

Blending Brings Out the Best in Life

By Daniel Rendelman of the Hope Network

The covid-19 pandemic turned life upside down on so many levels. Some people could work from home while others were considered essential and still had to report to their job site. If you are like me, you probably created a working office on your dining room table and your eyes saw only squares from constant webinars and online meetings.

Yes, thanks to the medical emergency, pajamas became formal attire and kids, who were used to school bells and book bags became virtual students overnight. This covid craziness created confusion as we sought work and life balance. Of course, its hard to give equal time to home concerns and the job when the two overflow into each other. And while balance can be a good thing, there is something more beneficial than just giving equal time to the various parts of our lives. Instead of balance, how about blending?

Blending life, the various aspects of your day - work, home, entertainment, and faith – creates consistency. And in our tornado-like society, consistency is something we all need. Instead of a scale balancing time, what if we integrated all aspects of our day? I thought about this a lot during the covid lock down and especially when the kids and I set to baking.

During the first few weeks of the lock down my family baked lots of bread. We had finished Netflix in its entirety and wanted something different to do. So, we pulled out the bread pans and began to bake. And we discovered that even the simplest of recipes call for consistency.

For example, once I remember mixing a beer bread with the kids. They were convinced the one can of Budweiser was going to make them drunk, but we made the beer bread anyway. We poured the number of distinct ingredients into a mixing bowl. Then the instructions called for us to “stir the items to uniform consistency.” Basically, we had to fold the flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, cheese, and beer together. We needed to do this until the individual ingredients were blended so well that every spoonful of the final mixture looked the same. No longer could you differentiate between flour and sugar. Even the beer disappeared. Blending creates consistency. This is true with cooking and with living.

When it comes to life, we can choose to try to balance everything. But we all know how well that goes. Just imagine that circus performer balancing plates for a suspenseful audience. The clown adds more and more spinning plates, hoping everything stays in motion and nothing falls. That is the problem with balance, something can fall at any time. Let’s consider this idea of blending a little.

Blending life means that you blur the lines between the different areas of your day. No longer do you compartmentalize life as work hours or church or family time. You act the same during all these times. You allow who you truly are on the inside to interact with each part of your schedule. Sure, everyone changes a little according to the people they are interacting with. You aren’t going to talk with your toddler the same way you speak with your co-workers. What remains the same is the basis of your behavior. Blending creates consistency. Let me give you an example...

Several years ago, in Long Beach, California, a fellow went into a fried chicken place and bought a couple of chicken dinners for himself and his

date late one afternoon. The young woman at the counter inadvertently gave him the proceeds from the day-a whole bag of money (much of it cash) instead of fried chicken. After driving to their picnic site, the two of them sat down to open the meal and enjoy some chicken together. They discovered a whole lot more than chicken--over \$800! But he was unusual. He quickly put the money back in the bag. They got back into the car and drove all the way back. Mr. Clean got out, walked in, and became an instant hero. By then the manager was frantic. The guy with the bag of money looked the manager in the eye and said, "I want you to know I came by to get a couple of chicken dinners and wound up with all this money. Here." Well, the manager was thrilled to death. He said, "Oh, great, let me take some photos for social media. I'm going to have your picture all over the internet. You're the most honest man I've heard of." To which they guy quickly responded, "Oh no, no, don't do that!" Then he leaned closer and whispered, "You see, the woman I'm with is not my wife...she's uh, somebody else's wife."

This guy didn't have any consistency or integrity. He was one person behind closed doors and another person in front of others. Another option is to allow blending to create a consistent lifestyle where your words match your actions. Something great at work can make life great at home. The way you interact with others is same, regardless of where you find yourself. Blending is all about synergy. It allows the traits from home to overflow into work and vice versa. Life is not boxed when you blend your behavior. You can be a successful mother and entrepreneur – the skill set is the same.

Take for example the integrity that must be shown by a bank teller. The banker must be extra cautious with other people's money, disclose the fine print of financial transactions, and be courteously professional.

When these traits and ideals blend, the banker's life at home is impacted. He is cautious to use a budget with spending and treats his family members kindly. He would never be late for work, so he's never late for family gatherings either. And his personality and faith show through all the while. The banker's joy is contagious to everyone he meets, and he treats the worker at the fast-food window the same as he would the customer at the teller window. That is blending at its best.

