

# HOW TO INTEGRATE WORK & LIFE

**“WORK IS PART OF LIFE. LIFE SHOULD BE PART OF WORK, IN THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BRING OUR WHOLE SELVES TO WORK – OR MORE OF OURSELVES, AT LEAST,” SAYS AUTHOR TRACY BROWER, PH.D.**

## WE CAN HAVE IT ALL.

But it's not about work-life balance. It's about work-life integration. If we believe we have to make trade-offs, we take different steps at work and in life. But if our perspective changes to having it all, we can bring work and life more closely together.

As we all know, navigating work and life isn't always easy. Here's what Brower thinks you should do in three sticky situations.

### 1. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M SATISFIED WITH MY WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION?

Remind yourself that you're responsible for your own satisfaction, and ask yourself these questions:

- Are you inspired by a broader purpose — something bigger than yourself that you feel connected to?
- Do you feel challenged and stimulated? Do you learn new things regularly?
- Do you feel positively energized?
- Do you feel you can bring your whole self to work? Can you be yourself, share about yourself and express yourself?

None of these are yes/no questions. Generally, your answers will fall on a continuum — and will likely shift over time. **Remember:** You own the results of this thought experiment.

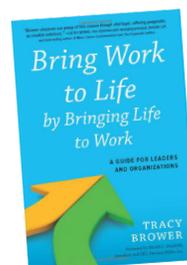


## 2. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY LEADER DOESN'T ACCEPT WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION?

- Start small, and make a specific request to your leader. Ask to leave early one day a week and come in earlier the following day.
- Sometimes, more traditional leaders change their minds when a high-performing employee finds a work-life integration that works. Connect with someone in the office who's had success with the particular work-life integration, so you'll have an example when you approach your leader.
- As individuals, we have some influence. But as teams, we have much more. Bring your team together to figure out different, creative ways of working. Ask the high performers to propose a pilot to your leader.
- Work with HR to find other roles within your company.

## 3. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY NEW LEADER DOESN'T PROVIDE THE SAME WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AS MY PREVIOUS ONE?

- It's best to propose a trial run. Talk to your new leader right away: "I've been working from home every other Friday in my previous role, and it's been very effective for me. Could we try that in my new role for a month and see how it goes?"
- Establish a track record of high performance with your new leader and then pitch a pilot timeframe.
- Ask your previous leader to help influence your new one: "Could you help me advocate this model with my new leader?"
- Make it about the business and team — not you. Try the pilot as a team, then have a transparent conversation about what is and isn't working with your new leader.



This information is based on, and includes quotes from, with permission, *Bring Work to Life by Bringing Life to Work: A Guide for Leaders and Organizations* by Tracy Brower (Bibliomotion, 2014)