

"THE INTEGRATION OF PERSONAL AND WORK LIFE FOR ACHIEVING HUMAN POTENTIAL IS A KEY GOAL FOR THE LIVES OF ALL OF US."

# INTEGRATING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY GORDON L.  
LIPPITT

Charles, once an industrial training director, is now farming in Vermont.

Anne, an executive turned mother, counsels women on new careers.

Judy, a Ph.D. political science graduate, is purposely unemployed to be a volunteer anti-nuclear activist.

Ralph, a former banker, is running a senior citizens center.

Mike, a computer specialist, now is a stock broker in Chicago.

Warren and Sue, a young married couple, both biologists, fill one job on a shared basis at a community college in Michigan.

Bob, a former government executive, imports Swedish furniture.

Finding a job and career that fulfills one's interest as these career people have discovered takes an understanding of oneself, opportunities in the 1980s, and what is meaningful to that individual. The dilemma of integrating and balancing one's personal and

social life with one's professional and work life is an increasing dilemma in modern society. Such a dilemma brings increased stress and strain to the lives of millions of people. These stresses and strains are part and parcel of the so-called "third wave"<sup>1</sup> or what is sometimes called the post-industrial society.<sup>2</sup>

In such a world we are aware of the problems of inflation, shortage of energy, slowdown in the economic expansion, increased competition, lessening of the resources available to people and organizations, the shrinking labor supply, increased value placed on quality of life, lessening of productivity, increased interdependence of the different regions and countries of the world, and other trends that make the next decade confusing, challenging, and stressful. Such an evolving civilization of mixed values creates a challenge for each individual to make sense of both their personal and professional lives.

It is my thesis that the most effective way to cope with these changing times is to develop a balance between one's work and

social identity.

Work Identity + Social Identity = Self Integration (quality of life).

The importance of such integration is not a new thought. Sigmund Freud was once asked what he thought a normal person should be able to do well. Undoubtedly the questioner expected some complicated profound answer. Freud simply stated, "Lieben und arbeiten" (to love and to work).

This simplistic answer becomes more profound the more one contemplates these two realities in the life of an individual today. Ancient prophets, philosophers, writers, and belatedly, the behavioral scientist, have postulated ways of looking at life cycles and human potential. While the scientific study of the entire life span is a relatively new phenomenon, we can find in the Talmud, the great book of early Jewish law, some of the earliest life scenarios. In its presentation of 14 stages the early years emphasize the religious and social obligations of the person, while the later years stress the biological characteristics. Confucius, in the sixth cen-

ture B.C., emphasized the psychological development and as such is much closer to those contemporary theories that stress changes in one's physiological task, development of one's personality, and shift in private goals in maturation.

Shakespeare's seven ages described in *As You Like It* are quite similar to the contemporary common concept of infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, old age and senility. There is also the poetic vision held about the nature of the human life cycle as the analogy between the seasons of the year and the stages of life.

In contemporary life and career-cycle thinking we are indebted to the work of Carl Jung's theory of adult-development psychology. He believed that development of the human potential continued as long as life itself. He devised a person's life cycle into two stages. In the first, the individual attempts to come to terms with the outer world, and his/her ego, the part of the personality that deals with external reality. The most important part of this phase of one's life is to divest the last remnants of childishness by finding lasting solutions to early childhood conflicts lingering in most adults even when adolescence is over. The second half of life is seen by Jung as being devoted to a process of inner growth and development which he called "individuation." The aim of this process is self-realization — a goal that can be approached but may never be fully realized. In this phase of adulthood, a person's task is to discover one's real self and to strive for the unification of ideas and outlook.

