

Improve your work-life balance – practical tools, techniques and tips

**Women in Energy soft skills
workshop**

4 March 2015

Today's Agenda

- 1. Defining “Balance”**
- 2. Psychological Theory**
- 3. Working Practices**

1. Defining “Balance”

What is work-life balance?



What is work-life balance?

“Work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities”

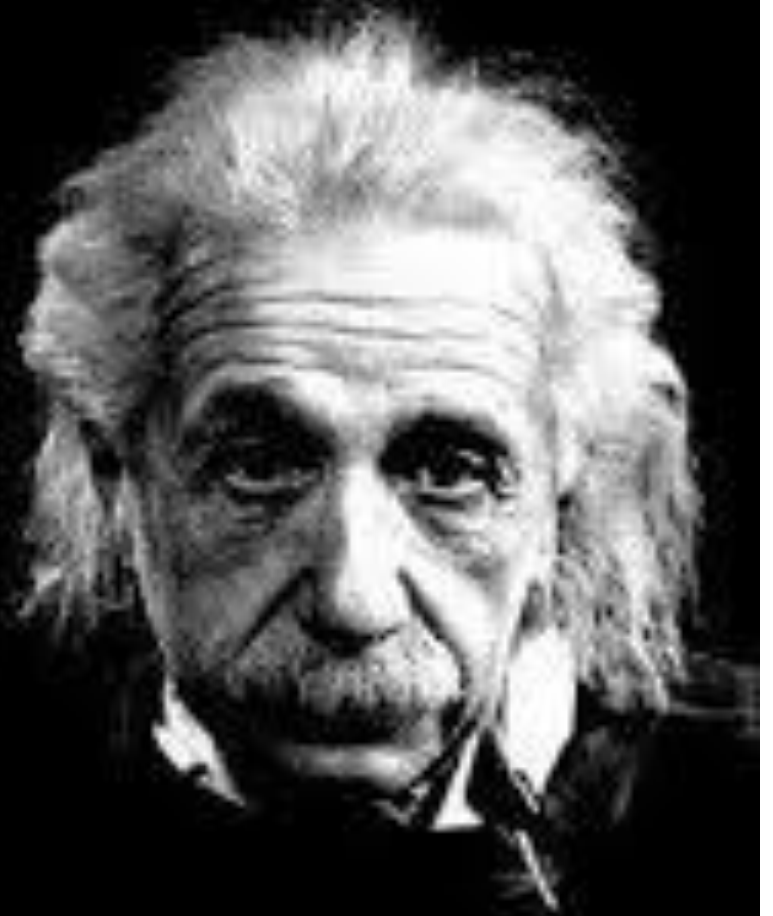
Thomas Kalliath & Paula Brough,
2008

What's your ideal balance?

The “miracle” question

(A Solutions Focus approach)

"WE CANNOT
SOLVE OUR
PROBLEMS
WITH THE SAME
THINKING WE
USED WHEN WE
CREATED THEM"



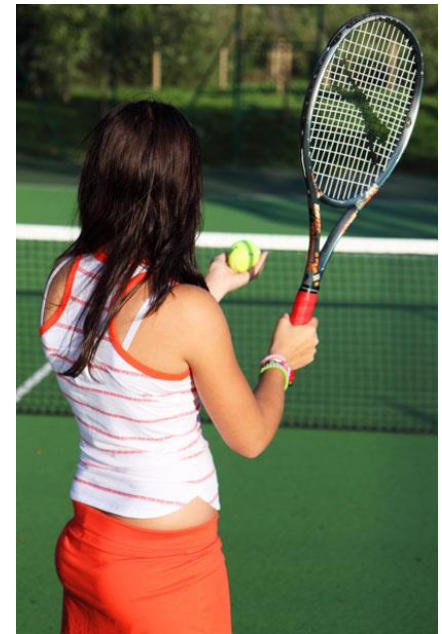
**On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is
“nowhere near” and 10 is
“totally”)**

**How close are you to your
“ideal” balance?**

2. Some Psychological Theory

- 1. Role Theory**
- 2. Depletion Vs Enrichment**
- 3. Boundaries**

1. Role Theory



Role theory

We all play multiple “roles”.

