

# Akron Beacon Journal

---

## THE BEST YOU CAN BE IN 2003! Tips for Balancing Work, Personal Life

By **ELAINE DEROSA**

*Published February 2, 2003*

Working long hours, taking care of children and elderly parents and managing household chores make it difficult for people to fit themselves into their own daily routine. This situation leads to a common complaint: Life lacks balance.

You can't add hours to the day, of course, but a variety of approaches can enhance your quality of life simply by changing your outlook and helping you to reassess your priorities. Suddenly, you'll find that you can create more time for yourself without depriving your loved ones of what they need and without diminishing your effectiveness at work. In fact, a new approach actually could enhance all of those aspects of life.

One question to ask yourself when you look at your calendar is "How much time is in there for you?" suggests **Jeffrey Patnaude**, an author who has a new book, "Living Simultaneously: Balancing Self-Care, Personal Relationships and Work," published by White Rhino Press. He also is a leadership developer who has worked with a number of companies, including Cisco Systems and Hewlett Packard.

"My own calendar is sometimes booked a year in advance," he says. "In January, though, I'm gone for a whole month. I'm taking time for me. I have to book that. How do you make time for yourself? At work, do you pick up the phone and call your children? Do you write love notes to people (you care about)? Why not? You don't check your heart at the door."

For upper-level managers, he advises scheduling time for "visioning," which he describes as "sitting on the mountaintop."

Even people further down in the hierarchy can attend to their need for balance, he says.

"You have to build a relationship with management to help them understand your productivity and how you work."

One piece of advice may be surprising, he says: Interruptions actually can be beneficial because you can learn a lot from those who interrupt you. The key is to keep the interruptions to no more than 10 minutes. "I taught a Hewlett Packard executive to use an egg timer. If someone said, 'Do you have a minute?' she'd say, 'I have five.' Then, she would turn the egg timer over."

He explains the concept of living "simultaneously" as realizing that aspects of life overlap and flow, rather than exist as separate pieces. To achieve better flow, he recommends the following:

- **Stop compartmentalizing.** Realize that life is not segmented and that you should embrace the consistent flow.
- **Recognize interruptions as a learning opportunity, and plan your week, allowing for interruptions.**
- **Recognize individual opportunity and understand that you can inspire others around you.**
- **Discover your true passion, asking yourself whether you have the same level of**

---

*Copyright © 2003, Akron Beacon Journal*

February 2, 2003 — "The Best You Can Be in 2003"

# Akron Beacon Journal

---

**passion for your work as for your personal life, or vice versa.** “Passions help shape our lives and must be woven throughout all that we do.”

- **Introduce humor into your daily activities, which can increase productivity.**
- **Select someone in your life whom you respect and ask that person to encourage you as you work toward your goals.**

Setting clear priorities and being realistic about the expectations you have for yourself also are important, says Jonathon Appel, Ph.D., director of Behavioral Health Services at Family Services in Akron.

“Women, especially, think that they have to do everything equally well, which is impossible,” he says.

His other suggestions include keeping track of how you spend your time – “we have a tendency to let it slip away” – to develop a network of people who are supportive of you and have a positive outlook, and to be more flexible with yourself, and in your relationships and your work life. Like Patnaude, Appel recommends scheduling time for fun.

“I live by my calendar, and for weekends, I write in the fun things I’m going to do,” Appel says. “If I don’t schedule it in, I’ll find that the time will be taken away by something else. You have to be self-nurturing.”

Humor and maintaining “an attitude of gratitude” are the keys to finding balance in life says motivational speaker Connie J. Young of CJ Young and Associates, who uses humor daily in her own life as well as in her presentations.

“We look at how many times a child laughs as opposed to an adult,” she says. “Children laugh about 700 times a day. Adults don’t see so many things as funny because they’re stressed out.” She advises not being afraid to take risks. “People need to get the ‘but’ out of life, as in, ‘I would, but.’”

People should view adversity as the basis of great stories to tell later, when time allows them to look back and laugh, and to remember that hard times do not last forever.

“Don’t let life take the snap out of your fingers,” she says. “You have to quit having relationships with dead things; stuff that’s past, like old boyfriends, exes, ex jobs, former coworkers, and deal with what is. Living in the moment is very important. Depression and anxiety come from the past and the future.”

It’s also helpful to realize that each of us is responsible for his or her own happiness, she observes. “Happiness is an inside job.”