



# Embracing Work-Life Integration: A Worksheet for Women Leaders

## Why Work-Life Integration, Not Work-Life Balance?

For many female leaders, work-life balance feels like an unachievable goal, and chasing it can lead to feelings of guilt and even burnout. The stats and research bring home how tough a task it is:

- Almost half of women say they are feeling burned out, and that their stress level is rising. [1]
- Women's extra efforts at work attract less recognition or reward. [2]
- Numerous studies show that in heterosexual relationships, professional women are still more likely to take on more domestic tasks and childcare responsibilities than their partners. [3]

If achieving work-life balance isn't working, it might be time to try a different approach. This is where **work-life integration** comes in.

## What Is Work-life Integration, and How Will This Worksheet Help You?

Work-Life balance is seen as keeping your work and private life separate but equal. Work-Life integration explores a more fluid approach where work and personal life coexist and blend together in a way that aligns with your lifestyle and needs.

This worksheet will help you to discover whether work-life integration may be a more sustainable and fulfilling approach, to evaluate where you are and where you want to be using the Wheel of Life, and to create an action plan to integrate your priorities and improve your wellbeing.



## Section 1: How Integrated Are Your Work and Life?

Let's start with a quick self-assessment to measure your current level of work-life integration. Answer the following questions to assess your current level of work-life integration:

Question	A	B	C	Your Answer: A, B or C
Which statement best sums up your work-life integration?	It feels aligned and fulfilling.	It's inconsistent and stressful.	I feel like I'm constantly failing at it.	
Do you feel guilty when prioritizing personal life over work?	Rarely, because I set clear boundaries.	Sometimes, but I try to manage it.	Always. I struggle to "switch off."	
How do you approach work outside office hours?	I set strict rules and rarely check emails or messages.	I try to disconnect but often get drawn back in.	I feel constantly on-call and struggle to switch off.	
How well do your work and personal goals align?	They complement each other well.	Sometimes there's alignment, but often they compete.	There is no alignment at all.	

### How Did You Score?

- **Mostly A:** You're already integrating work and life well (great job!), but this worksheet will help you to refine your approach even further.
- **Mostly B:** Your integration efforts need some adjustment. As you work through this sheet, you'll identify key conflicts and learn how to restructure so that you can feel less stressed.
- **Mostly C:** You're likely experiencing high stress due to competing demands. This worksheet will help you to realign your priorities and implement strategies to reduce stress.



## Section 2: What Is the Wheel of Life?

The Wheel of Life can show you how different parts of your life fit together. Use it to assess where things are working well and where you may need to adjust.

Female leaders juggle leadership, personal responsibilities, and workplace biases, making integration even more important. By mapping out different areas of your life, the Wheel of Life helps you to prioritize what truly matters so that you can make informed decisions about how your time is spent.

The classic Wheel of Life includes the following categories or “dimensions”:

1. **Career and growth.** Your professional aspirations, leadership development, and workplace fulfillment.
2. **Family and relationships.** Personal and professional relationships, including caregiving roles.
3. **Health and wellbeing.** Physical, mental, and emotional health.
4. **Personal development.** Learning, self-improvement, and mindset growth.
5. **Fun and recreation.** Hobbies, travel, and activities that recharge you.
6. **Finances. Income stability,** wealth-building, and financial security.
7. **Spirituality and mindset.** Beliefs, mindfulness and overall perspective on life.
8. **Community and social life.** Involvement in social causes, mentorship and networking.

While these categories apply to everyone, female leaders may find that career, caregiving, and wellbeing require intentional focus due to workplace pressures and societal expectations.

