



EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN'S COACHING

## Better than Balance: Life Integration

*How do I achieve work-life balance?* This is **the** question we hear from nearly every woman in our community. In the high tech, non-stop world we live in, most of us feel compelled to “fit it all in.” So we search for the answer, the magic combination that makes us feel balanced about our accomplishments, our life, and ourselves.

Work-life balance is one framework to help us make choices and prioritize. But there's another concept to consider: Life Integration. Integration is *blending into a unified functioning whole*. Take a moment and ponder this definition. How is it different than work-life balance? What do you prefer? Why?

The concept of balance is useful for some, while for others it feels unattainable. Balance is often accompanied by fear of failing, obsession with perfection, and pitting your life against your work. In Tiara we are looking at how to practice life integration, so the unified whole of your life is a creative blend that represents your values, priorities, and desires. We've identified **4 Life Integration Practices** that we will be working with during our upcoming TeleSeries in April. All are welcome to join, and it's perfect if you think any of these are impossible.

**Practice 1: Identify your most important roles and their priority during a specific time period.** Here's the first challenge. Choose 8 or fewer roles that are essential in your life for the next period of time. Include taking care of yourself (mind, body, and spirit) as one of those roles. Then be honest about what percent of your life energy will go to each role during that time. If you are going to be a mom 75% of the time this summer, great. If you are going to be 90% focused on your career because of an exciting new project, great. It's not about trying (and failing) to achieve a perfect balance of activities every day. It's about priorities.

**Practice 2: Choose.** The next practice is choosing. We are grateful to all of the women who came before us, giving us the myriad of choices that we have today. We, as women, can do anything. The pitfall is now many of us feel like we have to do everything (and do it all perfectly). Choosing our priorities – as well as our thoughts, words, actions, and states of mind – provides us the feeling that we are the leaders in our lives. It is easy to feel like someone else is running the show (like your job, your spouse, or your kids), but they are not. You are.

**Practice 3: Shift from “either/or” thinking to “both/and” thinking.** When we have MANY goals we often think we have to choose between things we want. We can *either* have a successful career *or* be a great mom. If you shift that to “I have a successful career, and I'm a great mom” you will start to see new ways of having these two goals integrated instead of being in competition with each other.

**Practice 4: Maximize your Return On Energy.** We can reinvent our relationship to time. We can use time in ways that feel effective and energizing. We can shift from a persistent fear of not having enough time to understanding that we have exactly enough time to do the most important things. Specifically we can look at how to maximize the “return on energy.” For example, if we want to be healthy, be a great mom, and prioritize friends right now, meeting with your friend and her kids for a long walk on a Saturday morning fulfills three of your priorities in one activity. Yes!

Please join our community in our commitment to living integrated, fulfilling lives this April. You can comment on our [Blog](#) or register into our [TeleSeries](#). We look forward to being on this roller coaster ride with you that will result in increased fulfillment, freedom, power, and peace of mind.