Attorney’s Balancing Act: Does Working Less Make for a Happier Personal Life?

By Jocelyn Neudauer

Are you happy? This article looks at whether happiness in an attorney’s life increases or decreases based on full-time work or less than full-time work under the notion of work-life balance. This present study hypothesized that personal happiness as a whole would increase as one works less hours. To determine whether attorneys are happier when on a reduced hour schedule, a set of questions was posed to each participant.

This study is broken into five parts. Part I is background information on what work life-balance is about. No article was discovered at the time of the study’s writing regarding happiness of attorneys’ personal lives. This present study will focus on what other articles lacked in looking at work-life balance from a happiness standpoint, and from a personal life point of view. Part II looks at participants’ general information such as the number of hours a week worked, etc. Part III will reveal the results of the survey, and various pertinent questions and responses participants made. Part IV will analyze the results of the study. Part V offers advice to others in an attempt to create happier attorneys and happier personal lives.

Part I: Background Information

The legal profession has been slow to create different work options over the past few decades and even slower in implementing the work-life balance options to allow lawyers more balance in their lives. Is it working? This article looks at whether the personal lives of attorneys who utilize work-life balance options in their legal careers are positively or negatively impacted by a reduced hour work schedule. Many papers offer research on whether law firms or corporations offer these work life balance options; there has not been any research on whether the work life options affect these attorneys in their personal lives.
For clarification, part-time work in the legal world often means standard full time hours in many other jobs. Cynthia T. Calvert, Linda B. Chanow, & Linda Marks, *Reduced Hours, Full Time Success: Part-Time Partners in U.S. Law Firms*, 7 (The Project for Attorney Retention, 2009).1 However, the corporate counsel averages 50 hours a week for full time work, so an attorney’s work hours varies depending on the area of law and their employers’ support of balanced hours. *Better on Balance-Corporate Counsel Work Report*, 3 (The Project for Attorney Retention, 2003)ii.

A. Work-Life Balance Definition

Having a work-life balance means different things to different people, however for purposes of this article, it will mean that a balanced hours attorney “has time in the day to do work tasks, get through daily work and family responsibilities without being drained, and participate in activities the attorney enjoys on their own and of course, being happy.” Lisa Barrett & Teresa Rider Bult, *Debunking the Work-Life Balance Myth: Is it Fact or Fiction?* 25 No. 6 Acc Dkt 83(2007); Women & Time Setting a New Agenda, 1 (Real Simple Magazine, April 2012).

Further, “balanced hours” consists of work-life balance options including part-time, job sharing, reduced hours, flex time, telecommuting, etc. Attorneys who utilize balanced hours are “balanced hours attorneys”, or “balanced hours partners” in this study.

B. Project for Attorney Retention (PAR) Study

Attorneys on balanced hours, as defined above in Part I Section A (flexible hours, reduced hours, telecommuting, job share, etc.,) at law firms, can be successful and happy despite the fact that 60% of balanced hours attorneys put in more time and effort into their job than their full time counterparts. Calvert, *supra* at 6, 12. The balanced hour attorneys of this Project for Attorney Retention (PAR) studyiii are generally happier as they stay on the balanced hour route. Their stay is 4-5 years longer than the average attrition rate of 7 years. *Id* at 12. However, this PAR study looks at partners at law firms, which may mean several things. First, an associate must achieve partnership status to become happy, but this
study show partners interviewed contradict this as the partners worked balanced hours for several years prior to attaining partnership. *Id* at 6, 11, 23. However, one reason the partners state they are able to achieve the work-life balance is that they push the work down to associates and case teams. *Id* at 23.

Despite these happy and satisfied partners, as many as 40% of the balanced hours partners in this PAR study feel some sort of stigma related to their balanced hours status as well as 60% of balanced hours associates at law firms. *Id* at 18, 19. Does this mean associates are unhappy from being overburdened? Not necessarily because as one partner puts it, if they were held to a strict billable hours budget while on balanced hours they “would be unhappy and feel less part of the firm” because they do other things such as mentoring, participating in committees, etc. *Id* at 16, 17.

C. Attrition Rate and Happiness

However, attrition rates during normal economic times is 20%, due to high billable hours requirements, unworkable balanced hours, being taken off the partnership track, finances, stigmatization or a combination thereof. *Diversity & Flexibility Connection: Best Practices, 2* (The Project for Attorney Retention, 2009). This is one of many reasons why attorneys do not go on balanced hours, making them unable to have a work-life balance. In the U.S. 82% of women overall have children and are unable to work the rigid attorney schedules due to family scheduling conflicts, cleaning, taking care of children, elder relatives, etc. on top of their jobs. *Id.* Yet attorneys without children also face the same situation of working more hours than other attorneys because they allegedly have more free time and are available at moment’s notice. *Id*; Calvert *supra* at 12. The demands attorneys face at their jobs has been linked to work satisfaction and would be more satisfied with their jobs if they had more exciting work on a more reasonable schedule, such as balanced hours. Susan Daicoff, *Lawyer Be Thyself: An Empirical Investigation of the Relationship between the Ethic of Care, the Feeling Decision Making Preference and Lawyer Well Being*, 16 Va. J. Soc. Pol’y & L. 87, 131 (2008); Barrett, *supra* at 83.
The incidence of depression among attorneys is the highest of all jobs at a 10% rate compared to the 3-5% of the general population, a result of dissatisfaction, lack of support in personal and work lives, etc. but the survey looking at depression includes full time attorneys, which may be one reason for the increased depression in the field. *Id* at 95, 104, 110. Regardless of the depression rate, the attrition rate is also due to workplace inflexibility as to balanced hours that may be policy on paper but not policy in practice. *Diversity & Flexibility Connection, supra* at 1.

Good news, however, is that there is higher satisfaction among attorneys working in the public sector at 66% compared to 44% at law firms. *Diacoff, supra* at 106, 107. This study has determined attorneys’ happiness and well-being is linked to whether they are satisfied with their job. *Id* at 131, 135. However, the imbalance of excessive working makes an attorney’s well-being dependent on one’s satisfaction of their job, making attorneys not as happy as they could be with their work or personal lives. *Id* at 131.

Furthermore, many attorneys are not idle as many employers believe when attorneys refuse to work extended hours or want balanced hours because they do not want to wait until retirement to enjoy their lives. Jennifer Ludden, *When Employers Make Room for Work Life Balance*, PR, March 15, 2010*; Barrett, *supra* at 82; Calvert, *supra* at 18. Nevertheless, these attorneys get work done because access to technology enables them to do so. Ludden, *supra* note 5.

