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WORK/LIFE HARMONY

Juggling work, family and life, **and really enjoying it.**

A human-centered leadership
approach to the roles we play.

Michael Lane Morris, PhD

Photo by [@salvadorkick](#) on Unsplash

Notes

02

LET'S HAVE A CONVERSATION

We all struggle.

01 No dumb questions

Everything is on the table.

02 Nothing is "normal"

Lots of variety in how people
live and work.

03 No silver bullet

Nothing cuts through all the
complexity at once.

04 Our goals today

Disrupt default thinking and
actions, challenge the status
quo, and inspire and mobilize
new ideas and solutions.

Notes

03

DEFINING HUMAN-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

The process of inspiring and mobilizing people to co-creatively tackle tough challenges and do things that matter.

Michael Lane Morris and Jules Morris

Photo by [@ing](#) on Unsplash

Notes

04

THE CREATIVE ALLIANCES SYSTEM

Harmony lives in Flourish.

BONDS
How we feel together

TASKS & TOOLS
What we do together

GOALS
What we achieve

Creative Alliances System™ © 2026 BombDiggity, LLC.

+ Text version of this diagram

Notes

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WORK AND LIFE: THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP

Each one spills over into the other.

(+) Enrichment
each lifts the other

(-) Conflict
each drains the other

+ Text version of this diagram

Notes

DR. MARIE PUYBARAUD, THEN
GLOBAL HEAD OF RESEARCH, JLL
CORPORATE SOLUTIONS

Beyond balance.

"A workplace that is powered by the human experience goes beyond a work-life balance. It drives how people feel about their place of work. How empowered, engaged and fulfilled they are, it's the purposeful fusion of life and work based on authentic human experiences."

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Notes

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THE FAMILY AND LIFE CHALLENGE

Care at home is now a second shift.

63M

Family caregivers

About 63 million Americans, nearly 1 in 4 adults, give ongoing care to a family member or friend.

60%

Also hold a job

About 6 in 10 family caregivers are also employed.

1 in 2

Feel it at work

About half of working caregivers report disruptions such as arriving late or leaving early.

AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, *Caregiving in the U.S. 2025*.

Notes

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WORK/LIFE CHALLENGES: WORKPLACE IMPACTS

Stress follows people home, and back again.

50%

Daily stress

Half of U.S. and Canadian employees felt a lot of stress during much of the previous day.

42%

Losing sleep

Among workers worried about a downturn, 42% say work stress makes it hard to sleep.

36%

Straining relationships

The same group says work stress has recently strained their personal relationships.

Gallup, *State of the Global Workplace* (2026 report, 2025 data); American Psychological Association, *Work in America* survey (2025).

Notes

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WORKPLACE FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The bill for burned-out people is real.

\$63.2B

Lost to insomnia

Insomnia costs U.S. employers an estimated \$63.2 billion a year in lost productivity.

11.3

Days lost

The average worker with insomnia loses the equivalent of 11.3 days of work a year.

\$2,280

Per worker

Lost productivity for each worker with insomnia, every year.

Kessler and colleagues, "Insomnia and the Performance of US Workers," *SLEEP* (2011).

Notes

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WHEN WORK AND LIFE WORK

Everybody wins.

Positive stakeholder outcomes when work and life work together:

Loyalty and commitment **Morale**
Concentration and focus **Retention**
Health and wellness **Teamwork**
Engagement and flow **Job satisfaction**
Fewer absences **Citizenship behaviors**
Bigger applicant pools **Motivation**
Innovation and creativity **Public image**
Revenue **Profits** **Stock price**

Notes

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NIGEL MARSH: HOW TO MAKE WORK-LIFE BALANCE WORK

A TED talk worth ten minutes.

Writer and former advertising executive Nigel Marsh on why the responsibility for balance sits with us, not our employers, and why small things matter.

[Watch the talk on TED](#)

Notes

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WORK/LIFE STRESS?

Pinpointing the problem.

Notes

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WHAT IS STRESS?

Neither good nor bad.

01 The body's reaction

Stress is how the body reacts to the demands of life.

02 Stressors are events

External events cause cognitive, emotional and physical reactions.

