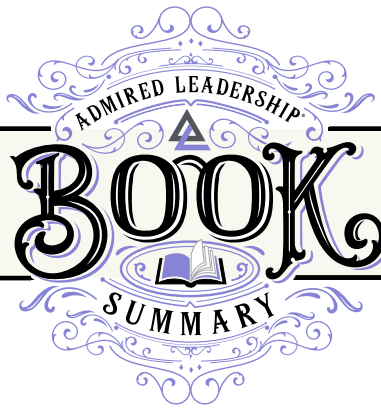




Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours



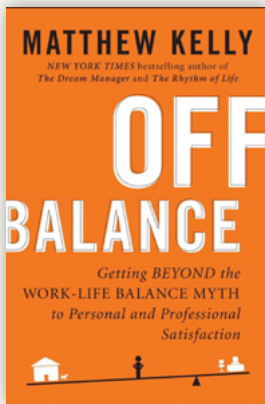
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# Off Balance

Getting Beyond the Work-Life Balance Myth to Personal and Professional Satisfaction

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In *Off Balance*, author, speaker, and business consultant Matthew Kelly rejects the idea that achieving a good work-life balance is the key to fulfillment. Instead, he proposes a straightforward system to help achieve something different: personal and professional satisfaction with life. As you go through Kelly's plan, you will develop your own approach which reflects your unique purpose and priorities and leads you to a higher level of satisfaction in all areas of life.

## Key Quote

"The promise of this book is to help you design and build a more satisfying life in both the personal and professional arenas. We will do this together by approaching our lives with the strategy and rigor with which the best companies in the world approach business. The result is a personalized system that you will be able to apply to your life year after year, to drive high levels of satisfaction" (p. xii).

— Matthew Kelly

## Key Points

**The Best Way to Live.** Specific questions can help people confront common but misguided approaches to life and help them strategically answer one over-arching question: "How is the **best** way to live?" According to Kelly, living your life well hinges on understanding three key "life principles": becoming "the-best-version-of-yourself," virtue, and self-control (p. 23-32).

**How Satisfied Are You?** People who seem to excel in both the personal and professional spheres often do not report having a good work-life balance themselves. Instead, they report satisfaction in work and life. Identifying and achieving things that will give you more personal and professional **satisfaction** is possible.

**Can You Have It All?** Satisfaction is not about "getting what we want" (p. 65) or having it all. In fact, "excellence in any field requires that we miss out on other things" (p. 66). Learn to choose based on your personal sense of purpose and priorities.

**Batteries Included.** Energy drives how much you get out of life. Become attuned to the things around you – “the people, places, things, and activities that energize you, and those that drain you” (p. 89).

**Systems Drive Behaviors.** Whether you want to radically change things or just make small changes to create a better version of the life you are already living, you need a plan. Identify your “desired outcome” and the behavioral changes that will help you achieve it (p. 104). Then set up core habits and systems to help you achieve those behaviors.

### Key Concepts:

“We seem more interested in how we want to live than we are in discovering the best way to live. Likewise, we are much more interested in developing self-expression than we are in developing selves that are worth expressing” (p. 13).

Kelley’s book rejects the work-life balance construct as artificial, inadequate, and impossible to achieve. Having a good work-life balance does not necessarily mean you have satisfaction in your personal and professional life.

Instead, he has developed a plan centered around finding the best way to live in order to become “the-best-version-of-yourself.”

### THE ESSENTIAL DILEMMA

Despite the popular focus on training in work-life balance, corporations have not found a way to successfully teach employees how to manage their personal and professional lives. In fact, one problem with the work-life balance myth is that many people think it’s an entitlement or a benefit that the company gives them.

People confuse value statements with time allocation statements. Family may genuinely be your top priority, but you will most likely have to spend more **time** working.


Kelley argues that value structures influence the **way** you spend your time but shouldn’t necessarily determine how you allocate your time.

The thing most of us are really seeking is not balance but **satisfaction**.