For the purposes of this exercise I would like you to consider your work role and an important non-work role. If you are a carer please choose this one.

For each role in turn please answer the following questions:

- **Where did you learn the “script” for this role? Who is judging how successful you are in this role?**
- **How much physical time does this role take up? How much mental energy?**
- **Who do you need to interact with in this role? (List the key players.)**

For each role in turn please answer the following questions:

- Is the script for this role still current?
Could you change it?**
- Can you reduce the impact by reducing
the amount of time or emotional
involvement?**
- Are there other ways you could play this
role which would enable better balance
in your life? Are there implications for
those with whom you interact?**

2. Depletion Vs Enrichment

Multiple roles lead to conflicting demands:

**Professional life interferes with personal life eg.
an unexpected meeting late in the day may
prevent a woman from attending an evening get-
together with friends.**

**Personal life interferes with professional life eg.
because a parent has to care for his sick child, he
cannot attend an important business meeting.**

Depletion vs Enrichment

**Conflict leads to feelings of
Depletion.**

**The alternative is to consider how
the roles are enriching each other.**

Depletion vs Enrichment

Enrichment refers to the beneficial “resources” we gain through carrying out multiple roles.

Enrichment models argue participation in multiple roles buffers an individual against psychological distress.

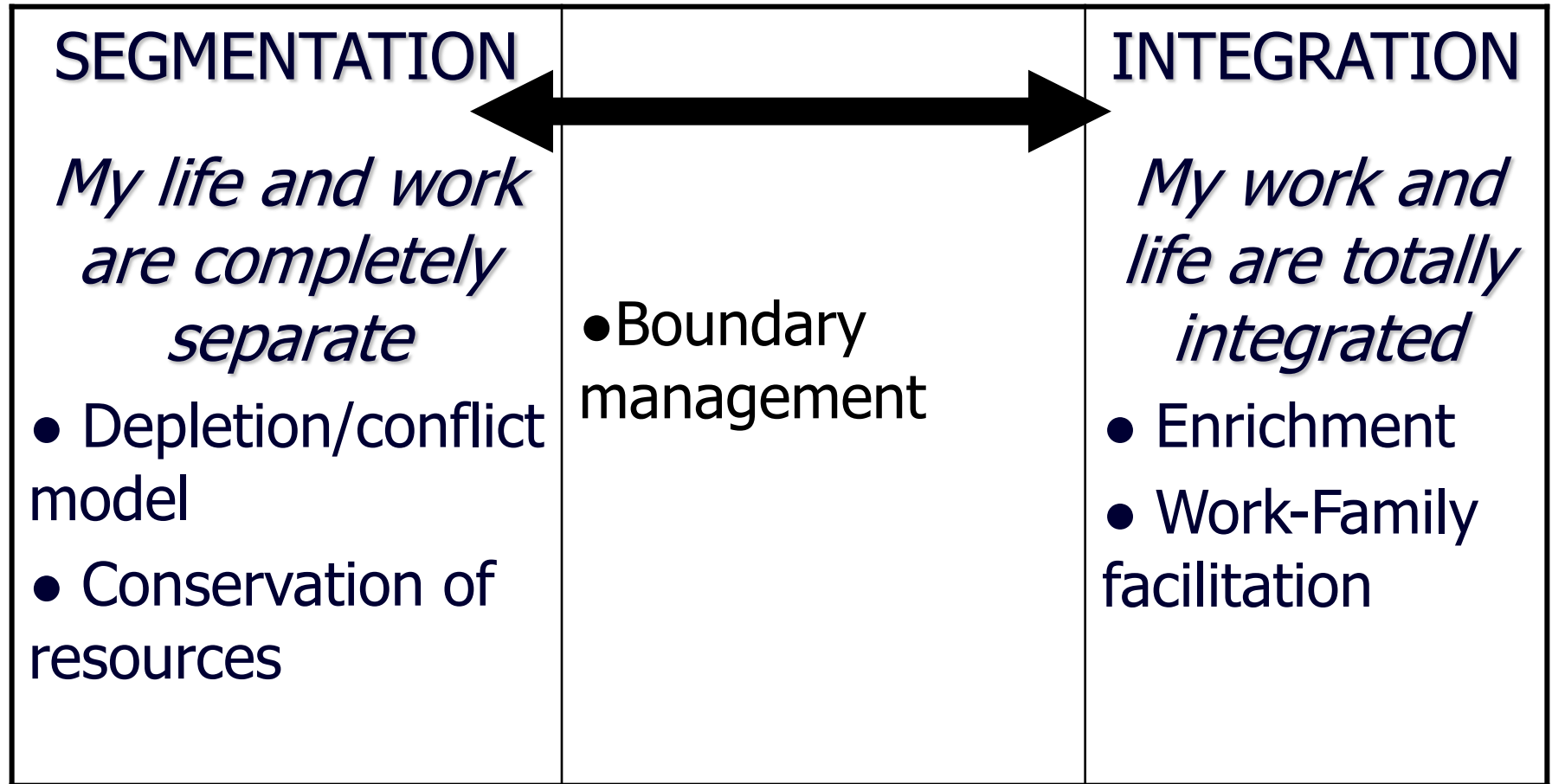
Depletion vs Enrichment

A study found that people had a significantly more positive view of their personal work-life balance after reading about facilitation (enrichment) than after reading about conflict.

Source: van Steenbergen et al, 2008

We may improve our work-life balance by seeing combining roles as a challenge & an opportunity rather than a threat.

3. Work-Life Boundaries



Separation/ Integration (See Kinman, 2005)

**Are you a Segregator or an
Integrator?**

**How do you prefer to manage
your work-life balance?**

**Does your employer's corporate
culture support your preferences?**

3. Working Practices