03 You make the difference

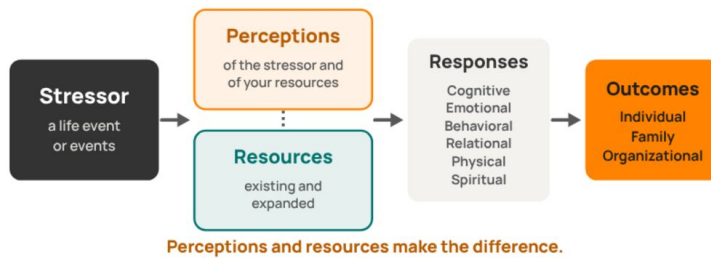
Perceptions and resources determine where it goes.

Notes

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A MODEL OF STRESS

Perceptions and resources make the difference.



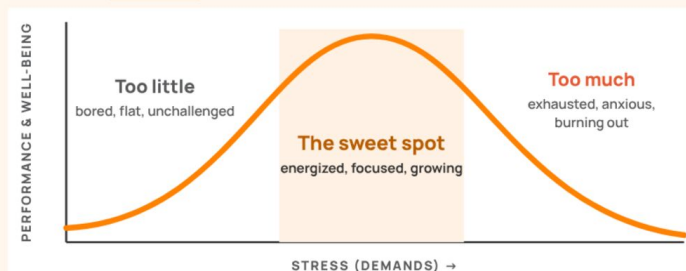
+ Text version of this diagram

Notes

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THE CURVILINEAR NATURE OF STRESS

Some stress helps. Too much hurts.



An inverted-U pattern, first described by Yerkes and Dodson (1908).

+ Text version of this diagram

Notes

THE SIX SIGNPOSTS OF WORK/LIFE STRESS

Your body and your life send signals.

Physical
Fatigue, headaches, insomnia, appetite changes, hypertension

Emotional
Bad temper, anxiety, irritability, moodiness, fear

Mental
Forgetfulness, indecision, dulled senses, losing concentration

Relational
Isolation, defensiveness, resentment, nagging, intolerance

Spiritual
Emptiness, apathy, cynicism, loss of direction, doubt

Behavioral
Pacing, restlessness, nail biting, slumped posture, unhealthy habits

Notes

THE SIGNPOSTS, UP CLOSE

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Physical, emotional and mental.

Signpost	What you might notice
Physical	Appetite changes, headaches, fatigue, insomnia, indigestion, frequent colds, weight gain, teeth grinding, hypertension
Emotional	Bad temper, anxiety, nightmares, irritability, depression, frustration, over-sensitivity, moodiness, fearfulness
Mental	Humorlessness, dulled senses, lethargy, boredom, indecisiveness, forgetfulness, loss of concentration, personality changes, stuck in the past

Notes

THE SIGNPOSTS, UP CLOSE

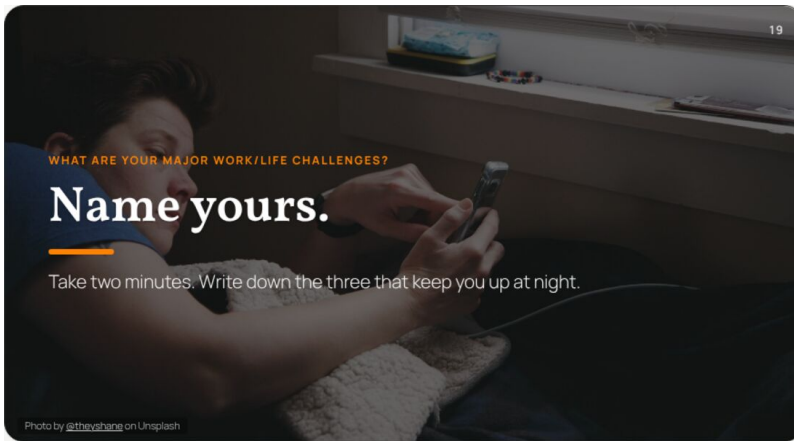
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Relational, spiritual and behavioral.