This is totally applicable in life. You can take these ideas we are discussing today and allow your best self to be present in each moment. Most of us we no longer have just an office. Many have home offices, which is a space full of blending. And those lessons learned from both sides can have positive impact on both fronts. Perhaps you read an inspirational quote. Sure, this could just be on your mind or you could post it on social media. You can also talk about it at work and with those in your personal life. Inspiration can blend to help make the world a kinder place. Life is full of opportunities to share your skills and impact people daily. The days of a 9-5 binary opposite existence are over.

Here are a few other ideas of how this plays out in your day...

What if the compassion shown at home with your aging parents, who can't figure out their smart phone, is brought to the job site? There are so many ways that caring for others creates a better work culture. What this could look like would be offering to help people when they have an issue instead of rushing to judgment that they screwed up. We all want to be given the benefit of the doubt, at home and at work.

The drive that you have at work with goal setting and passion to perform can also be applied to family goals. Imagine taking that laser like focus that you use to achieve something special at work and applying it to a fun

game night with friends or Taco Tuesday with your family. And those communication skills totally blur in life. What if you were just as intentional with speaking in clear kind ways at your job like you do with your partner? You don't exclusively communicate with the people that you love via email or text. Just think of how your partner would feel if you only emailed him instead of talk to him face to face. It's the same way with your job. It's important to look people in the eye and build relationships when communicating. Connecting with others is not built via instant messaging at home or at work!

Blending can integrate those organizational skills too. And we all know that we could use a little more grace or forgiveness no matter where we go. Blending creates consistency. Your professional life and personal life are two sides of the same coin when you live with integrity and consistency.

As a person of faith, I have found that spiritual principles can be applied to every area of life. Real religion is not just one hour on Sunday. True faith is living in a way that affects every hour of my day. This concept is supported through the writings of many world religions. One day, after the resurrection, Jesus is talking to his followers and says to them, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and all the ends of the earth." Blending creates consistency with the faith too. It allows followers of Jesus to be "in the world" and make a difference without being "of the world." It's really interesting what is implied in this passage when Jesus said his followers would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, out to the ends of the earth.

Jesus said that his followers would be witnesses, but he didn't say if they would witness FOR the Christian faith or AGAINST the Christian faith. He simply declared, "you will be my witnesses." We all know people who

claim to be religious but act anything but. And sadly, the news headlines often contain stories about people of faith who have been accused or caught acting immoral. Our actions witness for or against our beliefs. If you are a Christian, your actions speak louder than your religious words of worship. Does what you say on Sunday blend with what you do on Thursday? Those who claim Christ but act with hate or judgment are witnessing against Jesus. Those who show love and forgiveness are witnessing for Jesus.

Our behavior, and not our theology or thoughts, is what matters. Values we put into action are values that we hold true. You may think you value something like saving the sea turtles or helping ease racial tensions. But those thoughts are simply thoughts until you back them up with activity. Thinking you value or believe in human dignity is only true when you express that value by volunteering at a homeless shelter or donating money to fight sex trafficking. You only value what you do. And you only do what you value.

If something is truly and deeply important then it will find its way in your calendar or checkbook. We often think we value concepts or philosophies. Perceived values are more in your mind and thought world. Until it is an action, it is simply an idea or something to romanticize. That religious, political, or social issue is only supported with conduct. Is there something that you feel is important that you feel you value or cherish or believe in? Well, do you back up that idea with behavior? You are not alone if that's the case, but let's do something about it! Let us be consistent and allow our conduct and passion to line up.

Surely you can think of people who claim to know God yet spout nasty words or treat people poorly. That's a witness but it's not a good witness. Believers are to be a light to the world and are always on display. Social

media rants, political tirades or work shortcuts are watched and remembered. When a person blends their honest and sincere faith throughout their day, they don't have to worry about witnessing against the Lord. Instead, they are consistent at the worship service or at Wal-Mart. Someone once said to "preach Christ at all times and if you must use words."

Notice the areas that Jesus mentioned that we are his witnesses. He said, 'In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and all the ends of the earth.' Jesus was probably in Jerusalem when he made this comment. He was speaking to Jewish people about their capital city Jerusalem. Jesus was saying, when you are home you are my witness. The next area was Judea, which was the larger area around the center of Jerusalem. Judea was outside the home. He was letting people know that their actions matter during their normal days. Then in the geographical list came Samaria. This was north of Judea and farther from Jerusalem. Here in Samaria lived the enemies of the Jews. Though Samaritans and Jewish people did not get along, the followers of Jesus were witnesses in "enemy territory." If you are a Christian, you are a witness even when things are hard or when people are against you. Jesus completes this flow of destinations with "all the ends of the earth." Our witness starts in the home (Jerusalem) continues in our city (Judea) moves out to those who are different than us (Samaria) and then reaches the entire world. This is a beautiful illustration of the blended life.