**D. Employer Support**

Many attorneys who are happy are happy because their employer supports the balanced hours approach and the attorneys who request it, and have a supportive family. Barrett, *supra* at 86. As one managing partner states, “balanced hours has proven its value in spades”. Calvert, *supra* at 11. Three countries in the European Union have implemented work-life balance statutes requiring employers to consider and accept balanced hours requests.
Many organizations, as well as in the U.S., have balanced hours on paper only. Ariane Hegewisch, *Issue Brief: Employers & European Flexible Working Rights: When the Floodgates Were Opened*, 1, 2 (Work Life Law, 2005). Employees in this European Union study prefer to work part-time, at 1/5 of males and 1/3 of females in the study would go on balanced hours, but no more than half of that group actually requested balanced hours for two primary reasons. One, financial, and the other, the belief that their employers do not support balanced hours work. Hegewisch, *supra* at 1, 2, 4. Further, 24% of women and 13% of men in the U.S. would also like to go to balanced hours but 70% of them cannot for the same reasons. *Id* at 2. While legislation does not get rid of stigmatization, balanced hours attorneys are happier when they do have support of their employer. *Id* at 14.

**E. Stigma Still Exists**

Stigmatization and hostility by employers and peers toward balanced hours attorneys contribute to the high attrition rate of 20% because they look for new jobs that support balanced hours. *Id* at 4, 5. Balanced hours are important to many attorneys and some will leave their jobs if they are unable to get balanced hours, or try to negotiate balanced hours prior to accepting a new job because it is vital for it to work with their individual lives. Calvert, *supra* at 10-12. Legal employers should take a cue from a program called ROWE to reduce stigmatization. ROWE was implemented in Pennsylvania where balanced hours are offered to all employees to set their own schedule, not track time, no paid time off, etc. as long as they get the job done. Ludden, *supra* note 2. Offering this program to all employees rather than case by case basis, eliminates most of the stigmatization. *Id*.

**F. Time for One’s Self**

Another study unrelated to the legal field surveyed women generally who worked standard full time hours, part-time hours, or who did not have paid work and whether they have time for themselves in the day. "Work” includes work related tasks, household chores, family responsibilities, etc., defined by Real Simple magazine’s study. *Women and Time: Setting a New Agenda, supra* at 1. Fifty two percent
of women who participated in the Real Simple magazine study stated they have less than 90 minutes to themselves and 29\% have less than 45 minutes. \textit{Id} at 2. This is an important study that looks at the average woman in the United States because if the average woman has less than 90 minutes to themselves a day, then the average female attorney who works longer hours than the standard part time and full time hours has even less, or no time at all for themselves after finishing all work and personal/familial tasks. \textit{Id}.

Further, two thirds of the women in that study say their work does not interfere with their personal lives and that their personal lives is what eats up their time. The working woman can, and does, achieve a work life balance, albeit save little time for herself. \textit{Id} at 7. So, most balanced attorneys who work similar hours to standard full time hours can also manage a work life balance and personal lives, but full time attorneys who work more hours are not as likely to achieve the same level of balance. When the women in the study delegated their work, whether work and/or personal tasks (similar to the partners mentioned above Calvert study\textsuperscript{vii}), and scheduled in personal time for themselves regularly, their satisfaction with their lives increased by 5\% from 50\%. \textit{Id} at 13. The possibility is there that balanced hours attorneys are likely happy and satisfied with their lives.

According to the above articles and studies, many balanced hours attorneys are happy with their work lives due largely in part to the support from all aspects of their lives, including the employer. However, it cannot be inferred that all full-time and reduced hours attorneys are happy with their \textit{personal lives} as a result of having balanced hours, thus, the present study conducted of full time and reduced hours attorneys from law firms of all sizes, corporations, government agencies, public interest groups, transactional and academia fields; surveys sent to judicial members did not respond.

Current research does not show whether balanced hours positively or negatively affect the personal lives of balanced hour attorneys and their satisfaction and happiness within their personal lives as a result of having balanced hours. It is safe to say, however, that balanced hours positively contribute
to a more balanced life for the balanced hours attorney if affirmative support exists (See Part II and Part III). This survey did not include questions taken in consideration from a psychological point of view, which is another potential future study to conduct.

**Part II: The Survey Sample**

**A. Methodology**

A survey of 21 questions, not including sub-questions, was sent to 43 attorneys located throughout the country. Of the 43 attorneys, 17 filled out the survey. Full-time participants ranged in field from private practice, partnership, corporate, solo practitioners, government and academia. Attorneys who worked less than full-time worked in areas of private practice, non-profit, corporate, and sole practitioners. The survey was sent to members of the judicial branch but they opted not to participate. Each respondent received a cover letter and survey with two portions focusing on happiness, control, and satisfaction in their work lives and personal lives.

**B. Sample Group**

Of the 43 attorneys who were sent the survey, 17 replied, giving approximately a 39.5% response rate. Of the 17 respondents, nine attorneys (9) practice full-time and eight (8) attorneys work reduced hours. Four of the 20 respondents are male and three of the four males work less than full-time hours. Thirteen of the 17 respondents are female. The range of years in practice of the sample ranged from 1.5 years to 26.5 years. The hours per week full-time attorneys’ worked ranged from 40 to 65 plus hours per week and, reduced hours attorneys was 0 to 35 hours a week. The average hours a week full-time respondents worked was 51.6 hours and the average for the attorneys who worked less than full-time was 31 hours per week, with the bulk at 30 hours a week. However, one reduced hours attorney reported working anywhere from 0-50 hours per week depending on work available at the time. Sixteen of the 17
respondents utilize a flex schedule, nearly all of the attorneys in the sample, including full-time attorneys. While the sample is small, it is representative of attorneys who are happy from various parts of the country and various legal fields, although a larger study, including members of the judiciary, would be ideal.

**Part III: Survey Results**

The present study is examined against the hypothesis that attorney happiness increases as work hours are reduced. The survey results will be reviewed from the following two points of view:

1. How is an attorney’s personal life impacted when work hours decrease?
2. Does attorney happiness increase when work hours decrease?

**A. Full-Time Attorneys**

1. **Happiness in Personal and Work Lives**

   All full-time attorneys in this study believed they were happy with their personal lives for various reasons, but most either commented they could use more free time or that there is always room for improvement of themselves. However, one attorney, mentioned that she became happier each time she put more effort into herself. This attorney’s statement shows what this study was looking for, that more time spent on one’s self than working makes for a happier person in their personal lives, with themselves.

   Most respondents defined happiness as relating to themselves, however two related happiness as “surrounding oneself with good people, lots of love, and altruism” and the other, “having friends, family and having or working on a successful career”. Two attorneys’ definition of happiness focused on both personal and work lives. One attorney did not answer this question; however, the other six full-time respondents described happiness as:
“Being present and content every moment in my life. Not always thinking about what’s next or where I would rather be. Simply enjoying my work, my free time and my time with the important people in my life.”

