



A road toward
Balance and Happiness

**CAUTION
INTERSECTION
AHEAD**

Should you find yourself struggling to achieve balance and happiness within your busy life, local life coaches assist in achieving positive change

*by Susan Springer, for The Bulletin
Special Projects Department*

“Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.”

Many of us aspire to this carefree picture of a balanced life as described by inspirational author, Robert Fulghum. The elements of our lives, however, can easily spin out of whack in this fast-moving world.

When the stress of work, finances and other problems overshadow the joys of friends and fun, life coaches guide clients toward a balanced and happier life. More people are turning to life coaching when they feel stuck in old patterns, are entering a new chapter in their lives or are trying to move past something painful.

Life coaching differs from therapy and other methods of bringing about life change. It is positive, focused on the future and helps clients see their

potential.

“It’s a self-help book come alive,” said Carol Delmonico of Into Balance Coaching.

“It’s expanding the horizon of possibilities,” said Stacy Waltman of Integration Coaching.

Life coaching is more profound than cheering on a client—coaches help clients see what possibilities are ahead of them and provide direction. One client said, “Most of all I gained the understanding of how my life is all about choices and that I have the freedom to make choices that are healthy for me.”

“A lot of us have scripts that play unrelentingly in our heads,” said Waltman. She helps clients move past tunnel vision to see the broader array of choices they can make.

“My job is to help people get clear about what they want to do—sometimes we just get lost,” said Delmonico.

Through her coaching process, Delmonico said that clients often find their own solutions.

Coaching begins with a consultation where the coach and client set goals, and then often continues with weekly 45-minute conversations either in-person or by phone. Coaching is usually done on an individual basis but can also be offered to groups.

Both coaches say that while clients may initially contact them for guidance with one specific problem, they soon find that changes in one area helps shine a light on other facets of their lives.

The Wheel of Life, which many coaches use to talk about balance, usually includes six “pie pieces” including health, money, spirituality, friends and family, career, and fun. Waltman said while we may pretend to be compartmentalized, our true self seeps into all areas of our lives.

The career and money pie wedges are often stealing energy from the other parts of life. Delmonico said hard work is often over-praised in our culture and that emphasis takes time away from other valuable elements of a happy life. Waltman’s offers a tele-seminar to help clients see money as a tool rather than

as something that defines who they are.

“My goal is to have people balance their outer doing with their inner being,” said Delmonico.

Delmonico said many clients feel they are on a hamster wheel and neglect themselves while spending more hours on their career.



“I learned how to recognize when I needed to be ‘gentler’ with my thoughts toward myself, when I needed to stop pushing to be more and just accept exactly how I am.”

“We need to do a lot of good self-care to be our best at work,” said Delmonico.

She added that busy people can use short activities such as deep breathing or a five-minute walk around the block to reduce stress.

As a certified yoga instructor, Waltman believes in the ability of yoga postures, deep breathing and meditation to make not only the body but the mind and spirit more flexible.

Both women found their path to coaching by realizing their natural abilities to connect with people and their genuine desire to support people.

Delmonico was a registered nurse for 18 years and found the part she loved most about nursing was talking and listening to patients. Four years ago, she started her coaching business after becoming certified by both the Coach Training Alliance and Wellcoaches.

Waltman has a journalism, communication and business background and earned her training through the Coaches Training Institute, which is accredited by the International Coaching Federation.

Seeking an accredited coach insures basic professional standards are met including confidentiality.

One enthusiastic client echoed how many people benefit from coaching sessions. The client, who felt stuck in self-destructive behavior, learned to stop harsh judgment which she found “incredibly freeing.”

“I learned how to recognize when I needed to be ‘gentler’ with my thoughts toward myself, when I needed to stop pushing to be more and just accept exactly how I am,” added the client.

“I think awareness is the most important gift you can give to anybody,” said Waltman.