

Lack of Balance by Tamah Kushner

I want to speak against life balance. I want to speak for "sequencing" - for whole heartedly throwing yourself into one part of life, and then a year or a decade later trying out another scenario. For never achieving balance but instead seesawing back and forth between different strengths.

I never seem to have managed balance - everything I do I threw myself into with complete abandon and way too many hours. Biologist by training - I worked long hours at University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Med. When I had children, I spent 19 years as a mother at home. Married - 31 years. I e-mail too much. I laugh too often. I ran a marathon. I believe if you're going to do something you should do it too much.

Balance has always seemed about constraint, that you have to do things in tiny bites and it all has to come out even in the end - work, fun, shul. And real life never seems to come out that way. Just when you think you might achieve balance, something happens and rocks you to the core. Perhaps it's better to accept the natural chaos of life?

Executive directors thrive on lack of balance. We are good at remaining the calm in the middle of the storm. We accept the craziness of the High Holy Days and a very unbalanced Jewish calendar with everything dense packed at the beginning of the year. On a daily basis we see how people's lives are unbalanced by death and illness.

I find peace in the chaos. I find peace in accepting that I will never lead a balanced life, but if I'm lucky to live to 120, there will be overall a picture of harmony in the whole.