‘Being content with where my life is.”

“Palm trees, golf courses, and an ocean breeze”

“Having real friends; staying connected to family and either having, or being, on a path to developing a successful career”

“I think it’s like obscenity- hard to describe but you know it when you see it/feel it”

“I am happy every day when I wake up. I think happiness is a state of mind. You can feel pushed down and unhappy or you can take control. I enjoy my work, and I love spending time with my family. That doesn’t mean that all family time is easy and fun – it is a parent/child relationship after all. And marriage has its own challenges. But I feel happy that God has given me the ability to enjoy my kids and husband, to pursue whatever interests me, to enjoy our beautiful community, and to work in a field that is challenging, rewarding, frustrating, and demanding – depending on the particular day. I have options, and friends. I laugh every day – sometimes at myself. I enjoy music and literature and trashy novels. Happiness is living. Not watching. “

2. **Happiness at Work**

Two of the attorneys stated they were not happy with opportunities at work, one did not state why, however, the other stated, “men are rewarded more, treated like colleagues and included in the
partner fold” at the corporation she is employed at. The other seven attorneys were happy with opportunities at work and one stated it is because “work is what you make of it.”

3. **Work-Life Balance**

Work-life balance is another issue that makes attorneys more or less happier in their personal lives. Seven of the full-time attorneys believe they have work-life balance due to flexible hours, giving the ability to take breaks and becoming “more productive and efficient and more motivated” as one attorney put it. However, two attorneys did not believe they have work-life balance, one of the two stated she was “trying to work less and bring less work home to increase her time with family and friends” and is not able to despite full-time but flexible hours.

What was startling were the work-life balance definitions provided by full-time attorneys because most of the same attorneys also believed they had work-life balance despite the belief work-life balance is a “never-ending process and to try balancing everything is a constant struggle.” However, two other attorneys claimed to have work-life balance because of having flexibility in their schedules; but, what is interesting is these two attorneys work the lower end of the range in hours of the full-time respondents of 40-45 hours per week. Most full-time respondents believe work-life balance is about flexibility and that it affects their personal lives for the better. The two aforementioned attorneys stated flexible hours did not give them more free time but it did decrease stress levels because of being able to do different tasks and responsibilities when needed.

Differing from respondents’ definition of happiness and this survey’s definition of work-life balance, respondents were also asked to provide their own definition of work-life balance.

- “Having time to see family and friends and while also working hard to advance in my career”
- “Flexibility—being able to go to personal doctor’s appointments during the day, go to events at my daughters’ schools on occasion,
and work from home if they, or I, are sick, in exchange for working late or on weekends so the work never suffers.”

- "Staying sane and not letting the stress of my job overwhelm my life."
- "Having enough time to do things you love-like work, family and friends."
- "Having time and the mental energy to do things I love outside of work."
- "It means successfully prioritizing and re-prioritizing on a daily, if not hourly basis. Being flexible is key."
- "Having the chance to be around my family when I need to and when I want to. At this moment I’m still able to take vacations when I want to, which is nice."
- "Choosing what is important: family first. If I had to choose between dinner with a client or my son’s baseball game, then I choose my son. Choosing priorities and running full tilt. And, exhaustion is just part of the bargain."
- "It does not mean this: “Work-life balance means different things to different people, but overall it means having enough time within work hours to finish all work related tasks, ability to do all work and family related responsibilities without being exhausted and being able to do activities one enjoys without interruption.” My job is incredibly busy and I am not sure I have ever finished all work related tasks – EVER. Nor have I ever finished all my home projects. I always am juggling the grocery store, the cleaners,
working in the yard, housework, getting a smog check – just like everyone else. I do believe that for me, work life balance is about choosing what’s important. For me, family comes first. I put a lot into work, but if I have to choose between going out with a client for a drink or getting to one of my son’s events, I choose family. So, I do some work at home. And I have stayed overnight at work. And I’ve also been to almost every event my kids have. They are both in college now, but I was a room mom every year, the team mom for virtually every sport, and I ran big events and sat on boards, etc. I wanted them to know that they mattered the most to us, and that work was necessary and fun and challenging – but always second to them. So, balance is choosing priorities, and running full tilt. And exhaustion is just part of the bargain.”


4. **Most Full-Time Respondents Do not Believe Working Reduced Hours Reduces Work Opportunities and Reputation**

Two of the respondents believe part-time status leads to reduced work opportunities while part-time respondents believe reduced hours does not lead to reduced work opportunities and reputation. The still existing belief of reduced work opportunities and reputation by reducing work hours shows precisely why many attorneys do not request reduced hours because the stigma is still attached to work life, as noted in *Part I*. Further, one full-time attorney noted that if reduced hours was available at the time she had her children, she would have taken it, however at that point in her life, it was improbable due to lack of options at the time. This attorney did not mention whether she still would take the reduced hours at the present time or when her children were teenagers. Another full-time attorney states, “those who have to work at the office complain about my being able to work from home.”
Five of the full-time respondents do not believe a less than full-time schedule equals work-life balance while two were not sure, one did not answer and another responded it depended on the field the attorney is in. The last respondent’s answer also contributes to the stigma mentioned above that one can have a reduced hours schedule if they work in certain fields and not in others. One attorney who was not sure stated reduced hours could equal a work-life balance if family needs were met as a result of the reduced schedule.

For the attorneys who believe reduced hours do not equal a work-life balance, one female attorney stated she loves her job and is the sole provider of her family, another stated they “always enjoy working and it [working] is a mark of productivity and progress in life” while another stated a reduced hours schedule would help but that if they were not working, other things would fill up their time.” The attorney who has worked for two years pointed out a concerning statement that if she was not “always available because if not you, then they [partners] will find someone else to increase billable hours”.

5. *Attorneys’ Do Not Feel Out of Control in Work and Life*

The full-time respondents were split 5-4 of feeling out of control at work, 5 stated they did not feel out of control and the other four believed they sometimes felt out of control in their work lives. Respondents who did not feel out of control stated it is about “organizing and planning ahead” and another is because she prioritizes her life with her husband who comes first, then her children, clients, extended family, colleagues, charities, etc., and in that order. Three of the attorneys who answered they sometimes felt out of control believed (one did not state why) “all professionals feel out of control sometimes”, another stated that she travels too much but gets flexibility in exchange for working at home. The third attorney stated she did not feel out of control, but overwhelmed and would wake up in the middle of the night worrying about her work.
All but one respondent stated they did not feel completely out of control in their personal lives. The one who felt out of control of her personal life stated that she “felt controlled but never will master control over her life—no one does.” One respondent was more optimistic and opposite view in that “it is the only thing I can control”. However, most respondents fell in between these opposite responses, including statements that they can “do better in both work and their personal life”, and that she is “always stressed but things are always out of your control”. One statement was not clear whether she felt out of control or not but claimed to be despite her statement that there are “high demands as a new attorney [at a law firm], so I breathe and be proactive.”