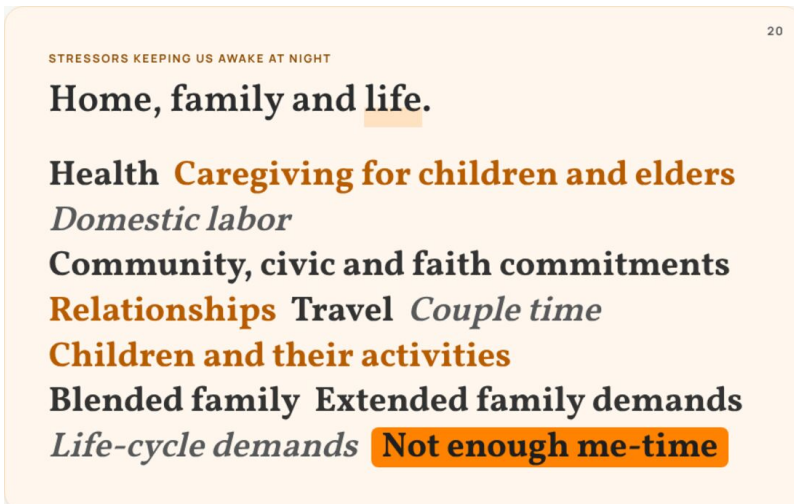
Signpost	What you might notice
Relational	Isolation, defensiveness, intolerance, resentment, loneliness, nagging, reduced intimacy, aggression
Spiritual	Feelings of emptiness, apathy, inability to forgive, cynicism, loss of direction, doubt, a need to prove yourself, hopelessness, gloom
Behavioral	Pacing, swearing, substance misuse, nail biting, slumped posture, restlessness, risk aversion, disordered eating

If several signposts are flashing at once, talk with someone you trust or a health professional.

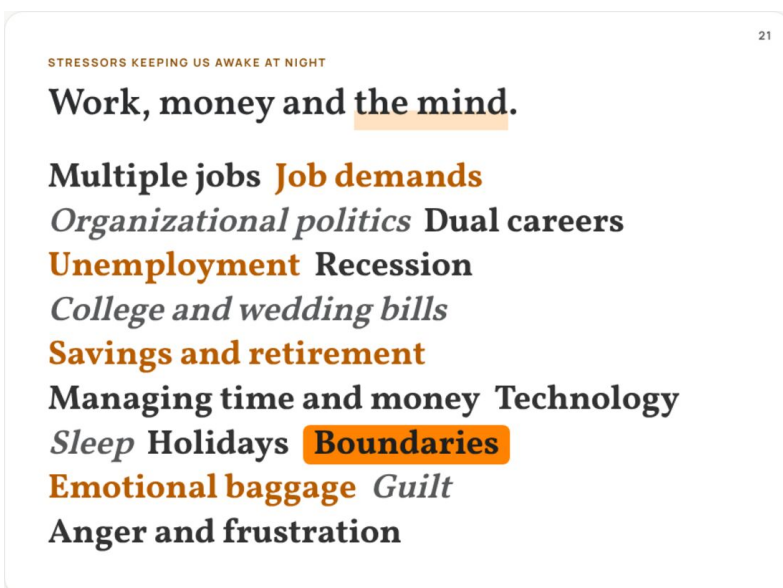
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THE IMPORTANCE OF COPING

Coping is the bridge.

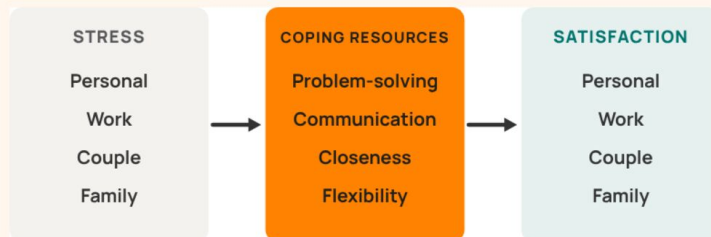
The interface between work/life stress and work/life satisfaction.

Notes

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COPING RESOURCES

Four resources turn stress into satisfaction.



Text version of this diagram

Notes

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BUILDING COPING RESOURCES

Bend without breaking.