Since this contribution we have seen in the 20th century the influential work on life cycles by the psycho-analyst Erik Erikson<sup>3</sup> who develops eight stages of identity of the person moving toward the sense of integrity in mature adulthood. Such a state is based on a person's developing sense of identity by being committed to a cause, a person, an organization, and helping create the next generation providing continuity of life. Since this pioneering work by Dr. Erikson



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such investigators as Bernice Neugartan, a social psychologist at the University of Chicago; Daniel Levinson, a social psychologist at Yale; Roger L. Gould, a psychiatrist at UCLA; and Gail Sheehy, the author of the best selling book *Passages*, have made contributions to understanding the adult components of a life structure. While we can understand these models of adult life stages, it appears paramount for us to realize the importance of integrating our personal growth and professional growth to be able to cope with the trends impacting on our ability to achieve human potential.

### The Workaholic

We are all acquainted with the term "workaholic." Some of us reading or writing this article may be in this classification. I know many such persons.

Ralph is a workaholic. He is 37 years of age and known around his office as an up-and-coming manager. He is seen as hard working, aggressive, knowledgeable about the bureaucracy of which he is a part, and is seen as a role model for a successful, upward mobile, young manager in the company where he is employed. When I look at his life, however, I see him involved in a destructive and competitive environment where he is constantly maneuvering to outwit his peers in his climb to the top.

Ralph even told me about a situation where he was able to "get" one of his co-workers by showing him up and later having him transferred. He does not leave work until late at night, often exhausted, and falls asleep in his living room watching the 11 o'clock news. Ralph was recently divorced and has very minimal social life. His life revolves around his job. He is bothered by high blood pressure and chronic asthma.

Such a picture of a workaholic is not unusual. This is an example of a person whose life energy is so consumed by work that life is out of balance. Social and personal life are practically non-existent and compulsive when it is evidenced.

### The Self-Indulgent

At the other end of the continuum of the unbalanced life, is the

self-indulgent. This person puts most of their life, time, and energy into their own social life frequently accompanied by a feeling of unease, dissatisfaction, and emptiness.

Charles is such a person. He lives in a house by the ocean with an outdoor swimming pool. He is an active volleyball player, frisbee thrower, tennis player, and owns a backpack, hiking and running shoes. He also owns a Mercedes 240 diesel and a home burglary system. He is single but has a very active social life with almost nightly visits to the local disco. He works as a technical specialist for a computer firm and spends considerable time on the road. He sees his job as a tolerable necessity to maintain his social life. Charles has few relationships within his community and is not active in any volunteer church, civic or citizen group. He suffers from insomnia, verges on alcoholism, and is bothered by ulcers.

This is not a characterization, but a real person. He may be a part of the so-called "me generation" that has received so much attention in the '70s. The literature has been filled with the stories of the middle class, young, and the new-found adolescents in their 50s who become "swingers" in the free lifestyle of the '70s. Many of these people that I have talked and met with seem desperately trying to become happy. The search leaves them unsatisfied, restless, and unfocused in their lives.

### Influence of Life Events

The ability of a person to fulfill the potential for balancing social, personal and professional work life is, of course, influenced by early events in one's life. One must give credence to the importance of the inherited health factors that will determine, to some extent, physical well being. As we now know, we also inherit our intelligence and certain aptitudes that influence our abilities, capabilities, and direction. One is also influenced in early life by parental love, authority, trust, hate and experiences. Whether one is a member of a large or small family has been found to be sociologically important. Whether one is the oldest or the youngest sibling has also been found to be a relevant factor in the

maturation process. One cannot neglect the importance of socioeconomic status of the family as another key part of one's "growing up" process.

Research has also indicated the importance of the early work experience as a significant factor in attitudes toward work and the balance between self and work. One's first part-time job in adolescence can make an important and long-term effect on one's attitudes. That first boss and his/her behavior in your

first full-time job makes a key contribution to one's attitudes toward authority and bureaucracy.

We are also aware of the fact that the culture in which we live creates norms and expectations relative to behavior of people. Such norms are reflected in dress, work habits and expectations in an achieving society typified by the advanced industrial culture. When we look at the culture we must also recognize the importance of the anxiety and stress that's created in

both one's personal life as well as the larger society of which one is a part. A war economy or the tension in the East-West confrontation does effect both the larger or smaller organizational systems as well as each individual.

