – each item you purchase must contribute to the bottom line, increasing revenue or decreasing tax burdens.

If your first pair of expensive shoes makes you look professional at the interview and you get the job and increase your household income, does your 2nd – or 48th - pair of expensive shoes still do that? If not, don't make the purchase.

If you buy a car to get to a minimum wage job so you no longer have to ride the bus the result is

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not just private transportation. The consequence is a 6-year loan meaning you can't afford to be out of work again for the next 6 years! Now you are forced to decide to take the next minimum wage job and the next to keep making car payments and insurance payments and to pay for parking and gas. Now you can't afford to go to school or take an internship, either of which could increase your marketability. Now you are serving your car instead of your car serving you – because you chose to make that purchase without weighing the long-term cost/benefits.

Imagine how it might feel to have less clutter, less responsibility, less debt, less stress. Simplify. Chose quality over quantity and revel in the abundance that balance brings!

As you are at the center of everything you do, management of your personal life spills into or drives your professional life. Consciously choosing a balanced life affords you the opportunity to create a culture of balance in your business, especially when you are the CEO. Recently my daughter went to work for a company in which the CEO experienced a health crisis, increasing his respect for balancing physical health with work productivity. The result is that he is rolling out a company-wide emphasis on health and wellness. Don't wait until your bottom line is negatively affected personally or in business. Seek balance in advance and watch the scales tip in your favor!

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