

Whole Life Leaders

Leaders who follow an integrated approach to work and life change the way they live their lives by shifting a few fundamental assumptions. First, they discard the outdated notion that a work-first approach is essential to business and the only route to success. Then they reframe this binary assumption into one that recognizes work matters AND life matters. They also learn how to create success in both areas by creating a “team approach” at home and work.

Most importantly, when couples jointly follow this approach, they both learn how to push back at out dated norms – even in work-first workplaces – as they support each other to achieve an integrated solution over the course of their careers.

For couples like these, work matters to both of them, and so do their lives outside of work. Both parents become experts in learning how to set thoughtful limits on how much work they can take on. **We call this win-win boundary setting.** Both parents also find ways to use flex to as a tool to help them do an excellent job at work, be responsive to the needs of colleagues and clients, and keep their eyes focused on their lives, not just their careers. **We call this a triple win.**

In short, professionals who follow this approach become experts in flexibility and capacity management.

Flexibility defines where and when someone works. Capacity management relates to how much work is expected to be done individually, as a team and within the organization.

Flexibility requires agility, and the ability to think outside the box when faced with competing goals. Capacity management requires innovation in how the work itself gets done such as prioritization, expectation management, and strategic delegation. In fact, success in these two dimensions requires a set of 21st century skills that are valuable for everyone who works in today’s 24/7 business environment. (Learn more from ThirdPath’s Whole Life Leader booklet.)

These leaders are changing the rules of the game.

Professionals who develop these skills, who are then promoted to managers, begin to spread the skills to their teams. Instead of pre-defining where, when and how much work gets done, individuals, leaders and teams work together to determine what outputs are required for success. Managers who follow this approach get out of the business of micro-managing unnecessary details about how work gets done, and into the business of managing effectiveness, ultimately becoming role models of a new kind of leadership.

Excerpted from: **Transformative Flex.** By Jessica DeGroot and Jodi Detjen

A few definitions:

Balance: this happens in the moment - something that one physically “feels” as in *“I feel out of balance”*

Integration: this happens in the long run – it’s how you create multi-faceted lives, with paid work happening alongside other commitments

Work First Work Cultures: in these organizations, life needs are always subservient to work and career priorities

Triple Win Solutions: flexing so it’s good for the work you do, the people you work with, and good for you

Win-Win Boundary Setting: working together to set thoughtful limits to how much work we take on so we can do our best, and our organizations thrive