

# Perfect balance

Laura Horton shares her techniques and explains how to achieve the life you deserve by gaining that all-important equilibrium between work life and home life



Forward planning is crucial for gaining that all-important balance

I love the quote from Gandhi: 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.' However, I find that dental professionals are good at the learning part but tend to forget about the living. As a business owner, achieving a good work-life balance can be one of the most challenging aspects to deal with.

As we all have differing needs, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to it, so there is no set format that we can all follow to achieve a perfect equilibrium between work and life. Equally, it is something that requires regular reassessment as our lives shift and change with time. The balance you achieve as a single 26-year-old will not be the same for the parent you may become in your mid-30s! So how do we go about the 'living' while not allowing the 'learning' to take a back seat?



Laura Horton

Laura has worked in dentistry for 21 years, and has an unrivalled passion and enthusiasm for treatment coordination, business and team development. In 2008, Laura left her full-time practice management role. Ever since, she has been working with dental practices to help them reach their potential. Laura is a master at communicating with patients and provides training to dentists.

## Wheel of life

The wheel of life is a great tool that provides a visual representation of what areas might need a little more focus in your life. It covers health, money, career, personal development, home life, family/friends, social life, love etc.

While many people may be successful in terms of their business, they may find that career, money, and personal growth rate highly while health and home life may not. This simple exercise can help to ground us, allowing us to spread our attentions in a more balanced manner, helping us to achieve a higher level of happiness and contentment.

I like to use this technique myself to help me to find the areas in my life that may be off balance so that I can focus my attentions where they are required. While it allows me to assess where I really am and where I want to be, it also helps me to understand that something will have to give from time to time. For me, my social life takes the impact as my family and my work need my time. I am sure (I hope!) one day that will change but for now I don't mind saying that actually you can't have it all.

There are some free online tools that will help you create your own wheel of life in a matter of seconds, for instance, check out [wheeloflife.noomii.com](http://wheeloflife.noomii.com).

## Work it out together

If you have a husband, wife or partner then it is important to discuss what will work out best for your relationship and your family.

Decide together how many weekends can be spent at educational events each year, plan these into your diary and don't sway from this decision later on.

How many breaks would you like each year? These may be holidays away or just time off work to spend at home doing the school run and catching up on appointments. This can be just as refreshing and important as trips away! Whatever you decide, make sure it is a joint discussion with an outcome that benefits your entire family.

For myself and my husband, the one-to-one time with our son, Harry, is as important as family time; we spend our weekends enjoying him alone and as a family unit. This means that I can have my own time to go to the gym and Glyn gets to play golf.

I have Fridays off to be with Harry, which is important to me, but I have allowed three Fridays this year for work – I only have one more to do at a wonderful event that I am really looking forward to.

## The two-week break

I'm a huge fan of the two-week break. I have now been having a two-week break twice a year for three years and I am reaping the benefits both physically and mentally. If you can't recall when you last took two weeks off work, or if the idea seems completely out of reach for you, then it's probably time to reassess your work-life balance.

So, how do I do it? By the end of June 2017, I had planned my diary until January 2019. I had planned 2019 by June 2018 and I am planning 2020 as I write. How far

ahead have you planned your diary?

It might sound crazy – and you don't need to organise your holiday destinations just yet – but forward planning is crucial for gaining that all-important balance and ensuring you get those well-earned breaks that you truly deserve.

Getting the time blocked out in your diary well in advance means your team can plan for your absence to ensure everything runs smoothly, and you won't have to cancel on patients in order to fit something in at short notice.

If you have not planned your holiday for the remainder of 2019 and into 2020, then I highly recommend that you take a look at your diary and work it out now.

## Make it work for you

Many people believe that achieving a happy work-life balance just isn't attainable, meaning they continue to put in too much time at the office, usually until they burn out. Putting yourself under so much pressure in this way can mean you become a block in your own business. In fact, part of creating a great work-life balance is about being able to understand when you have the opportunity to move forward with projects and when you just need to put the brakes on.

At Horton Consulting, Michael and I constantly remind business owners that the beauty of owning a business is that it needs to work for your life and we truly believe that. Take the time to re-evaluate where you are and redesign the business to meet your own needs. This will allow you to achieve the life you deserve – if you need our help then we are here for you. [OH](#)