## Four Steps for Using the Wheel of Life

### Step 1: Identify Your Key Life Areas

Using the list above (or from a list of your own dimensions), select the eight most important areas of your life. Consider different approaches:

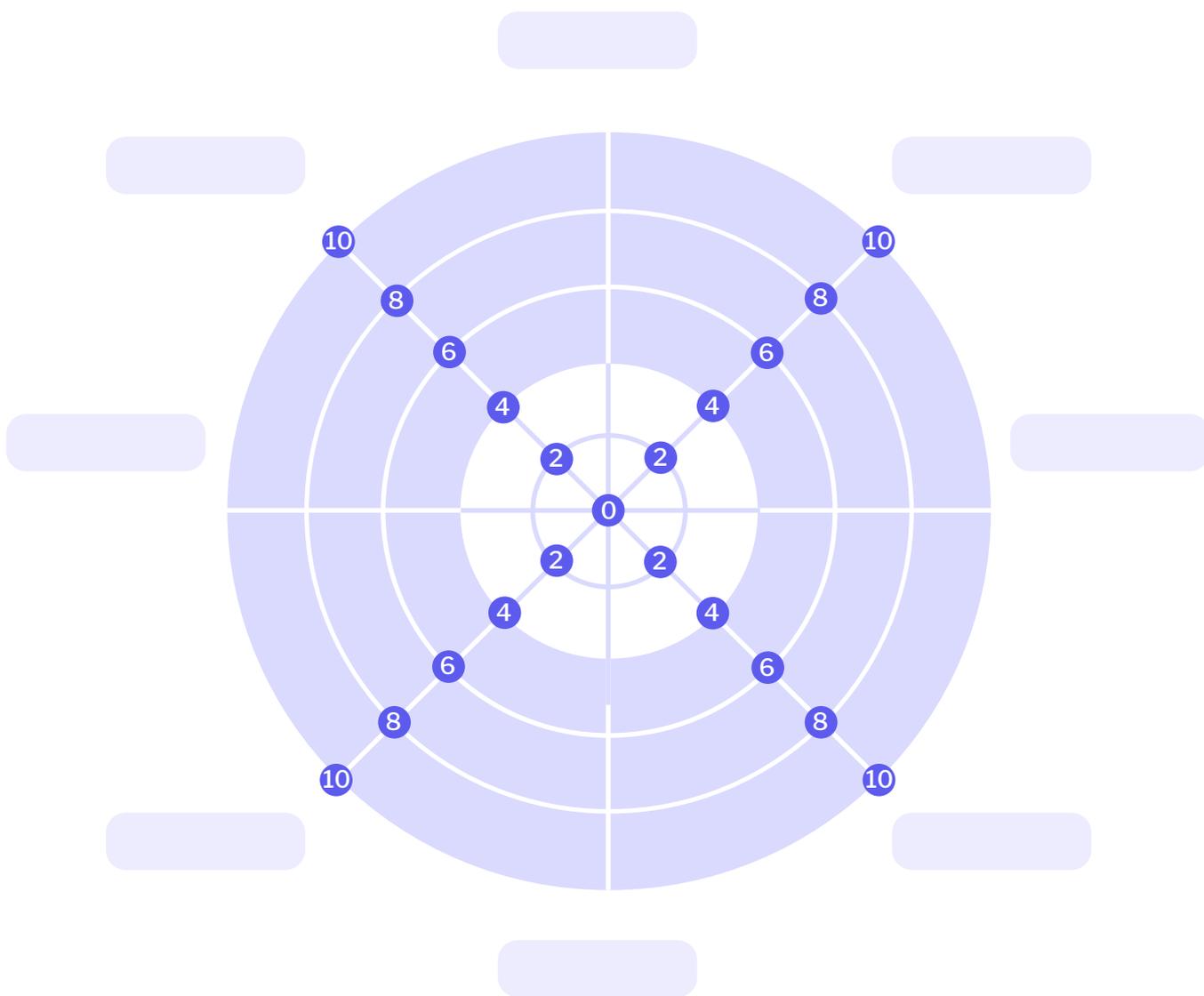
- **The roles you play** (e.g., leader, mentor, partner, parent, friend, carer).
- **What drives you** (e.g., career growth, financial independence, wellbeing).





## Step 2: Map Your Wheel of Life

- Type your chosen categories on the spokes of the Wheel of Life diagram, below.
- Rate each area from 0 (low satisfaction) to 10 (high satisfaction) based on where you currently stand.
- To help you to better visualize your Wheel of Life, print out this page. Then you can mark your ratings on the page and connect the dots with a line to create your unique life map.



