

# 10

## ways to achieve balance

All entrepreneurs juggle constantly. There is no perfect formula but Grace Marshall's tips can help



ILLUSTRATION BY CHING LI CHEW FOR THE TIMES

As entrepreneurs we juggle being the boss and doing the work, working on the business as well as in it, the big picture versus the day-to-day, generating leads and delivering the goods, creative thinking versus focused execution, proactive versus reactive and, of course, life at work versus life outside work. While there's no perfect formula and balance is always a work in progress here are my top ten tips on creating the right mix

### Spend time in "boss mode"

It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day activity of running a business, but if nobody is in the driving seat, you can end up spinning your wheels, going nowhere fast. Be the boss. Just for yourself, have daily meetings, weekly reviews and quarterly awaydays, where you reconnect with the vision, define the direction and make the decisions that ensure your time working is time well spent.

### Compelling project names

Don't settle for generic project names like "website", "admin" or "marketing". Think positive, desired outcome. What do you actually want to achieve and why does it matter? Make that part of your project name and you'll have a clear and compelling reminder to keep you focused.

### Recharging is fuel

What recharges you? Make it part of your regular routine. When you're at your best, you give your best. What do you need in order to be at your best? Make it happen.

### Know your body clock

When are your energy levels highest? What's the best use of this time? Save your best times of the day for creative, strategic and problem-solving thinking and leave the mundane for when your energy slumps.

### Sharpen your saw

Your success depends not only on what you do, but also your skills, capability and mindset. Set aside time and budget for training, rather than use what's left. Make personal and professional development an integral part of your goal setting.

### Build a team

Work with people who complement (not compliment) you. Build a strong team of employees, suppliers, advisers, mentors, collaborators and peers with like-minded values and different strengths; people who will cover or check your blind spots.

### Switch off your emails

Emails are constant and highly reactive. Switch them off from time to time to give yourself a break. They'll still be there when you get back.

### Do your marketing

Marketing takes time to work.

Relationships take time to develop. Customers take time to know, like and trust you. Be the one who shows up regularly, not just when you're desperate.

### Next actions

Writing a big, generic task on your to-do list like "write book" just invites procrastination. The smaller and more specific the action, the easier it is to do. Ask yourself, what's your next step?

### Don't be a superhero

You can't be all things to all people. You will have to say "no". Better to choose wholeheartedly, than to say "yes" reluctantly and "no" regretfully.

*Grace Marshall is the author of '21 Ways to Manage the Stuff that Sucks Up Your Time', a 'Productivity Ninja' at Think Productive, and blogs at Grace-Marshall.com*