Coping is bending without breaking or sacrificing yourself or others: having the personal and relational strengths of hardiness and resiliency during times of change.

Notes

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HUMAN-CENTERED COPING SOLUTIONS

Four ways to work a solution.

01 Establish and start

Solutions don't exist yet. Put solutions into place.

02 Enrich and improve

Solutions exist, but must be made better.

03 Maintain equilibrium

Solutions exist and are working. Sustain them.

04 Eliminate and extinguish

Solutions exist but are not working. Stop them, and discover new ones.

Notes

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AN INVITATION

Consider work/life *harmony.*

Photo by @ro_ko on Unsplash

Notes

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HARMONY BENEFITS

Better for you, better for work.

Personal harmony

- Better physical health
- Better mental health
- A more productive and efficient you
- More energy

&

Work harmony

- Higher morale
- Greater productivity
- Lower turnover
- Better focus and concentration
- Punctuality
- Higher engagement

Notes

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HARMONY BENEFITS

Better for us, better for family.

Couple harmony

- Partners feel better about themselves
- Partners feel better about their relationship
- More intimacy

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Family harmony

- The family unit bolsters each person's contentment
- Kids do better in school
- Fewer emotional problems
- Closer parent and child relationships

Notes

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WHY WORK/LIFE BALANCE IS A MYTH

Balance is a *trade-off*.

Notes

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THE BALANCE MYTH

Balance trades. Harmony blends.

Balance



50-50 trade-offs. Zero-sum.

Harmony



Many roles, one song. Integrated.

+ Text version of this diagram

Notes

HARMONY INVOLVES

Three shifts.

01 A holistic mindset

An integrated approach to all of your roles.

02 Getting on the balcony

Step back and see the whole dance floor, including yourself.

03 Conflict and enrichment

Manage the conflict, and maximize the enrichment.

Notes

GET AND KEEP THE STRINGS IN TUNE

Are your roles in tune?

Text version of this diagram

Notes

HOW OUR STRINGS GET OUT OF TUNE

Five L's that pull us off key.

Loyalties

Allegiances that compete for us.

Live-wires

Triggers that set us off.

Land-mines

Catch-22s that trap us.

Luggage

Carrying other people's water.

Leashes

Eight hungers to manage: power, pleasure, praise, prosperity, prestige, protection, perfectionism and privileges.

Notes



DESIGNING WORK/LIFE HARMONY IN YOUR LIFE

34

Thirteen how-to tips.

Harmony: a human-centered leadership approach.

Pick one

Choose the tip that would make the biggest difference this month.

Try it small

Run it as an experiment for one week.

Keep what works

Then add another.

Photo by @scibouamouja on Unsplash

Notes

TIP 1: BECOME THE LEADER OF YOUR BAND

Who is in charge of your life?

Don't wait
Don't count on the organization to give you harmony.

Be intentional
Direct the performance.

Know the difference
Don't confuse feeling important with frustrating interruptions.

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Notes

TIP 2: ORCHESTRATE YOUR LIFE

How do you define success?

01 Professionally and personally
Define success on both stages.

02 Success is not survival
Getting through the week is not the goal.

03 The bridge
Tomorrow, will I be happy with today's choices about success?

04 What and who matters
Decide what, and who, is really important.

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TIP 3: BE COMPASSIONATE WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Compassion is empathy in action.

Learn how to understand the human half of work/life challenges, so you can act. Remember that you are human too, with:

- Needs and wants
- Beliefs and values
- Priorities
- Dreams and goals

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TIP 4: SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Multitasking is a myth.

-  **Want or need?**
Decide which is which.
-  **One thing at a time**
Concentrate on one thing, then the next.
-  **Take inventory**
Be honest about your roles, responsibilities, resources and capabilities.
-  **Lengthen the horizon**
Give harmony time to arrive.

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TIP 5: BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPT

The cues are the clues.

Read the warning signs and constraints. Small things make a big difference. Control what you can and roll with the rest, and ask: if I change, who wins and who loses?

- 1 Maintenance**
Small, regular care keeps things running.
- 2 Repair**
Fix what is starting to slip.
- 3 Overhaul**
Rebuild what no longer works.

