

## Ten Commandments to Work- Life Harmony

**Linda J. M. Holloway\***

*Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Psychology and Counseling, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Alabama, USA*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Linda J. M. Holloway, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Psychology and Counseling, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Alabama, USA.

**Received:** February 09, 2017; **Published:** February 15, 2017

We live in a society with a tremendous pressure to perform daily; both on and off the job. Many feel like they have to perform at full capacity in all areas of their lives, which leads to living very stressful lives. This negative stress can lead to poor physical health, as well as mental health issues. Scores suffer from cardiovascular illness, high blood pressure, and varying degrees of mental health issues such as, generalized anxiety and depression.

We live in a culture that has witness significant progress in technology and we enjoy the fruits of less labor with gadgets designed to make our lives more efficient. Technological success cuts like a double edged sword in the work environment, and due to greater efficiency, employers have increased workload expectations. People are forced to work longer hours in their attempt to keep up. The days of a forty hour work week are gone; thus, leaving very little time, if any for family, friends and fun. Additionally, technology does allow for both the employer and employee to be connected twenty- four hours a day through the use of smart phones, voicemails, and e-mails. Due to this fact, there is not a clear debarcation between personal and professional life any more. Plus, most employees have a strong desire to perform at their maximum and are often told to get the job done at all costs. It does not help that we live in an economy where many people are losing their jobs. This too keeps many people on edge wondering, "Am I next?" Therefore many people tend to go beyond what is expected of them even at the expense of their own health. Work- life balance brings to mind the need to have some degree of equilibrium in one's life and the ability to juggle several things at the same time and at the same pace.

So, what I wanted to do was spend some time talking about work- life harmony. The word harmony, on the one hand, suggests consistency, order, and flow in one's life. This article is very personal for me since I have been in academia for over 23 years, while simultaneously maintaining a career in the United States Army Reserve for over 27 years, and serving in combat on four separate occasions. It was extremely difficult and almost impossible at the time to manage and maintain work- life harmony. I cannot count the times I felt like giving up, throwing in the towel or simply feeling like there were not enough hours in the day.

I grew up on a farm so getting up early in the morning is natural for me. Working hard long-hours was something drilled into me early in life. I was exceptionally proud of this and personally wore it as a badge of honor; however, I came to realize that there is more to life than just working long hard hours. I literally told myself one hot summer day that you are not "living life but life is living you". That is when I begin to establish some ground rules to simplify my life. I developed my own personal ten rules of "Thy Shall" Commandments of work life harmony. These are what I would like to share with you. I hope you find them as beneficial for your life as they have been for mine.

1. **Thy Shall Know Your Life Purpose-** Everybody was created for a purpose. So seek to find your purpose in life. It is that thing you are most passionate about and that you willingly pursue with all your heart, mind, and soul.
2. **Thy Shall Plan-** It is important that you develop a master plan. It is from this master plan that you will develop a monthly, weekly and daily plan of activities you would like to accomplish. It's always a good idea to break down your overall plan into digestible bite- size manageable tasks. As the old adage goes "those who fail to plan can plan to fail".
3. **Thy Shall Prioritize-** Once you have established your plan, it is extremely important to prioritize your to do list because we spend

a great deal of time on things that are least important versus those things that are most important. So the overall goal is to complete the mission essential tasks first. Just as you create a "To do list", it is just as important to create an "I will not do list." These are those things that can easily sidetrack you and get you off course. For example, spending too much time trying to answer every e-mail and returning each phone call. Learning to distinguish between what is urgent and important pays big dividends.

4. **Thy Shall Organize-** Organizing your life is over half of the battle. When you are organized, it cuts down on spending five dollars of valuable time on penniless tasks. Being organized also helps you gain time you didn't think you had. This is because you are no longer spending vast amounts of time on tasks which would have otherwise consumed you.
5. **Thy Shall Set Parameters.** - Creating concrete boundaries in your life is an added benefit. It allows you to avoid the spillover effect in your life. For example, if you have made plans to spend time with your family or friends then do that, do not commit to work late on a last minute project.
6. **Thy Shall Unplug** -We live in a gadget oriented society where everyone feels the need to be connected; however, there are times when you need to unplug for your own sanity and take some time away to have some personal space to declutter your mind of day to day activities.
7. **Thy Shall Learn To Say "NO"** - It is okay to say no and not feel like you have let others down. It is difficult to live a life of harmony always saying yes to every opportunity that comes your way. Please know you simply cannot be all things to all people. Keep in mind, you are not saying no to the person, but you are simply saying no I am not available to take on any more obligations at this time in my life. What this does is put you in the driver's seat to saying yes to your own life's harmony.
8. **Thy Shall Take Small Breaks-** It is a good idea throughout the day for you to take small breaks. This practice allows you to clear your mind and gain clarity on project(s) you are currently working on. You can listen to music, meditate, take a five to fifteen minute nap or simply take a short brisk walk. A change of scenery is always helpful.
9. **Thy Shall Take Care of Self.** Create your own personal workout plan. You will discover how extremely beneficial and rewarding this is to your mental and emotional health. Exercise aids in the reduction of your stress level, clarity of your thought processes and it gives you more energy to accomplish those things in life you desire. Prior to developing your workout plan, please be sure to consult with your family physician.
10. **Thy Shall Celebrate You** – It's okay to reward oneself. Yes, do not wait on others to reward you for your accomplishments. Get in the habit of learning to celebrate you each time you accomplish a goal. We are quick to celebrate others, but we often do not see ourselves as worthy of a celebration; consequently, we become upset with others when they do not celebrate us. Please keep in mind not everyone in your fan club is going to celebrate you for your accomplishments. Oftentimes, they are not even on board with your plan in the first place. So get in the habit of celebrating you!

The ten commandments of "Thy Shall" for work- life harmony are by no means all-inclusive or a one size fits all. In the hectic world of work and family it is extremely important that we maintain a healthy work- life harmony in order to maintain our own sanity. Do take care of your life and you will see that it will take care of you.

**Volume 2 Issue 4 February 2017**

**© All rights reserved by Linda J. M. Holloway.**