

~ *Work-Life Balance* ~

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How can we balance our personal life, working life, and spiritual life? Sometimes it feels like these three are in contradiction, and normally we think we do not have time for all three. Then sometimes we feel like we are burned out, stressed, and like we cannot do even one of these well.

But, actually, these three can help each other. And we need to have these three lives, actually. One of these lives is okay, but at a certain level it [focusing on only one] becomes difficult.

So what is our working life? We have to work, right? Everybody works, or otherwise we may become homeless. We have to take care of our family and ourselves, so working life is important. And our personal life, in between working, is also very important. Also, our spiritual life — exploring our true nature, our innate qualities — is very important.

So how can we combine these three together? For me, when I was young, I engaged a lot in the spiritual life. Then, in 1998, when I was twenty-three, I began to teach meditation around the world, and I became very busy, in one way. For a few years I was quite busy. And I thought, “How should I begin to bring together teaching, my personal life, and my meditation, my spiritual life? How do these combine together?” Then, I found some kind of balance.

Now, what I do is . . . I really like teaching, and this is one of the most meaningful purposes in my life — I really want to help many people by engaging in teaching. So this is like my working life. But then, in between that, I take some breaks.

One time, one of my friends, a very famous business leader, said that he can do thirty days’ work in twenty days, but not in thirty days. So if you have no personal life and are totally lost in your work, the quality

of your work is not good, and of course your personal life is also not good.

So what we need is to do something different. You might have weekends free, Saturday and Sunday, and every weekend you can try to do something new. Maybe one day go into the mountains. If you always just go from work to home and home to work, then it will create stress and emotional imbalance.

There are a lot of reasons for this on the physical and emotional level, also. On the physical level, if all the *prana*, *bindu*, and *nadi* — meaning the energy, nerves, cells — go only in one direction, then you feel stressed. If you do something different, it energizes you and relaxes you also. And for the mind, it aligns with impermanence. Everything changes — one of the universal laws is impermanence. So if we follow that, it is really good.

So maybe one day go to the beach, or near water. One day go to a national park, and one day go hiking. Maybe one day just stay home, relax, and sleep! Or maybe have a gathering with friends and family, for your personal life. Spend one day with just your partner, if you have one, or with your friends. Simply spend time together.

Also, even before you go to work, do not choose the same path every day. One day maybe you can go by car, the next day by public transportation. Maybe one day you can walk. Choose different paths also. This is also really good.

So do something different. And that helps your health and also helps with your family and friends. So it also really helps your personal life.

And number three is your spiritual life, meditation. Normally, you do not have to feel stressed about setting aside a particular special time outside of your working life and personal life. We can meditate everywhere, anytime, with anything.

In fact, if you meditate within your professional life, it is good for your job also. For example, if you are working as a project manager, or maybe you are designing something, or working with technology, there is a lot of stress. A lot of engagement, right? So you can engage . .

. and then maybe meditate for a few seconds . . . and engage . . . and meditate again. Meditation helps you work better, actually. You might have better ideas. Your mind becomes more relaxed, and also that “short times, many times” practice is good for your spiritual practice, your spiritual life. The traditional example is that if there is a big, empty container, and the water or liquid drops fall into the container one by one, one by one, what happens? In the end, even a big container will be full of water. So practicing short times, many times is very important.

Then, you might need one daily practice. Even just five minutes is okay. There is a lot of research on this. Scientists, during the time of COVID, asked teachers and many people to meditate four to five minutes per day, while doing laundry, or while waiting in between classes. They practiced four to five minutes every day for thirty days, and when they checked the results, it was by 30–32% that their stress and depression were reduced. So you can do just four to five minutes every day like this, in formal meditation.

For us, spiritual practice normally means engaging with awareness, love and compassion, and wisdom. These three are the essence of spiritual practice. If you combine these three together, your work is good and your spiritual life slowly, slowly develops. Sometimes we cannot do too much spiritual practice at the beginning. It is like if you take too many vitamins at one time — they cannot help you suddenly. So you have to do it every day. It is good for spiritual practice, and also it will help your personal life and personal time. And once in a while you can take a long vacation. And if you really think you do not like your job, why not change from time to time? You are still the master of yourself.

Thank you.