6. **Attorneys Have Some Free Time for Themselves**

Six of the full-time respondents stated they had time for themselves ranging from 1-8 hours a week. However, most of this free time is occupied by exercise rather than the survey’s definition that free time is to do “activities one enjoys without interruption”. Most of the free time available to these respondents fall on weekends, however, one attorney stated it takes a full Saturday to feel rested, to recuperate and caught up with oneself to actually enjoy her free time on Sunday, so it takes this attorney a day before she can actually enjoy doing activities one day a week.

One respondent stated her free time is related to her sanity rather than things she enjoys doing, such as sleeping. Other respondents claimed their schedule is too tight and does not justify squeezing [personal] time into her schedule and another said it is “hard to remember to keep free time open for herself a priority”. The respondents are split as to whether to schedule free time ahead of time; one claimed her schedule is filled up and not possible, another does not schedule ahead of time to make it “more like a reward and less stressful.”

Four of the respondents answered they had dependents in their lives including significant others, children and parents. None of the respondents had nannies or housekeepers. Of the four full-time attorneys who responded to the question of whether anyone helped in their personal lives, two of them
had significant others who did 100% of the work in their personal lives and another did approximately 60%. The fourth respondent did not give a percentage of work the person helped in her life.

7. **Scale of Happiness Relating to Work-Life Balance**

The survey posed the question of attorneys’ happiness in their lives based on the survey’s definition of happiness and also, based on the respondents’ own definition of happiness with a scaled response. The scale was from 1 to 10, with one consistency being most unhappy and ten being most happy. The responses to the survey’s definition of happiness ranged from 5-10 with the average range of 7. As to the range based on the respondents’ definition of happiness, it also ranged from 5-10 with the average range of 8. The attorney’s answers were either the same for each question or +/- one with the exception of one respondent; this respondent increased her answer by 5 for her own definition of happiness, which is what this study believed all respondents would do, but nearly all did not. The attorneys’ responses are as follows and correlate to the same attorney per column:

| Table 1: Rate Based on Survey’s Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance for Full-Time Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 7 | 7.5 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7-8 |

| Table 2: Rate Based on Respondents’ Own Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance for Full-Time Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | 7.5 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 7-8 |

B. **Less than Full-Time Attorneys**

All reduced hours attorneys worked full-time prior to working less hours in the legal field. One attorney noted “while working 40 plus hours a week was satisfying, it was extremely stressful and took a toll on family relationships, my health and household.” All but two respondents reported positive effects
to personal life as a result of reducing work hours; one respondent did not answer this question and the other respondent noted it affected her positively and negatively but with no explanation as to what was negatively affected. An eighth attorney did not answer the survey question but submitted a published article as her answer to the survey questions (See Part V).

1. Happiness in Personal Life and Work Life

The respondents were asked to define what happiness meant to them. Three of the eight attorneys did not answer this question. These responses were shorter than the full-time respondents and differed in focus:

- “Having a job I enjoy, and having family and friends close.”
- “Being satisfied.”
- “Being able to wake up each day with a feeling of having a purpose/reason to get out of bed.”
- “Security, family and passion.”
- “Using God given talents to bless the lives of others.”

Another question posed to respondents was whether they are happy with themselves and with opportunities available at work. All but one respondent stated they were happy with themselves and where they are in life. However, the opposite was expressed by two respondents: one stated her unhappiness with work was not related to work-life balance or work schedule but did not explain what it was. Another stated it was due to work itself that it was not fulfilling but was grateful to have the job in the present economy. Further, similar results occurred regarding work opportunities itself while three respondents did not believe their status reduced their work opportunities while three believed it did. The other two respondents did not answer this question. One attorney believed her status reduced her opportunities stated “employees complained she, the attorney, was able to work from home instead of
being at the office,” but “despite that, the benefits of working from home far outweigh that [employee complaints at work].”

2. *Does working a reduced hours schedule equal a work-life balance?*

As mentioned above in *Part III Section A*, full-time respondents believed a less than full-time work schedule did not equal work life balance. However, it is a mixed response among the respondents who work reduced hours. Three of the seven part-time attorneys believe it does lead to a better work-life balance, however one does not. This individual attributes this belief to lack of choice of choice full-time employment due to the present state of economy. Two of the respondents believe a reduced hours schedule sometimes equals work-life balance. One of the two attorneys explained she “could not imagine working 40 hour weeks and finding enough time for herself, her children and proper sleep.”

3. *Having Work-Life Balance*

Four respondents believed they did have work-life balance, one did not, and two believed they had work-balance, some of the time. The reasons for lack of work-life balance “some of the time” are: there is “never enough time for personal life and professional life” and that it “depends on the hours per week, but I always make sure I get 8 hours of sleep each night.” Another respondent attributed this belief to being in a transitional period where her children are grown and recently left home.

A fourth attorney expressed she did not have work-life balance because her less than full-time status was not by choice due to the economy and lack of employment; she does contract work for several firms. This attorney’s focus on work-life balance is not having a work life. She articulated this situation applied primarily to recent graduates as she has practiced for a year and half. This respondent articulated that many of those graduates, presumably friends of respondent, are unhappy, not due to personal happiness, but due to lack of work. One of the reduced hours males who has practiced 2 years also similarly stated the he would like to work full-time but the option is not available to him at this time. However, another respondent who has worked two years did not mention similar situation(s) or comment.
This brings up an aspect of new attorneys working out of law school and their happiness levels, not focused on by this study but would be an excellent issue to explore in the future.

4. Definitions of Work-Life Balance

The balanced hours respondents also varied in their responses, like the full-time respondents. Given the nature of this question is different for each individual, this is to be expected.

- “Being able to meet my job related responsibilities along with having time for my children”

- “Having a work-life balance means being able to prioritize both work and life including family obligations and commitments.”

- “Relax. Keep your cool. Have self-confidence. Know that sht happens and you’re not Superman so don’t sweat it. Pay attention to my wife and my kids. There’s a life other than the practice of law. Mellow out. Learn how to walk away when it is necessary. Learn how to take vacations. You come first, not your client when your client demands obedience.”

- “Balance between work and personal time where you are content in both.”

- “I make my own schedule based upon balancing the needs of my family and the work responsibilities I have as a lawyer.”

- “It means having a rewarding career while spending enough time with my family.”

- “It means keeping your family life a priority, while still maintaining meaningful employment.”