It has been pointed out that some of the key factors that influence the ability of a person to be responsive to opportunities for growth are some situational skills as follows:

- *Mobility readiness* — ability and willingness to make a geographical move rather than always staying in the same place of either one's birth and family or first job placement.

- *Anticipate chance* — an ability and desire on the part of a person to make out of a chance encounter an opportunity, or event and significant improvement of one's own balance of job and life.

- *Life/career planning* — the ability to project into the future your own life and career so that you have goals and targets to which your life is directed.

- *Visibility opportunities* — providing opportunities for yourself to be visible by being active in citizen affairs, professional activities, a key position in volunteer or professional organizations, and other situations where one is visible to others which provide opportunities for growth of self, job and promotion.

- *Flexibility* — the desire and ability to be able to adapt and adjust to changing situations and differing work patterns so one is not tied to a particular skill, geographical location, or type of organization.

- *A survivor* — a person who has resiliency and is not "thrown" by crisis, defeats or failures.

- *Beliefs/values* — a person who has a value system that extends beyond opportunism, self-center focus, and living only for the moment.

### Achieving Balance

In Figure 1 you will find the author's concept of achieving balance in the quality of personal social life and the quality of work life by developing that self-integration which is the essence of maturity.

Some of the characteristics of a quality of personal/social life would include the following:

1. Security of one's psychologi-

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cal, physical and economic self.

2. Relatedness with other persons who provide support in one's life.

3. Fun and adventure to make life a zestful experience.

4. Multiple role integration of one's function as a citizen, worker, companion, parent, and other roles.

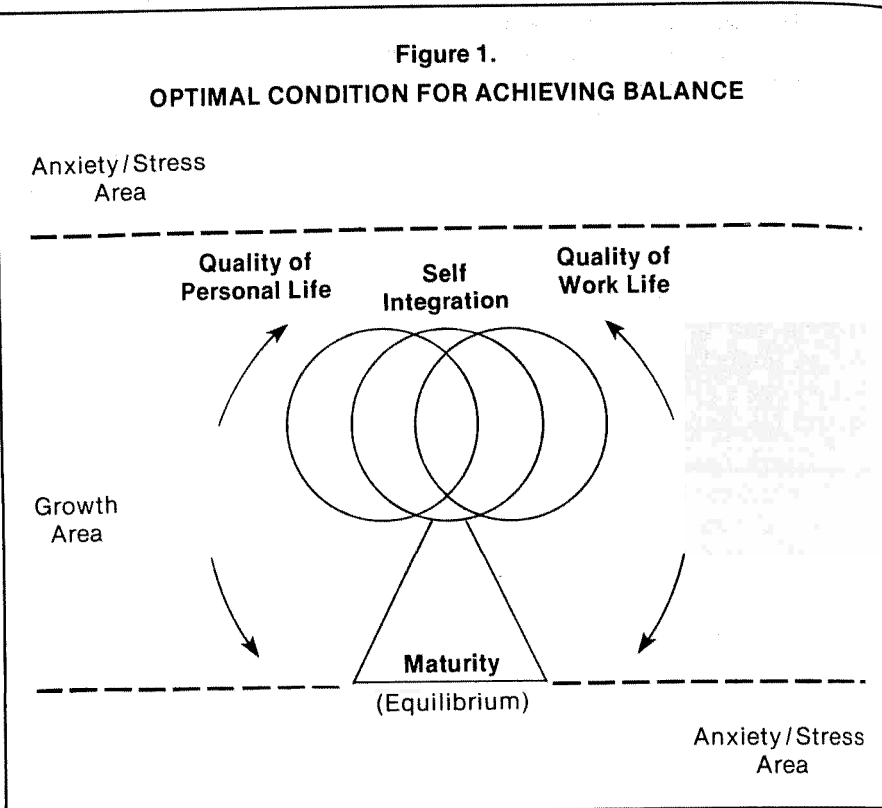
5. Peak experience opportunities which gives one the thrill of a lifelong memory.

