

## The Myth of Work-Life Balance

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You just got off a client call in your breach of contract matter (1.4 hours). You previously worked on your brief seeking class certification in another case (2.8 hours) and prepared for a deposition in your securities litigation (3.1 hours). You need to attend to a bit of firm management (0.5 hours) and draft one more email (0.6 hours) before you can head out the door.

Nobody would describe this as balancing your work. It is simply work.

Every lawyer — whether at a firm, in-house or with the government — has to juggle various tasks and different matters throughout the day. The best lawyers know which tasks and matters need immediate attention and which ones can wait. Which ones are safe to delegate and which require personal involvement.

It is therefore perplexing that we use that ubiquitous yet misleading concept of “work-life balance” to describe what I would simply call “living.” Balance necessarily requires a scale, with “work” on one side either raising or lowering the quality of your “life” on the other.

No wonder we see women leave the legal profession in droves — focusing on your career seems directly at odds with being a wife, mother and fulfilled individual. If you are doing well in one area, you are detracting from the other. And if you’ve achieved parity in both, the results seem middling. There is no way to win.

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