5. “Feeling In Control in Personal and Work Lives”
a. Work Life

Respondents were asked if they felt out of control of their personal lives and at work; six of the eight respondents did not believe they felt out of control of their job. However, one mention it is not an out of control feeling, but a “high pressure” feeling and another stated they “feel out of the loop with the rest of the employees but that the benefits far outweigh that feeling”. Two of the respondents stated they did feel out of control of their job for very different reasons: the unknown work schedule, or no control over when or how much work they could, and would, get.

b. Personal Life

As for control in personal lives, all but one responded; one did not believe they had control over their personal lives, three believed sometimes they did and did not, and three believed they did have control. The respondents who did have control stated “order” was the reason why and the other attributed control in personal life to the type of work she does is “uniquely situated to flexibility and scheduling ahead of time”. The other reasons are due to more than just work related issues, such as “not everything is within my control.” These respondents replied they have “strained communications with family and feel isolated” and that they are “just one person and can only do so much and it is overwhelming when she deals with family, pets, home and household chores.”

6. Time for Oneself

The previous comment also pertains to this section about how much time the attorney has to themselves during the week to enjoy things they like to do without interruption or exhaustion. Less than full-time work hours are perceived as having more free time to themselves, but this is not the case as in this study, both the full-time and less than full-time attorneys have nearly the same amount of free time for themselves of 0-9 hours a week (out of 168 hours per week) for reduced hours attorneys and 0-8 for full-time because other issues occupies their time, such as children, household, events, chores, etc. One attorney did not respond to this question. One attorney did not have time for herself while another stated
she sometimes has time for herself. The other four respondents had time for themselves, however, most of
the time for one’s self is very “last minute” while a number of respondents’ free time is spent exercising.

One attorney stated she makes time for herself a priority in order to maintain her sanity. The
individual attorney who had 0 hours for self stated she was happiest when she worked; this attorney also
has children who have left home and is in a transitional state in her life and is adjusting to her new
lifestyle. Three respondents also scheduled their alone time ahead of time when the rest did not because of
the need for flexibility at moment’s notice.

7. **Scale of Happiness Based on Work-Life Balance Definition**

The same question of scaling respondents’ happiness based on work-life balance definitions was
posed to full-time respondents and results were surprisingly similar. One respondent expressed in this
question he was “happy to pick my own clients but I am not happy with non-paying clients. But I am glad
I am not appeasing the ‘partner Gods’”. He also believed to be happier than attorneys working in law
firms.

**Table 3: Rate Based on Survey’s Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance for Less than Full-Time
Hours Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Table 4: Rate Based on Respondents’ Own Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance for Less than Full-
Time Hours Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The above results (and results of full-time respondents) may have been skewed as a result of
questions that were not clear to participants after reading various answers as inappropriate answers to the
question(s). Or, perhaps both the survey and personal definitions are the same in respondents’ minds or as a result of societal rules.

Such questions relate to the individuals’ definition of happiness. The first involves the issue of control. Most respondents stated they had no control or felt very little in control of their lives. The word “control” was not defined so answers varied from “yes” to “no”. A few of the “no” was due to billable hours and partners going to someone else if the attorney is not constantly available, unless the attorney is on vacation. A few respondents replied that control of their lives is not possible when they always feel they can do better personally, and at work. Another respondent believed she did not have control because everything, as a contract attorney, is last minute and is difficult to plan ahead.

Another incomplete question was a better explanation of what free time meant in this study. Many respondents stated they work-out at gyms during free time or spend it with other individuals, another respondent stated, “I don’t exactly know how you would define free time. If you mean non-sleep, non-work hours…” Another stated, “It is hard to classify ‘free time’—are we including the time from dinner until bedtime? If we are talking about functioning time that I have to myself—life daylight hours, I would say Saturday and Sunday usually.”

Part IV: Analysis of the Survey Results

The various answers of respondents prompted a look at possible explanations as to why such answers resulted through principles of psychology. The four principles applied are: hedonism, desire, objective list, and positive psychology. Hedonism is happiness in the form of raw emotion; desire looks at happiness from the viewpoint of wants; objective list describes happiness as achieving set goals, and positive psychology looks at subjective well being and character traits.
A. Positive Psychology

The results of the Happiness Scales of Tables 1-4 were surprisingly close where respondents were +/- one point or so away on the happiness scales above. Several things may explain this phenomenon. One being the survey and each respondent’s definition of work-life balance was actually the same, or having given the definition upfront resulted in the combination of the survey’s definition and personal definitions of work-life balance. Another, perhaps more unsettling, is the respondents may not be as happy as they believe themselves to be.

Looking at happiness through positive psychology means may be a better way to describe what occurred. Positive psychology is relatively “new” to the field of psychology. In exploring the close results in the survey, happiness psychology will be applied. Generally, positive psychology is not specified with attorneys in mind but the general population. Positive psychology is the study of subjective well-being, of positive character traits, and of positive institutions, such as happiness. Joe Volz, *In search of the good life*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pg. 68 (American Psychological Association, February 2000), accessed February 2013.

1. Happiness Is...

Defining happiness is debatable considering happiness is still an abstract and undefined concept even though traits have been identified to attribute to happiness. One thing that is consistent is psychologists agree that happiness requires effort to increase happiness—effort to adapt slowly to new events or purchases, effort to be optimistic, effort to not be pessimistic, and so on. Hedonism is defined as happiness in short-term or long-term raw pleasure. Another definition of happiness is life satisfaction but that pleasure does not add to life satisfaction. Martin Seligman, *Pleasure, Meaning, and Eudaimonia*, (University of Pennsylvania Authentic Happiness, 2002), accessed February 2013. Life satisfaction as well as a principle of happiness in psychology include “objective lists”, including aims such as pursuing a goal, achieving self-excellence, and contributing to the lives of others; it does not require optimism or enjoyment. Id.
Another viewpoint that does not have a “label” of happiness is that happiness is a fleeting emotion due to the human ability to adapt quickly. Momentary happiness should be considered as “just being”, feeling without labeling the particular feeling rather than hedonism which focus on the particular raw emotion. Robert Scheinfeld, *How to Be Happy All the Time-Part 3* (May 1, 2012), accessed February 2013. If the feeling is labeled, the mind separates the feeling into a positive or negative emotion making the person happy for only a fleeting moment but not happy for longer. *Id.* This approach to delaying adaptation to an event or purchase is a good technique to achieve this “being” state. This also requires effort not to label a feeling, not to be judgmental and not to compare oneself’s self to others. In addition, relaxing and resting does not bring happiness because one is not engaged in a task. Christopher Munsey, *Does marriage make us happy?* Vol. 41, No. 9, pg. 20 (American Psychological Association, October 2010), accessed February 2013. Not engaging in a task allows the person to reflect on unhappy thoughts. *Id.*

a. Traditional Theories of Happiness

The various types of happiness are categorized into three traditional theories of happiness: a) hedonism, b) desire and c) objective list (the fourth is Positive-Negative which is discussed in the next paragraph). Martin E.P. Seligman and Ed Royzman, *Happiness: The Three Traditional Theories* (University of Pennsylvania, Authentic Happiness, July 2003) accessed February 2013.