6. Flexibility and change so that one does not get bored with the tedium of life.

7. Values clarification opportunities so one can think and reflect about one's life in a more meaningful way and making a lasting contribution.

We can now identify some of the key factors in Quality of Work Life that research and experience is presenting to us that make work a challenging experience.<sup>4</sup> They include the following:

- Job satisfaction
- Opportunity to influence the work situation
- Support from one's organization for growth and development
- The person and organizational fit so that there is an interrelationship between your skills and competency and the organization with which one works



• Meaningful responsibility to do work that has significance to yourself

- Support of your peers in a meaningful, "psychological" contract with others
- Support of one's supervisor
- Potential for growth opportunities both in terms of learning and promotion

• Work justice so that one is treated fairly in terms of pay, rewards and opportunity

- Multiple career opportunities so that one can have a variety in one's interests, capabilities and opportunities
- Challenging work that utilizes one's resources.

This partial list of quality of work life is intended to be suggestive of the key elements but not exhaustive.

These two areas of life — work and personal life — merge together to build self-integrity. In the context of self-integrity, I would like to include such items as:

- Strength of one's ego
- Clear life goals
- Effective stress management
- Acceptance of life cycle
- Reality acceptance of one's own limitation
- The contribution of others
- Generativity to contribute to the next generation
- Trust in oneself and others in the world
- Spirituality to believe in something that goes beyond self.

Such integration and pulling together for effective balance in one's life is the challenge before all of us. I have always liked a reflec-

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tion written by Bradford Shank which goes as follows:

#### MISSION

The basic need of my existence  
Is for re-integration with the whole.  
But this reunion is not a going-back  
Not the return of a prodigal son  
Not even the completion of a cycle  
But one turn of a majestic spiral  
Whose gain in height  
Represents the emergence  
Of new and finer structural patterns.

I have been individualized  
To explore and invent  
To combine, permute, polymerize  
To abstract and to integrate  
To create and transmit  
And to bring my creation home.

My need expresses itself  
In the unending complexities of behavior  
According to the degree of my development  
And the details of influence  
Exerted by my cultural environment.

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#### Six Areas of Human Potential

The achievement of the balance between one's personal and professional growth and life should actively contribute to six areas of human potential.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Achieving physical potential*  
The physical potential is one's own awareness of one's self as a physical being. Our body is the physical form that contains our human energy which makes it possible for us to be vigorous and develop ourselves to the fullest.

2. *Achieving emotional potential*  
The emotional potential of each person is achieved when one becomes aware that we have emotions that can be experienced and enjoyed. To be human is to experience a range of emotions from immobilizing anxiety to liberating ecstasy. Each person should be able to express their emotions fully, humanely and spontaneously.

3. *Achieving socialization potential*

This potential involves one's overall awareness of oneself as a social being that is developed in interaction with others. In such a context we develop the caring community in which we care about

others. Another example from *Fragments* indicates this concept.

Nothing in the world  
Is yours to keep.  
You may have  
But not hold.  
In the end you receive  
Only that which you  
Have given.

4. *Optimizing one's intellectual potential*

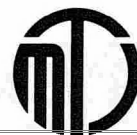
In this potential a person becomes aware of one's own mind. Through the use of one's mind we can make of life a knowledgeable experience where logic, imagination, information and the sensors of the mind are utilized. Such intellectual potential means that the person is engaged in a life-long learning adventure.

5. *Optimizing the aesthetic potential*

In the aesthetic experience of one's life there is a recognition that we are part of the total universe and find beauty in a person, nature, a living thing, an inani-

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mate object, a process, a product and the expression by these inanimate and living objects. Such appreciation for the sensuous value of beauty is a necessary part of both work and personal life. The integration I'm talking about is a performing art in which one utilizes all of one's senses to balance one's personal and work life.

