

North Carolina Dental GAZETTE

The Heart of Dentistry

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North Carolina Dental Society
1600 Evans Road
Cary, NC 27513

**100 Years of Dental
Public Health**

**2018 NCDS Annual
Session Recap**

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Counterbalancing Work/Life Stresses

In a recent survey by the North Carolina Dental Society (NCDS), the #1 concern facing dental professionals right now is Work/Life Balance. However, the reality is that NCDS members are not alone.

The stress to find balance is the greatest concern for all professionals, stay at home moms, students, and others. According to the American Psychological Association, chronic stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has declared stress a hazard of the workplace.

I saw firsthand what the stress and pressure of running a dental practice had on my dad. Shortly after a dinner with my parents at UNC Chapel Hill during my senior year of college, I received a call from my mom that would change my life forever. My dad had collapsed from a massive heart attack and died in my childhood home in High Point.

In the midst of the grief and devastation, my dad's words from dinner that evening kept running through my mind; "Audie, I can't handle the stress. I just can't handle it." He wanted less stress. He wanted something different.

Sadly, when dentists and other professionals want to address work stress and 'to turn the ship around,' it can feel like turning the Titanic. They do not know where to begin.

I will give you a place to start; ask yourself, "is my life *really* working at the level that I want right now?"

Let's consider the elusive goal of Work/Life Balance that everyone is chasing after.

Now, take a moment and do a little exercise. Please stand up and balance on one foot.

What are you actually doing? Are you "balanced?"

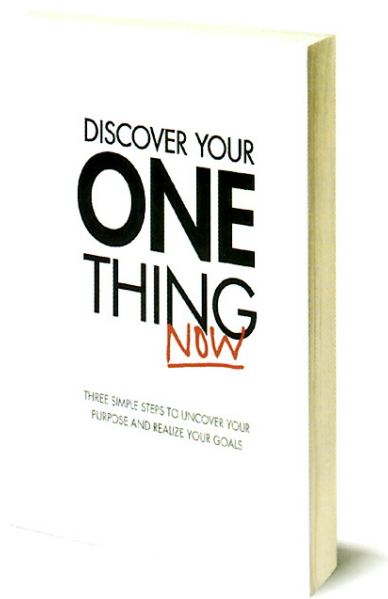
Or are you "*balancing*?"

You'll notice that the muscles in your leg, ankle and foot are actually straining and adjusting because you are actually in an act of balancing. A better description would be that you are "counterbalancing," meaning that your muscles are firing on and off to keep you from falling. The point is, the Work/Life Balance sounds like an endpoint when in fact, it's a process.

So let's get started to help you get *Work/Life Counterbalance!*

Here's part of the simple process when we work together:

1. Make a list of everything you want, e.g. work 30 hours/week, travel overseas, take four weeks vacation every year, a deeper connection with your spouse/kids, sell your practice, attract new patients, find/train qualified committed team members, reduce financial worries, solve a specific personal or professional problem, or do something that lights you up!
2. Prioritize the list, e.g. 1-create a deeper connection with my spouse, 2-find/create a committed team, 3-sell my practice, 4-travel overseas, etc.
3. Describe the reason behind your #1 priority, e.g. right now my spouse and I are ships passing in the night. If it continues I fear an affair, separation, or a divorce which would devastate our family. I want to fight for my spouse's highest possible good to connect and develop true intimacy with her/him!
4. Plan and execute the next step that you can take right now toward your goal, e.g. send my spouse a small gift along with an invitation to a special dinner date.
5. Keep up your momentum! Pick one thing and do it for 66 times to make it a habit that will reinforce your commitment to what you want from Step 2 such as:



weekly 1:1 date with your spouse, 1:1 date with your children, read, practice gratitude, meditate, exercise, breathe, get out in nature, do what personally lights you up, professional growth activity, etc. For example, you might pick exercising which could help you to feel better and be more attractive to your spouse.

In the bestselling book *The ONE Thing*, authors Gary Keller and Jay Papasan point to Australian researchers Megan Oaten and Ken Cheng who found “a kind of halo effect around habit creation. In their studies, students who successfully acquired one positive habit reported less stress; less impulsive spending; better dietary habits; decrease alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine consumption; fewer hours watching TV; and even fewer dirty dishes.” They said if you sustain the discipline long enough on one habit, not only does it become easier, but so do other things as well. The point here is doing the most important thing first regularly makes everything else easier.

I wish my dad would have known this process, because I believe he would have been here enjoying my beautiful daughters today.

Audie Cashion: Speaker, Business Coach and Certified ONE Thing Trainer

Want the next critical step to optimize your Work/Life Counterbalance? Get your free 15 minute Breakthrough Session to bring clarity around your next step when you schedule with me <https://calendly.com/audie/15min>.



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