Note down:

- **2-3 “market skills” for which you’ve been employed.**
- **2-3 “internal skills” you’ve acquired during the course of employment and which make you valuable to your employer.**
- **The cost of replacing you:
30% of your salary; (say) 5% of your boss
and your team’s salaries in lost time
recruiting/training your replacement.**

Re-designing your job. What do you want?

- **Reduced hours**
- **Flexible location**
- **Flexible hours**

Reduced Hours

- **Job-share**
 - The job-share project (Capability Jane); four to follow on Twitter
<https://twitter.com/GrownUpBalance/lists/job-share/members>
- **Other arrangements**
 - “Hours to Suit” – report in two parts from
www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Reduced Hours

Specialist tasks – must be carried out by current postholder or qualified candidate	Lower level tasks – administrative or routine which can be delegated/ automated/ eliminated.	D, A or E

Flexible Location/Flexible Hours

LOCATION	INDEPENDENT (Mobile)	
	SPECIFIC (Office)	
		TIME LIMITED (daily, weekly, monthly etc)
		NOT TIME LIMITED

Working practices – preparing to negotiate

- 1. What policies does your organisation currently support?**
- 2. What else is going on “under the radar”?**
- 3. Can you find an internal Role Model?**
- 4. What skills do you need to improve?**
- 5. Who do you need to influence?**

Requesting FW – legal reasons for rejection

- 1. extra costs**
- 2. work can't be reorganised among other staff**
- 3. people can't be recruited to do the work**
- 4. Poorer quality and performance**
- 5. Unable to meet customer demand**
- 6. lack of work during proposed working times**
- 7. the business is planning changes to the workforce**

Working practices – preparing to negotiate

2. What else is going on “under the radar”?

3. Can you find an internal Role Model?

4. What skills do you need to improve?

- **Negotiation**
- **Communication**
- **Boundary management**
- **Mindfulness**

5. Who do you need to influence?

- **At work?**
- **At home?**

Making small adjustments

**“change happens
best when
nobody notices”**

Parting Thought:

What small step(s) can you take this week to move you up one point on your scale?

Thanks for Listening!

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