Hedonism focuses on the raw emotional feeling of happiness, maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. *Id.* No matter how hedonism is measured, the individual is always right even if the individual does not fall under the criteria of how happy one should be. *Id.* The second theory, desire, focuses on what the individual wants and acquiring such. *Id.* An example of the desire theory is an art collector. *Id.* However, collecting art it is not satisfying due to human nature’s ability to adapt promptly to a new event or purchase. *Id.* The scope of the desire theory is limited to desires that are worthwhile. *Id.* The third, objective list theory looks at the achievements of worthwhile pursuits, such as career advancements, educational goals, etc, but the objective list theory does not account for feelings and desire. *Id.*
b. **Negative Side of Happiness Theory**

Positive Negative is a fourth theory of happiness but is not a “traditional” theory as it is still a new theory. Until recently, happiness research did not include the affects of negative feelings, but recent research shows too much happiness results in negative feelings, such as selfishness, avoidance of the truth, etc. Eric Jaffe, *Positively Negative*, (Association for Psychological Science), accessed February 27, 2003. The positive negative approach to happiness looks at emotional balance when positive psychology only looks at one side of the coin. *Id.* Further, if there is a level of contentment with negativity, a person will feel less negative, which is a positive outcome. *Id.* One study looked at happiness and loneliness. *Id.* Its’ subjects were women who observed a film about intimate relationships and either an article on the benefits of happiness or a neutral article. *Id.* The study discovered the women who read the happiness article wanted more happiness, and as a result led to increased loneliness. *Id.* These results suggest wanting happiness too much can result negatively. *Id.*

2. **Happiness as a Whole**

a. **Ways to Measure Happiness**

In 2004, another APA article explains there are 24 characteristics of happiness and the five strongly associated with satisfaction in life are: hope, zest, curiosity, gratitude and love. Karen Kersting, *Accentuating the positive*, Vol. 35, No. 7, pg. 64 (American Psychological Association, July 2004), accessed February 2013. The 2004 article insinuates that strengthening these positive traits will make a person happy. *Id.* However, it has been discovered the happier one becomes, the more powerful negative events affect the person. L. Meyers, *Too much Satisfaction*, Vol. 38, No. 11, pg. 38 (American Psychological Association, December 2007), accessed February 2013. However, other positive psychologists believe meaningful goals that include content, orientation and structure of the goals, “contribute to the sense of well-being”. Volz, *supra*.

Measuring happiness is conducted by simply asking “how happy are you on a scale of 1-10?” just as the present survey has done. Mike Rudin, *The science of happiness*, pg. 1, (BBC News, April 30, 2006) accessed February 2013. *Id.* Based on this question, most people say they are fairly happy, but the cause
of happiness is not yet determined as of 2006, for example, whether people are happy because they are healthy or are healthy as a result of being happy. \textit{Id.}

\textit{b. Traits of Happiness}

One of the “Big Five” personality traits defined in the 1970’s is conscientiousness. Conscientiousness increases as individuals’ age and is “related to higher activity levels, better diets, less alcohol and drug use, less risky driving behavior, less risk of suicide and fewer instances of violence. Karen Kersting, \textit{Turning happiness into economic power}, Vol. 34, No. 11, pg. 26 (American Psychological Association, December 2003) accessed February 2013. As stated above, many attorneys are alcoholics and have a high risk of suicide which may be related to conscientiousness. \textit{Id.} Extreme conscientiousness is perfectionism and conscientiousness is a trait that influences whether people set and keep long range goals, behave impulsively, and take obligations seriously. \textit{Psych Basics: Conscientiousness} (American Psychological Association), accessed March 2013.ix

\textit{c. Happiness Increases as People Age}

The American Psychological Association (“APA”) website has vast resources of the mind. For example, as people grow older, people are better able to control their emotional health. \textit{Accentuating the positive-why older people are happier}, Vol. 38, No. 2, pg. 17 (American Psychological Association, February 2007), accessed February 2013. An “older” person is not defined in this article, and that older people also have “selective attention” that focus on positives. \textit{Id.} This study does not explain why as people grow older their happiness increases. \textit{Id.} The increased happiness may be the result of their children being grown, retirement, not working or working less, lesser financial burdens, an increased awareness of what is important in their lives, etc.

Younger adults in this APA study remembered negative and positive images. \textit{Id.} This difference may explain older persons having less stress and depression daily than other generations. \textit{Id.} Happiness also increases depending on when one is born due to unique experiences people encounter during the lives. Anna Mikulak, \textit{Happiness Increases with Age, Across Generations} (Association for Psychological Science, February 6, 2013), accessed February 2013. Those who were born and lived through the Great
Depression had lower well-being than those who grew up during good economic periods, higher educational opportunities, and access to social and public programs. *Id.* Today with the economic situation, high unemployment, etc. will have a lasting effect on psychological well-being for young adults. *Id.*

d. **Well Being and Finances**

Work, unfortunately, defines many individuals and as a result, money factors into people’s well being. Zak Stambor, *False assumptions*, Vol. 38, No. 11, pg. 36 (American Psychological Association, December 2007), accessed February 2013. Overall, the amount of money one earns makes little difference in happiness. *Id.* The only difference money and work does is keeping individuals and families fed, safe and warm. *Id.* As income rises, time spent relaxing decreases. *Id.* Incomes between $20,000 and $99,999 spend 8.1% of their time doing activities they enjoy and for incomes above $100,000 the rate increases by 2.1%. *Id.*

What matters is how people spend their free time, whether they spend time on things they would like to do versus being forced to attend an event, or work more. *Id.* “Free time” is not necessarily doing nothing but rather, participating in activities one enjoys. One respondent in the present study who works less than full-time hours deflates the thinking that part-time means more free time because, “as you take work [or other activity] off your plate, you fill the plate back up”.

e. **Blindfolds to Internal Happiness**

Many people are not happy because they have “focusing blinders”. *Id.* Focusing blinders are where people focus on how their neighbors and friends are living their lives rather than concentrating on themselves. *Id.* Researchers discovered by focusing on the context of an individual’s prior day by the individual, they reduced focusing illusions. *Id.* This allowed individuals to reflect on potential personal enjoyment rather than immediate gratification. *Id.* This depreciating comparison of one’s self to others can be adjusted by choosing how much to compare and who, to compare ones’ self to others, or not comparing at all.
The comparison and self-criticism also contributes internally of compassion of ones’ self. Studies on self-compassion contribute to higher emotional well-being, including increased happiness, decreased anxiety and depression. Kirsten Weir, *Golden rule redux*, Vol. 42, No. 7, pg. 42 (American Psychological Association, July 2011), accessed February 2013. Self compassion does not have negative side effects with the exception of taking responsibility to an extreme. *Id.* Compassion also seems to “erase the emotional fallout” one experiences, but an emotional state many are not aware of being compassionate toward themselves. *Id.* Being nice to ones’ self is difficult when self-judgment is a powerful tool that can lead to narcissism, depression, anxiety, etc. *Id.*