### 6. *Achieving spiritual potential*

In this context we are rising above a level of the senses into an awareness of one's self as a holistic part of a larger meaning or pattern of life. Spirituality brings us into a feeling of awe about the realization of being interconnected with all that is in the process of becoming. It is a recognition of the ultimate questions of birth, life and death. It is a reverence for life and a belief in the celebration of meaning that goes beyond what we now know.

These six areas of human potential can be achieved if the balance between individual life and work life are meaningfully integrated.

### Steps for Achieving Personal and Career Integration

In closing, I'd like to suggest five steps that can be taken by each of us to continue the process of achieving the self-integration necessary for the balance that I have discussed.<sup>6</sup>

**Step 1: *Take Charge of Your Own Life.*** It's the responsibility of each of us to take any steps possible to increase our self-insight, to plan our own future, to assess our career and professional growth, and to focus in on the targets and goals that you may desire to achieve.

**Step 2: *Engage in mind, body and spirit stretching.*** In this step one should recognize the importance of having new experiences for one's mind, body and spirit. Branch out into a multidisciplinary approach in one's learning and living. Develop new linkages with people, organizations and activities that develop new insights and experiences. This takes an experimental attitude which will involve risk.

**Step 3: *Inventory your life.*** Each of us need to periodically and on a regular basis inventory our capabilities, our desires, and our re-

sources. In this process we will want to review the constraints on our lives as well as the successes we have achieved.

**Step 4: Develop an action plan.** In any career and personal growth integration each of us needs to develop an action plan which will involve setting targets, re-examining our career fit and examining our life style to determine if it is meaningful and contributing to one's potential. In this action plan one should review past learning experiences and re-examine life-long learning plans for personal additional adult education, challenges, opportunities and experiences.

**Step 5: Plan for support, review and evaluation.** The process of growth and maturation is difficult. We will need, each of us, to identify and cherish the support of significant others in our life . . . those friends and colleagues who can give us feedback on our behavior, competencies and limitations. We will need to build in evaluation of our new directions to assess their meaningfulness and satisfaction. I also commend to each of you building into one's life periodic celebrations of achievements and successes that occur to reinforce the meaningfulness of life.

### In Summary

The integration of personal and work life for achieving human potential is a key goal for all of us. I have found a poem that explains this potential integration as well as anything I have read. It illustrates the idea that a workplace can be a place where human potential is achieved.

### "WHERE CAN I GO?"

*If this is not a place where  
tears are understood,  
Where do I go to cry?*

*If this is not a place where  
my spirits can take wing,  
Where do I go to fly?*

*If this is not a place where  
my questions can be asked,  
Where do I go to seek?*

*If this is not a place where  
my feelings can be heard,  
Where do I go to speak?*

*If this is not a place where  
you'll accept me as I am,  
Where can I go to be?*

*If this is not a place  
I can try, and learn, and grow,  
Where can I just be me?*

*If this is not a place where  
tears are understood,  
Where can I go to cry?*

—Bill Crockett, Closing Session, San Diego.  
(Poem by Ken Medina, modified by Bill Crockett.)

The 1980s and the post-industrial society bring challenges to the lives of individuals and all organizational systems in the world. The challenge will be to integrate them and build the kind of integrity of people, organizations, communities and countries that place life in perspective as something sacred, valued and filled with potential.

*This article was adapted from Gordon Lippitt's keynote address presented at the 1980 ASTD National Conference in Anaheim, CA.*

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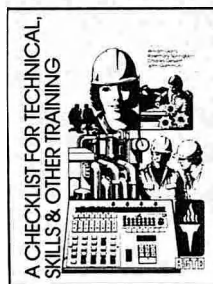
Gordon L. Lippitt is professor in the School of Government and Business Administration at The George Washington University. He also serves as board chairman of Organizational Renewal Inc. and the International Consultants Foundation. Dr. Lippitt is president of Project Associates, Inc., and a diplomat of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He is an internationally known consultant, teacher, writer, speaker and researcher, and has published over 300 articles and books.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE ALLOW 4-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ASTD MEMBER # \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_