The concept of the Wheel of Life was originally created by Paul J. Meyer, founder of Success Motivation® Institute, Inc.™



### Step 3: Analyze Your Results

- A well-rounded wheel suggests strong alignment between your priorities.
- An uneven wheel highlights areas needing more of your attention.

**NOTE:** For a deeper dive into how to create and interpret your wheel, see our dedicated article, [The Wheel of Life](#).

### Step 4: Consider Some Reflection Questions

Many female leaders struggle to prioritize themselves due to competing external pressures. Use this exercise to set boundaries and protect what matters most, whether that's career growth, health or personal fulfillment.

- Which areas feel neglected? Why?
- How does your leadership role impact your personal priorities?
- Where do work and personal life support each other?
- What one change could help create better integration?

Write your thoughts in the box, below.



### Section 3: Shifting From Work-Life Balance to Work-Life Integration

The pursuit of balance sometimes creates more stress than it resolves. The idea that work and life should be rigidly divided can lead to feelings of guilt or failure. This is especially true for female leaders who juggle high expectations, caregiving roles, and professional ambitions.

Integration lets you shape work and life in a way that fits your real priorities, without guilt or unrealistic expectations. This table illustrates the different ways of thinking about “balance” and “integration.”

Traditional ‘Work-Life Balance’ Mindset	Progressive ‘Work-Life Integration’ Mindset
Work and life are separate and compete.	Work and life coexist and can support each other.
Personal time excludes work activities, and vice versa.	Integration is flexible and based on priorities.
Success = Equal time split between work and personal life.	Success = Aligning your time with your values and goals.

#### Self-Reflection: What Does Integration Look Like for You?

- **Looking at your Wheel of Life, where do your priorities feel like they’re not working together?**  
Think about the areas you scored lower on. What’s one small, practical shift that could create better flow?
- **What’s one expectation (at work, in leadership, or at home) that you can rethink, release or delegate?**  
Are there any self-imposed pressures or external demands that no longer serve you? How can you adjust them?
- **How will you define success in a way that feels fulfilling, not just achievable?**  
Does it mean delegating more so you can focus on the bigger picture? Having more energy for family? Setting clearer boundaries?

Write your thoughts in the box, below.



## Section 4: Putting Work-Life Integration into Action

You've reflected on your priorities, mindset and opportunities for integration. Now it's time to turn what you've uncovered into action.

### Your Work-Life Integration Plan

Most of us fill our schedules with urgent tasks, but how often do we truly schedule what matters most?

Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, puts it like this, "The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities."

#### Step 1: Decide What Matters Most

- Think about the three things that truly matter to you this week, both at work and in your personal life
- Check your calendar. Are these priorities actually scheduled? If not, when will you make time for them?

Don't overthink it. Your first instinct is often the best guide to what truly matters. The goal isn't to plan the perfect week, but rather to make small, meaningful shifts that reflect your true priorities.

#### Step 2: Make It Happen

- Choose one priority and schedule time for it. Even 15 minutes can make a difference.

Treat this like an appointment you wouldn't cancel. Remember: your priorities deserve space in your schedule.

### Keeping It Going: Simple Strategies for Success

Now that you've taken action, how do you make it stick?

- Start small. Habits are easier to maintain when they're realistic.
- Build it into your routine. What small tweak can make this shift feel natural?
- Let someone know. Telling a mentor, manager, or friend makes you more likely to follow through.
- Check in with yourself. If this change isn't working, don't abandon it. Think about how you can adjust your approach.
- Keep coming back to it. Small changes add up over time. Revisit this exercise regularly to build on what's working and create new habits that support better work-life integration – whatever that means for you.



## References

[1] Deloitte (2022). Women @ Work 2022: A Global Outlook. [online] Available here. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2025].

[2] McKinsey & Company (2022). Women in the Workplace 2022. [online] Available here. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2025].

[3] European Institute for Gender Equality. (2021). Gender differences in household chores entrenched from childhood [online]. Available here. [Accessed 18 February 2025].