**f. Control of Happiness**

Forty percent of our personal happiness is within our control, internally and through the decisions made. Psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky produced studies where respondents thought about happy life events for eight minutes a day, for three days, which resulted in increased happiness in the respondents. *The happiness diet*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pg. 24, (American Psychological Association, April 2008) accessed February 2013. Happiness is fleeting and a never-ending effort because when one adapts to a happy event, the happiness associated with the event may dwindle. *Id.* For example, at the start of a new hobby, one tends to be excited but that excitement may diminish. *Id.* Happiness is fleeting depending on how quickly one adapts to a new event or purchase, etc. One way to amend this is to enjoy the event as long as possible. Rudin, supra.

**g. Positivity and Happiness Contribute to Long-Term Health Benefits**

Happiness is associated with positive, long-term health benefits. Nicole Crawford, *Positivity pays off for winners of psychology’s top monetary prize*, Vol. 33, No. 7, pg. 98 (American Psychological Association, July 2002), accessed February 2013. Optimism includes happiness. *Id.* However, shortcomings for persons who are generally happy persons but stressed are short-term immune conditions, such as a cold or flu. *Id.* The weakened immune system is a consequence of the increased effort happy people exert to achieve their goals. *Id.* Optimism is not internal at birth but learned. *Id.* The same applies to pessimism. Conversely, individuals can change pessimism with effort to be more
positive. *Id.* “Happy people construe the world, themselves and other people in more positive and adaptive ways than unhappy people do.” *Id.* One way to fix unhappiness is to stop obsessing and dwelling on issues. *Id.* Furthermore, increasing short and long-term happiness can only occur with conscious and consistent commitment and effort. Zak Stambor, *A key to happiness*, Vol. 37, No. 9, pg. 34 (American Psychological Association, October 2006) accessed February 2013.

In Lyubomirsky’s study, one group of students completed five conscious acts of kindness in a single day and another group spread the acts of kindness over one week. *Id.* The second group whose act of kindness was spread over a week were less happy than those who did all five acts in one day. The acts over the week are less noticeable to the student. *Id.* Stress is also an indicator that happiness can decrease well-being. *Id.* The students in this survey, both one day and spread over the week groups, had decreased overall well-being because the study was conducted during the examination period. *Id.* Lyubomirsky suggests performing several acts of kindness in one day, reframing situations in a positive light (i.e. look for the good in things), thinking of positive events and blessings in one’s lives will contribute to increased happiness. *Id.*

In another study, patients wrote down three things that well for them each day for 90 days. Martin Seligman, *Staying happier for longer*, (BBC News, May 9, 2006), accessed February 2013. As a result, 10% of the patients using medication or other treatments improved whereas 70% of the patients utilizing positive therapy improved.

h. **Psychological Ingredients to Happiness**

“Meaning” in your life can denote a variety of things. One is, believing in something better than ones’ self, such as philosophy of life, religious practice, meditation, etc. that signifies happiness to some. Rudin, *supra.* However, some studies reject religious practice as an ingredient of happiness.

i. **Marriage Buys Some Happiness**

One can look at a single indicator of happiness, which is the quality of social relationships. In the social relationship of marriage, it increases approximately ten more years of happiness than those not in marriages; in addition, marriage adds an average of seven years to a man’s life expectancy and four years
to a woman’s life expectancy. Munsey, supra; Rudin, supra. Further studies show married people without children are happier than those with children, particularly young children. Munsey, supra. Evidence shows people are “happiest when having sexual intercourse, talking, or otherwise investing in social relationships”. Id.

i. Unemployment Rate Effects on Happiness

Employment “is a powerful part of your self-image.” The loss or lack of employment is a loss of “identity” that many people self-identify with, and invariably results in many visits to the psychologist. Volz, supra. Lack of employment opportunities results in individuals feeling out of control over their job situation and unhappy. Id. In 2007, 74% of respondents in a survey by APA claimed work as their top source of stress, a 15% jump from 2006. Dr. Norman B. Anderson, APA Chief Executive Officer, Toward reducing work stress, Vol. 39, No. 2, pg. 9 (American Psychological Association, February 2008), Accessed February 2013.

3. Work-Life Balance and Positive Psychology

Positive psychology looks at what happiness is composed of and how to increase one’s happiness. However, researchers have focused little on work-life balance in relation to positive psychology. Many individuals believe work-life balance does not exist while others believe it is a result of hard work. Some believe one must be “fully engaged” on an emotional, physical, energetic, and mental level, and that balance is not a destination but a matter of maintaining the above elements. Paula Davis, Does work-life balance exist? (Psychology Today, October 5, 2011), accessed March 27, 2013.

Many career driven people are considered “workaholics” yet these “workaholics” say they have work-life balance. In such instances, it is not a matter of balancing activities, but rather balancing the mind and body to the point of not falling into exhaustion according to Psychologist Marcia Reynolds. Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D, Wander Woman: Guidance for the goal-driving woman (Psychology Today, November 20, 2011), accessed March 27, 2013. These individuals have a common thread of increased passion for working because it gives them a sense of purpose, satisfaction and identity of themselves in
their work. *Id.* These individuals stress that “forcing themselves to balance their activities leaves them feeling more overwhelmed than refreshed”. *Id.*

**B. Analysis of the Present Survey**

The background information in happiness psychology contributes to the analysis of results in the present survey. While there is no exact solution but a variety of means to increase happiness: healthy social and familial relationships, exercise, positive psychology therapy, belief in a higher power (some psychologists reject religion as a factor), setting and achieving goals, etc. Rudin, *supra.*

The present survey parallels to some happiness psychology. However, respondent definitions of happiness included familial and social relationships, career orientation, personal being, and contentment. The respondents’ answers are a combination of some form of the four theories of happiness: hedonism, desire theory, objective list and positive-negative. The information above shows how certain issues: job status, marriage, aging, health, etc., affect individual happiness.