Notes

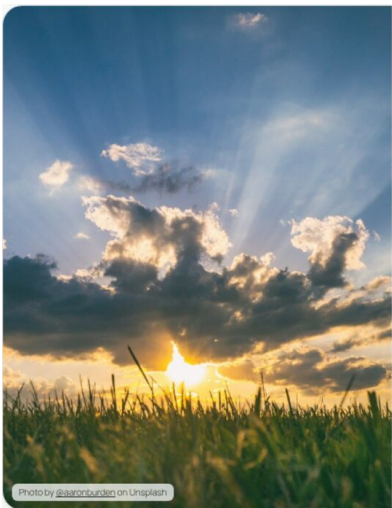


Photo by @sarahboulton on Unsplash

TIP 6: KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

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Look for the sunshine.

Catch the stinking thinking
Monitor and manage it.

Every day
Refocus, reframe and look for wins.

Cloudy days too
Look for the sunshine on cloudy, rainy and stormy days.

Notes

TIP 7: BROADEN AND BUILD

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Maximize the power of positive emotions.

Positive emotions broaden what we notice and build the resources we draw on later.

Trade this	For this
Fear	Courage
Anger	Optimism
Guilt	Gratitude

Barbara Fredrickson, broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (2001).

Notes

TIP 8: THE TRIGGER CUES ARE THE CLUES

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Let triggers prompt questions.

01 How can I make this better?

02 What are my warning signs?

Which signals say my work/life needs an adjustment?

03 Does my performance system help?

Does it support my work/life situation?

04 Results or impressions?

Am I focused on results, or on managing impressions?

Notes

MEANWHILE, AT HOME 43

Boundaries beat programs.

Just one quick email...

...or 40.

Great news: we're launching a wellness program!

Harmony starts with boundaries, not programs.

Text version of this diagram

Notes

TIP 9: SET FIRM BOUNDARIES FOR YOUR ROLES 44

Say no when necessary.

Manage boundaries
Choose which are permeable and which are not.

Protect private time
Respect it and keep it.

Say no
When necessary, and without apology.

Master your tech
Technology is a good servant and a bad master.

Photo by @bruno_nascimento on Unsplash

Notes

TIP 10: RELAX AND RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES 45

Down-time is productive.

Schedule yourself
Put time for you on the calendar.

Watch your habits
Monitor your personal habits and lifestyle.

Take a real vacation
Rest fuels innovation and creativity.

Know the limit
Past about 55 hours a week, extra hours add little or nothing.

John Pencavel, "The Productivity of Working Hours," *The Economic Journal* (2019).

Photo by @dustinakozlovsky on Unsplash

Notes

TIP 11: PROTOTYPE NEW IDEAS

Small things, huge improvements.

- Rethink solutions**
Solutions are sometimes the problem.
- Start small**
Small things can improve things in huge ways.
- Many paths**
Different strokes for different folks: there are multiple pathways to harmony.
- Fail forward**
Fail your way to success.



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Notes

TIP 12: USE A PRIORITY-DRIVEN DECISION FILTER

Decide by **what matters most.**

Priorities give focus and direction, for strategic and tactical things alike. A filter helps you handle the pressure points.

-  **Promises**
Your values: the promises you keep.
-  **Purpose**
Your why.
-  **Passions**
Learn how to make them valuable to other people too.
-  **Principles**
The lines you will not cross.

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Notes



TIP 13: BUILD A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

You are not alone, so don't go it alone.

- Allies are assets**
Check in often.
- Three kinds of support**
Emotional, informational and instrumental.
- Role models**
Who are your work and life role models?
- Think beyond you**
Build a shared vision.

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Notes

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CHANGE MODEL AND ACTION PLAN

Make it CHANGE.

C

Commit

Commit yourself to a specific goal.

H

Habits

Break old habits and start new ones.

A

Action

Take one step at a time.

N

Never give up

Lapses may occur. Fail your way to success.

G

Goal-oriented

Focus on the positive.

E

Embrace

Embrace and reward yourself.

Notes

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THANK YOU!

Pick one tip. Try it this week.

Then use the Work/Life Harmony Check-in below to build your CHANGE plan.

Notes
