

Joyce A. Generali



Don't Fret about Career and Personal Life Balance—There Is No Such Thing

As you meet Joyce it is immediately obvious she is a gregarious extrovert who has a great sense of humor, and with little prompting she will tell you a joke, many on herself. It is thus easy to imagine her early experience as a bus tour guide telling jokes to keep her charges engaged. Joyce has a serious side as she is an expert and proficient drug information specialist. She put together all the Black Box warnings and published them thus alerting and enabling practitioners to protect patients. Joyce brings a number of years of experience in conducting drug information centers and teaching as a pharmacy faculty while raising a family.

Joyce holds a bachelor of science in pharmacy from the University of Connecticut, School of Pharmacy and a master of science degree from The University of Kansas, School of Pharmacy. She completed residencies at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals and Kansas University Medical Center. Joyce is currently Director, Synthesized Referential Content, Facts and Comparisons and Professor Emeritus, Kansas University School of Pharmacy.

In her letter, she gives the following advice: *Saying goodbye to “perfect” and hello to “it’s done” and learning the difference between the two is a key to being comfortable with the decisions you make on how to spend your time.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

Don't fret so much about *balance*. The eternal quest, or should I say struggle, for the how to live a productive personal AND work life is a question for the ages. There is no balance. Sometimes it is 60/40; sometimes it is 80/20. Sometimes, it feels fine to be 30/70, and other times you feel totally out of whack at 55/45. Here's why. Balance is an imperfect concept. It is a static term, a snapshot of time attempting to define a dynamic process. It is a moving target. Each day it feels different. A set of changing probabilities and possibilities that looks one way before your morning cup of coffee and another way on the way driving home from work. Balance is a myth that we all chase, something just out of reach, right around the corner. If we just stretched a little harder, we would have it. Right?

Stop chasing the shadow and look up to see what is really in front of you. Imbalance only rears its head when we feel out of control. At its core, the yearning for balance is really about our expectations and the strong desire to do all things well. Not having balance is just another way to describe that we are stressed.

I never expected balance in my residency programs. I knew what I signed up for. But once I was in the work world on my own, I did expect some sort of settling down. And it never happened. For me, it was raising a family while working full time without family close by. For you, it might be a different set of expectations for the lines between your professional and personal world. It might be growing personal responsibilities: caring for elderly parents, merging schedules with a spouse, or finding enough time to train for a marathon during a particularly busy time at work. Handling stress and making thoughtful decisions about priorities in both life and work are the keystones to being and feeling productive.

I remember an important decision point in my career, one which forced me to reprioritize my goals in a more responsible and accountable way, and ultimately reduce the imbalance or stress that I was feeling. I was about 10 years into a solid career and was working full time, married to a partner with a very busy career, and had two