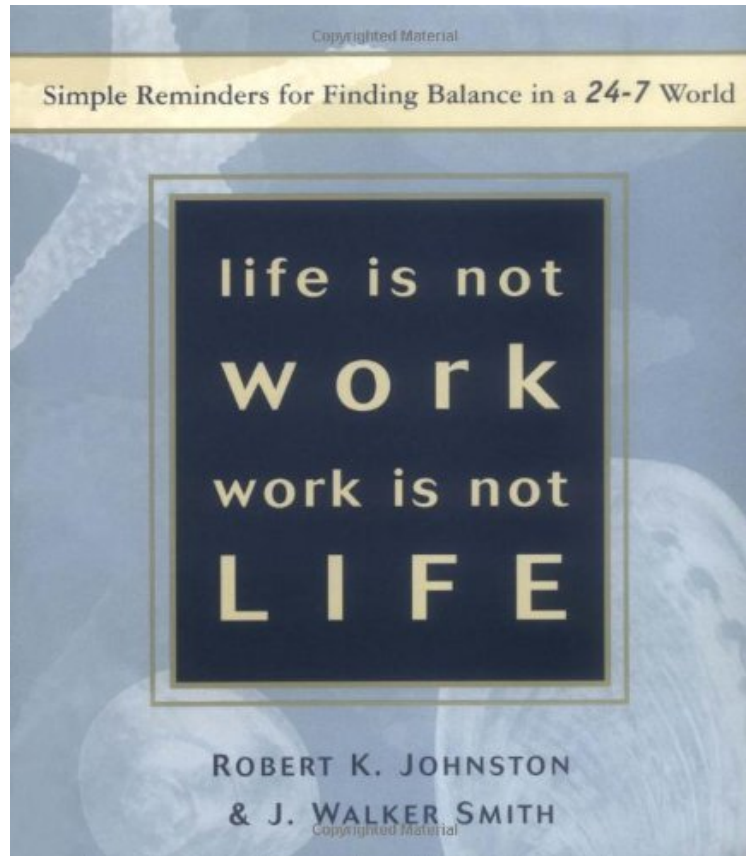


(Mobile book) Life Is Not Work, Work Is Not Life: Simple Reminders for Finding Balance in a 24-7 World

Life Is Not Work, Work Is Not Life: Simple Reminders for Finding Balance in a 24-7 World

Robert K. Johnston, J. Walker Smith
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We live in a rush-rush world filled with a myriad of activities that demand our time and challenge our priorities. More and more people are talking about balance, life-work balance. A theologian and a corporate executive (a nice balance in itself) got together and wrote a little book that may bring you some serenity and perspective.
Life is Not Work is one of those little books you often see next to the cash register in book stores or gift shops. An impulse buy. Except this one is more expensive ... It

offers more than just little quotations, though. The little essays, personal stories, make this book a cross between a quote book and a Chicken Soup for the Soul volume. The authors bring us 137 of these short, easy-to-read essays, organized into twenty categories. Listing the categories will give you a sense of the content you'll discover: Balance, Time, Work, Living, Play, Spirituality, Wholeness, Empowerment, Strength, Joy, Stress, Materialism, Repose, Wonder, Nurture, Happiness, Authenticity, Integrity, Community, and Fulfillment. Have I whetted your appetite? Consider the background and perspective of the authors and slide into your easy chair to think about the balance in your life. Forewords from the authors will help you understand who they are and where they're "coming from." A bibliography completes the book, giving the reader an extra sense of connection to the messages and their sources. This book will rest comfortably, waiting for its next opportunity, next to the bed in our family's guest room. Be my guest. Read this book gently and contemplate your life-work balance.

In no small way, our lives have been defined by work. In order to support our work ethic, we need to refresh ourselves. And, what is even more important, we need to find a balance between work and the rest of life.

Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. 1A RENAISSANCE LIFE Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment. Go some distance away because a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen. —Leonardo da Vinci Such wise advice this is —from Leonardo da Vinci no less, the prodigious polymath of the Italian Renaissance. Painter, sculptor, engineer, astronomer, anatomist, biologist, geologist, physicist, architect, philosopher, humanist. His legacy of work inspires us yet today. Did he ever rest? Well, he certainly believed that balance, too, is a supreme accomplishment, if not the most sublime. This archetypal Renaissance man believed that work suffers, indeed, is inharmonious and out of all proportion, if not tempered by some distance and relaxation. The genius of da Vinci's counsel is not simply that work should be paralleled by life, but rather that without a life, work itself is compromised. BALANCE —JWS 2 WORK AND EGGS I enjoy myself most when I am so at peace that activity is secondary. I also know how difficult it is to develop this as habit. —M. C. Richards The seventeen Trappist monks who live in a monastery at Snowmass, Colorado supported themselves at one time by raising chickens. They also ate eggs, lots of eggs —twenty-seven eggs a week. When researchers came to check their cholesterol, they were shocked to discover that no one had a count of over 130. How was this possible? I have been with several of the monks at conferences. Their life is not simply work. These monks spend hours in centering prayer. Their life has a balance of activity and rest, reflection and prayer, work and play, service and praise. Their spirits have found their center in the Spirit. And so they eat eggs! BALANCE —RKJ 3 A BREATH OF EVERYTHING Truly to sing, that is a different breath. A breath to nothing, a wafting in God. A wind. —Rainer Maria Rilke The central image in the Academy Award-winning film *American Beauty* is a plastic bag being suspended in the air by the wind, which is captured on video by a teenage boy named Ricky. The image is meant to be a parable for the Spirit that energizes and enriches all of life. For just as the Hebrew word רוח means both "wind" and "spirit," so Ricky finds in the prolonged flight of the bag a beauty that is deeply spiritual. He tells his girlfriend Jane that he now realizes there is an entire life behind things. And he believes that this benevolent force wants him to know there is no reason to be afraid. As in this movie, where Jane's parents let their obsessions with marketing and real estate deafen them to life's real singing, we, too, often fail to recognize the Spirit at work in us. The plastic bag suggests a different breath, a breath for nothing and yet for everything. BALANCE —RKJ 4 WORK, TENNIS, AND FAMILY Inner happiness, external play, objective vocational success, mature inner defenses, good outward marriage, all correlate highly —not perfectly, but at least as powerfully as height correlates with weight. —George Vaillant Several hundred Harvard graduates were studied by Vaillant over a forty-year period in an attempt to understand "the kind of people who do well and are well." His conclusion: being a good businessman (there were no women at Harvard at the time) goes hand in hand with being a good tennis player and husband. Contrary to common mythology, the very men who enjoyed the best marriages and the richest friendships tended also to become the company presidents. BALANCE —RKJ 5 SLEEP IN With people now waking up to the fact that widespread sleep deprivation is a major threat to our public health and productivity, the ability to get adequate rest has become a new denominator of luxury, status, and privilege. When was the last time you slept to your heart's content? What would you give for the time off to sleep in? The fresh face of a good night's rest is today's look of success. Eight hours of sleep are harder to come by than a luxury car or a big house. What is it that we think we get more of by sleeping less? Work to the point of exhaustion makes us prone to mistakes as well as less productive. We've become like the Red Queen in *Wonderland* who tells Alice she is running as fast as she can just to stay in place. Instead, as writer Edward Helmore suggests, we should emulate someone like Albert Einstein who needed ten hours of sleep a night while he was working out the revolutionary concepts of quantum physics and space/time relativity. BALANCE —JWS