### SATISFACTION VS. BALANCE

The concept of work-life balance rejects the fact that there are days, weeks, and seasons of life where long, hard, consuming work sessions are deeply satisfying and wholesome, and that seasons of complete detachment from work are, as well. The balance pursuit also doesn’t account for the fact that much of life is dynamic and out of our control.

“To maintain balance, as the work-life balance has framed it, requires the creation of an artificial environment in which you can control many of the things that you simply cannot control. [But] satisfaction can be created and maintained in a much more dynamic and unpredictable environment” (p. 47)



*“Specific questions can help people confront common but misguided approaches to life and help them strategically answer one over-arching question: “How is the best way to live?”*



Compared to a work-life balance goal, which in a dynamic environment is not really possible, satisfaction as a goal is both possible and “easier to sustain” (pp. 46-47).

The satisfaction that emerges in response to the fulfillment of a need is more likely to last than the satisfaction from the gratification of desires.

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT VS. TIME MANAGEMENT

Your experience of life expands with the more energy you have. We all have the same amount of time available to us each day. But people with more energy achieve more of what they want to accomplish in that time. You can't create more time, but you can expand your capacity for life by managing energy.

You can do this by identifying what energizes you and what doesn't. “Being familiar with the people, places, things, and activities that energize you, and those that drain you, is critical to managing your energy” (p. 89).

“More energy means more satisfaction. The more you increase your energy level, the more you will increase the levels of personal and professional satisfaction you enjoy and can share with others” (p. 102).

### FOUR LEVELS OF ENERGY:

No aspect of life is not affected by the type of energy we bring to it.

We all experience all four levels of energy. But “you have more control over the time you spend in each level than most people are willing to admit” (p. 97).


“Level One: Depressed, exhausted, burned-out, defeated, and overwhelmed.”

“Level Two: Angry, fearful, anxious, defensive, resentful.”


“Level Three: Mellow, serene, content.”

“Level Four: Confident, joyful, enthusiastic, invigorated” (p. 96).

At this fourth level, we live our best lives and effortlessly celebrate “the-best-version-of-ourselves.”



*“Being familiar with the people, places, things, and activities that energize you, and those that drain you, is critical to managing your energy.”*



## THE PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION SYSTEM

There is a five-step process to developing your own satisfaction system.

Assess what satisfies you using Kelly's system of satisfaction measurement. An online assessment is found at [floydconsulting.com](http://floydconsulting.com), and helpful assessment questions are also found within the book on pages 48-57.

**Priorities:** “Without clarity around what matters most, without a clear value and priority structure that we can commit to, our lives tend to get kidnapped by the urgent” (p. 81). The most satisfied people tend to have a clear sense of who they are and what is important to them.

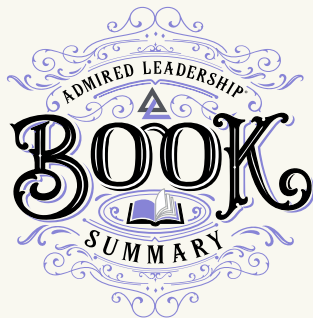
**Core Habits:** Discover (and measure) four to five habits that help you have a great day, and do them every single day. Build up over time, starting with just one habit.

**Weekly Strategy Session:** Assign a focus for each day of the week. Holding to that focus plays a significant role in creating and sustaining high levels of satisfaction. Planning saves time in the long run.

**Quarterly Review:** Accountability is essential. You should review your satisfaction (via the assessment at the beginning of the process) every 90 days or so to make progress and continually work toward improving personal and professional satisfaction.

“If you don’t measure it consistently, you won’t change it. Why do we measure so many things in our business? Because measuring is one of the simplest systems – and systems drive behavior” (p. 114).

Kelly, M. (2015) *Off Balance: Getting Beyond the Work-life Balance Myth to Personal and Professional Satisfaction*. New York: Penguin Publishing.



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After reading a good summary, we believe leaders are able to make better choices as to what to ignore, what to peruse and what to make the time to read closely.