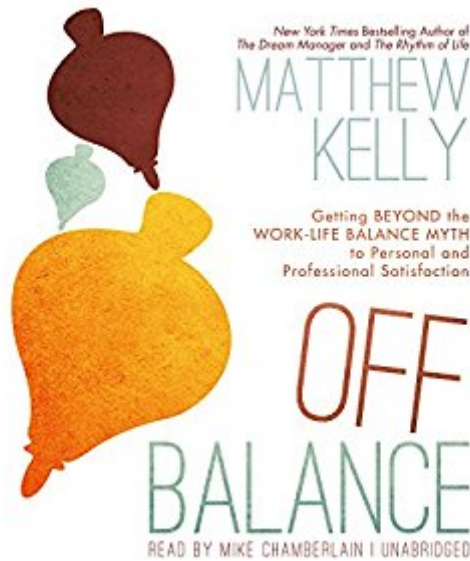


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# Off Balance: Getting Beyond The Work-Life Balance Myth To Personal And Professional Satisfaction



## Synopsis

The prescriptive follow-up to the New York Times best seller *The Dream Manager*. One of the major issues in our lives today is work-life balance. Everyone wants it; no one has it. But Matthew Kelly believes that work-life balance was a mistake from the start—because we don't really want balance; we want satisfaction. Kelly lays out the system he uses with his clients, his team, and himself to find deep, long-term satisfaction both personally and professionally. He introduces us to the three philosophies of our age that are dragging us down. He shows us how to cultivate the energy that will give us enough battery power for everything we need and want to do. And finally, in five clear steps, he shows us how to use his Personal & Professional Satisfaction System to establish and honor our biggest priorities, even if we spend a lot more time on some of the lesser ones.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Over the past twenty-five years, there has been substantial increase in burnout due to overwork and increased stress. Workplace violence, absenteeism, and rising workers' compensation claims are used as evidence of an unhealthy work life balance. A Center for Work-Life Policy (CWLP), a "think tank," has even been created to study and research the problem of work-life balance. In one study, they found "seventy percent of US respondents and eighty-one percent of global respondents say their jobs are affecting their health." In *"Off Balance,"* best selling author and national acclaimed speaker, Matthew Kelly, turns the subject upside down (not just off balance) and reframes the discussion with challenging questions about the role that work plays in our life and why we should

discard the theme "work-life balance" in favor of "work-life effectiveness" which results in what we all seek, the experience of satisfaction. The popular press has conditioned us to think about "work-life balance" in a self-defeating way as they have compartmentalized work and life, setting them against one another...equating "balance" to working less. These cannot be separated. Work is a necessary part of life and, despite popular efforts to do so, it cannot be left to stand by itself. Reality has taught us that what happens at home will affect us at work (a new baby, deaths, divorce) and what happens at work will affect us at home (promotion, termination, plant closures). Rather, a better approach would be integrating the two... and achieving "work-life effectiveness." Kelly found that "If you ask people why they want work-life balance, they talk about things that have little or nothing to do with balance. They talk about dynamic relationships, fulfilling careers, challenging projects that engage their talents, opportunities to grow as a whole person, and pursuing their personal and professional dreams. Work-life balance as a term has become a catch-all." Kelly's observations have led to his recommendation that we focus on achieving personal and professional satisfaction, not balance. This requires understanding what personal and professional satisfaction means to each of us; defining our dreams; assessing and categorizing our values and principles; prioritization of what is truly important for us to "become the best-version-of-yourself"; assessing where we are today; developing a system that facilitates personal accountability: and periodic reviews. In "Off Balance," Kelly provides the how: tips, templates, and self-revealing questions for each. Kelly points out the few people have the requisite self-knowledge to set things right to experience a satisfaction filled life...and even fewer, if any, companies know how to help. "Off-Balance" is Kelly's contribution to filling this vacuum. Individuals who work at this will learn to live lives filled with satisfaction and enlightened companies who foster this will have an edge in attracting and retaining the best talent. "Off Balance" expertly reframes the discussion of work and life and will be a tonic for those trying to align the need for satisfaction with the realities of work and life.

This book is a powerful indictment of a myth: that happiness comes from trying to balance the personal with the professional. Floyd demolishes this idea, correctly noting that work and personal are twisted together like a pretzel. He goes further though and frames the question differently: how can we have satisfaction, not how can we have balance. He argues that satisfaction (not to be confused with getting what you want) comes through commitment to your priorities. This leads you to be the very best possible version of yourself. The book gives exercises in how to do so, and is nice and short.

The work-life balance is an issue that has fascinated me for decades. Hence my interest in this book in which Matthew Kelly claims that, in fact, the work-life balance is a "myth" that people must "get beyond" to achieve their personal and professional satisfaction. As he observes in the Introduction, "While the work-life balance discussion was introduced with the very best of intentions - namely, to help people deal with mounting pressures surrounding both personal and professional life in the modern world - in many ways the idea never had a chance because the term itself was fatally flawed." Kelly believes that individual destiny and organizational destiny are "intertwined." Yes, you can consider work life from personal life separately but they cannot be separated. What to do? Kelley wrote this book in response to that question. These are a few of several dozen key points that caught my eye: "I have come to the conclusion that people don't really need or want balance." Rather, they need and want "a satisfying experience of life." (Page x) "The crisis of the modern world is a crisis of ideas. Ideas shape our lives and the world. Thought determines action. It would not be too soon for us to learn that ideas have very real consequences." (19) "If it is to be sustained, our satisfaction has to be something that transcends external circumstances. It cannot be something that we put in the hands of things that are completely beyond our control." (47) "Continuous change is now an accepted part of life and business. The waves of change are constantly crashing on the shore of our lives, but it is a well-defined value structure that allows us to thrive in the midst of the change. It is the unchanging that allows us to make sense of the change." (79) "There are five facets to the process [of increasing the level of personal and professional satisfaction that we experience in our lives]: (1) Assessment, (2) Priorities, (3) Core Habits, (4) Weekly Strategy Session, and (5) Quarterly Review. All of these are interconnected and play either a macro or micro role within the overall process. To neglect one is to tamper with the system, which always leads the system to break down." (107) "The most important part of any system is accountability...I have noticed that most people can do something for a few days, or a few weeks, but over time they tend to slip back into old self-destructive ways. That's why we need doctors, managers, parents, leaders, role models, and mentors." (134) The Personal and Professional Satisfaction System that Kelly explains and strongly recommends - indeed *any* system - can only provide a framework (albeit one that is to some extent self-correcting) and its effectiveness depends almost entirely by the person who adopts it and then applies it. Viewed as a journey, the process of increasing one's level of personal and professional satisfaction is not automatic. Although the ultimate destination is certain, efforts to get there will encounter doubts, distractions, ambiguities, resistance (at least some of it self-generated), and temporary setbacks. The "balance" to which Kelly frequently refers evokes the image of a spinning gyroscope rather than an up-and-down see

saw (or teeter totter) because its steady rotation is maintained amidst changes in location. A sturdy moral "compass" and a well-defined value structure ensure both proper balance and steady progress. Years ago, Stephen Covey observed that people spend too much time on what is urgent and not enough time on what is *important*. I agree and so does Matthew Kelley. "To lay your head on your pillow at night, knowing that who you are and what you do make sense...now, that is satisfaction." We are also well-advised to recall advice from Oscar Wilde: "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken."

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