If you are a follower of Christ, then you are a witness for Him or a witness against Him. Your actions matter at home, around town, with outsiders, and wherever you go.

The story is told of when a rabbi bought a donkey from an Arab. The rabbi's servants were delighted at finding a jewel hanging from the

donkey's neck. He at once returned the gem to its original owner, who cried out, "Blessed be the God of the Jews Who renders His people so scrupulous in their dealings with other men." The rabbi's actions led to God's name or reputation being praised. His witness proved his character and illustrated a foundation of faith – to do to your neighbor what you would have done to yourself.

Sadly, though we've somehow separated people's behavior from who they are in our minds. We've excused the priest and the politician from saying one thing and doing another. And it's become acceptable to act with vile negativity or name calling to one group of people while portraying yourself as kind and compassionate to others.

There are so many who say they follow the Bible, yet their actions prove them to be hypocrites. Too many people say one thing and do another. This type of religion is void of any spiritual power and has become sour to the world. Benjamin Franklin said, "a good example is the best sermon." Who can disagree with that?

The opposite of consistency is hypocrisy. No one likes a hypocrite. We're all disgusted by those who say to "do as I say and not as I do." Teenagers are frustrated with parents who say to be respectful but then show disrespect. Even toddlers are quick to point out when daddy says a word that he shouldn't. I've found that some of the best parenting advice is to simply be the adult you would like your child to become. That easy idea enforces consistent blended living.

Hypocrisy is self-justification on display. It's acting one way or being one type of person at times and then being totally opposite with others. It often happens when people look for work life balance. It's easy to say to

yourself, “the boss will understand if I slack off because I worked extra hard a few days ago.”

It has been said that the way you do anything is the way that you do everything. This indicates that even your smallest actions or most insignificant behavior reflects your intentions. Again, the way you do anything is the way that you do everything.

The story is told of the great Michelangelo, who painted the magnificent frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel while lying on his back for endless hours to finish every detail with great care. A friend asked him why he took such pains with figures that would be viewed from a considerable distance. "After all," the friend said, "Who will notice whether it is perfect or not?" "I will," replied the artist.

Blending creates consistency. While no one likes a hypocrite and struggles with work life balance are apparent, we are all okay with people who are consistent.

One way to know if you are consistent is by asking yourself a specific question of discovery. The neat part about this definite question is that it is applicable in in any and in all scenarios. This unique tool I am about to share with you applies regardless of what situation you find yourself in. You can use this today to help your professional and personal life blend. Here is the secret weapon... when making a decision, simply ask yourself “What would a consistent person do?” That is it. Ask yourself, preferably out loud, “Would a consistent person do BLANK and then fill in the blank.” Line up that query with your goals or your identity. For example, if your desire is to spend more time with your family and children, then say aloud, “would a consistent person work later hours tonight or take time for the children?” The path will become clear with this inquiry.

Maybe your hope is to lose weight and you say to yourself, “would a consistent person eat these doughnuts?” Here are a few other examples...

- “Would a consistent person post this online?”
- “Would a consistent person talk this way to the cashier?”
- “Would a consistent person spend this money?”
- “Would a consistent person wash my car?”
- “Would a consistent person pray right now?”
- “Would a consistent person go on a run for exercise?”
- “Would a consistent person stay late for work to help out?”
- “Would a consistent person say those words?”

This power question will power you to be blended as you seek consistency. Just imagine if we all blended our lives so that the lines between who we are at work and home are cross. Aren't there benefits from a blended life that creates consistency? Here are a few things to consider....

- Blending allows you to be the same at work or home
- The compassion needed at home is also needed on the job. The attention to detail at work is really needed at home.
- Seeking balance often leads to areas in your life being shortchanged
- The skill set for being a good friend and a great manager or coworker are the same and can overflow into each other
- Professional development and personal growth are two sides of the same coin
- You only truly value what you act upon

- Followers of Jesus witness for the faith or against the faith
- You can be consistent at home, at work, around town and throughout the world
- The opposite of consistency is hypocrisy and no one likes a hypocrite
- The way you do anything is the way you do everything.
- Ask yourself this power question, “Would a consistent person do ____ and then fill in the blank.”

Learn more about leading a lifestyle that matters at thehope.network.

