Balance is the key to Thriving for CEOs

This week I got a flash of wisdom from one of my LinkedIn colleagues! This article stated “I have always tried to be an “A student.” Work hard, complete the assignment, pay attention to the details, work your way through the to-do list…..and good things follow. For most of my professional life, this “rule” worked extremely well.” Then it continued with a gut-wrenching story about the author’s experience with a sick son.

The summary; of the story was this. “And then I was “reorganized out” of Bank of America, smack out of the blue. I had poured myself into turning around its Merrill Lynch business after the market crash; and on the day I was sent home, the business was growing, was above budget and was gaining market share. To get there, I had put in place a great team, and I had personally traveled like a fiend, worked through almost every weekend and spent more time with the people at the bank than with my family. But in this case, my “rule” hadn’t worked, and I searched for a new construct.”

Sallie Krawcheck is the business leader of the global professional woman’s network, 85 Broads. She is the former CEO of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and Smith Barney. Now she has a new rule for her business life. “Today, I can easily see what I lost on leaving the bank: I no longer have access to the private jet or the car and driver or the big office. In return: I don’t work any less hard than I used to, but I have the freedom to set my own schedule and focus on the things that I believe to be most important. I know that my old “rule” doesn’t always work out, but the rule that replaced it is that I spend much more time with the people who are important to me….and to whom I am important. First among those are my family. I realize as I look back that the bank gave me a most wonderful gift indeed, even if it came wrapped in the proverbial punch in the gut.

CEOs and leaders of companies and organizations are so prone to the need of “keeping busy” in our leadership tasks. In Arianna Huffington's new book “Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-being, Wisdom, and Wonder”, she makes it clear how we glorify being busy and the toll that this path takes on our lives.
She reminds us that generally our two main metrics for success are money and power, and they drive us to work longer hours, sleep with our phones and tablets, miss important moments with our families, and impacts our health. Arianna proposes a third metric for success: thriving. When you thrive, you take care of your health, get enough sleep, and do not live to work.

Here are ten tips from Arianna and *Thrive* for creating a life of well-being, wisdom, and wonder (I wish I had more space to give details, but you will need to read this book):

1. Redefine success.
2. Avoid burnout.
3. Nurture your well-being.
4. Sleep your way to the top.
5. Take a digital detox.
7. Listen to your inner voice.
8. Act like a child.
10. Give back to your community.

As you can see, opening up to this third metric, thriving, touches many parts of our lives. This was a learning experience that I needed.

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