Contentment was one attribute of happiness respondents’ claimed as part of their happiness. Contentment is not a factor positive psychologists investigate when researching happiness and work-life balance. *The undervalued component of happiness* (BBC News, May 9, 2006), access February 2013. Contentment means one of two things, 1) accepting things as they are, or 2) a peace of mind. A peace of mind also varies person to person, much like happiness. *Id.* Contentment is a combination of having a clear conscious, not arguing, mental and/or emotional satisfaction, not worrying, a need of want, etc. *Id.* All of the above combined means being happy with who you are as a person and every part of your being. *Id.* Contentment is a blend of hedonism, objective list and positive negative theories of happiness. As mentioned, changing your level of contentment and/or happiness, depending on if one views the two separately or as one, requires effort and internal reflection of who we are and what makes us happy or content.
1. *Happiness and Work-Life Balance Compared*

Both full-time and part-time respondents’ definitions of happiness include some combination of each theory of happiness proscribed by positive psychology. The respondents behaved as if the theories were one theory. *See Table 5: Happiness Theories.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s Definitions of Happiness</th>
<th>Type of Happiness Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Friends, family, and having or working on a successful career”</td>
<td>Desire, Objective List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Surrounding yourself with good people, lots of love and altruism”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Desire,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being present and content every moment. Enjoy time with people, free time and with work.”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being content where my life is at”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Palm trees, golf courses, and ocean breezes”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Happiness is living, not watching. It’s a state of mind. Be unhappy and pushed down or you can take control. I laugh at myself every day”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Desire, Objective List, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When I see it or feel it, I’ll know”</td>
<td>Hedonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Having a job I enjoy, having family and friends close”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Objective List, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being satisfied”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Desire, Objective List, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Feeling of purpose or reason to get out of bed”</td>
<td>Hedonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Security, family and passion”</td>
<td>Hedonism, Positive Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Using talents to bless the lives of others”</td>
<td>Objective List</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generally, there is no difference between attorneys who work full time hours or more versus attorneys who work less than full time hours as to happiness as seen in the results. However, the difference between full time attorneys and part time attorneys are the number of hours spent at a paying job and time spent doing non-work activities, not necessarily activities one enjoys. Part-time attorneys utilize their non-work hours with family, household, and other responsibilities.

Per positive psychology, no one respondent is “wrong” about their happiness and work-life balance, but what matters is reflecting upon what makes the attorney happy. However when an attorney is depressed, unhappy, or pessimistic, it is highly recommended by positive psychologists to decrease those negative emotions and into a balanced emotional state of positive and negative, with the balance heavier on the positive. This is essentially the positive-negative theory of happiness. For example, in the present survey, one respondent reported being unhappy with employment opportunities due to lack of opportunities. Another respondent who is unhappy is in a transitional period in her life is suggested to decrease the pessimism and look at the positive to balance herself out.

Sometimes, it is a matter of constructive conversation with a spouse, significant other, employer, or other person involved in your life about balance, being aware of such, and how to achieve it together with each other’s help. Amanda Horne, *Balance, Boundaries and Integration* (Positive Psychology News Daily, April 4, 2011) accessed March 27, 2013. When one says “I want a work-life balance,” clarification is needed as to what they mean by that, and why; is it because their relationship is suffering, not wanting to work so hard, lost their creative touch, wanting more fulfillment in life, or just needing a break, etc. Id.

The results of the scale of level of happiness based on the survey’s definition of work-life balance compared to the respondents’ own definition of work-life balance may be explained through a side-by-side comparison.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s Work-Life Balance Definitions</th>
<th>Survey Definition of Work-Life Balance</th>
<th>Definitions Match Up?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Time to see family and friends and working hard to advance my career”</td>
<td>“Has time in the day to do work tasks, get through daily work and family responsibilities without being drained, and participate in activities the attorney enjoys on their own and of course, being happy.”</td>
<td>Yes. “participate in activities the attorney enjoys on their own” = family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Flexibility, work from home, etc., in exchange for working late or weekends so work never suffers”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly. Work is included but nothing about activities this attorney enjoys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Staying sane and not letting stress of work overwhelm my life”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes. Not allowing work to drain the attorney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Enough time to do things I love—like work, family, friends”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Time and mental energy to do things I love to do outside of work”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Successfully prioritizing and re-prioritizing daily, even hourly.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly. Prioritizing not necessarily part of the definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Time with family when I need and want to be”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly. Time with family is a type of activity the attorney enjoys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Choosing what is important. Family is first. If had to choose between taking a client to dinner and watching my son’s baseball”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partially. Exhaustion is not part of the definition, rather, the opposite—not being drained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing priorities and running full tilt. And, exhaustion is just part of the bargain.”

“Taking time for self, being healthy and happy.”

“Prioritizing work and life”

“You come first. Relax and learn to take vacations. I am not superman but I pay attention to my family. There is life besides work.”

“Balance between work and personal time where I am content in both”

“Making my own schedule as to family and work”

“A rewarding career and spending enough time with family”

“Keeping family a priority and maintain meaningful employment”

“Has time in the day to do work tasks, get through daily work and family responsibilities without being drained, and participate in activities the attorney enjoys on their own and of course, being happy.”

Partially. No mention of work.

Possibly.

Partially. No mention of work.

Yes.

Possibly. No mention of exhaustion or enjoyment.

Partially. No mention of exhaustion.

Partially. No mention of exhaustion.

The lack of discrepancy in respondents’ score of happiness and work-life balance is evident below. The survey’s definition of work-life balance: “means different things to different people, but overall it means having enough time within work hours to finish all work related tasks, ability to do all
work and family related responsibilities without being exhausted and being able to do activities one
enjoys without interruption.”

| Table 7: Rate Based on Survey’s Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|               | 7              | 7              | 7.5            | 10             | 7              | 9              | 6              | 5              | 7-8            |

| Table 8: Rate Based on Respondents’ Own Definition of Happiness as to Work-Life Balance |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|               | 7              | 8              | 7.5            | 10             | 8              | 9              | 5              | 10             | 7-8            |

Many of the respondents wrote they were happy but could improve upon their selves. Belief in
having room for improvement may indicate unhappiness with something in one’s life. The proximity of
the respondents’ answers may be due to respondents taking into consideration they can improve
themselves. However, one attorney expressed happiness as, “when you see and feel it [happiness], you
know it [you’re happy]”. This respondent does not put specific expectations on herself which would give
way to disappointment and unhappiness if one cannot achieve their expectation, including improving
one’s self, always being available to the employer, but not always available to personal responsibilities,
including time for one’s self. This is the opposite of the effort positive psychology puts forth as a
requirement to increase happiness.

2. **Societal Roles**

Societal roles play more of an impact in our lives than many think. Both genders in this study
stated exhaustion was part of the bargain and if work was not on their plate, it would be filled up with
other things. “Other things” can include non-work activities, personal time, sleep, exercise, etc. to create
that balance. Like a meal, the plate should be balanced with vegetables, calcium, starches, etc. but most
attorneys do not achieve this as seen in respondents’ answers.

Part of societal roles are for people to be “super people”, to do everything themselves and to get it
all done. This is not possible as there is not enough time in the day nor can one person do it all, because
attorneys and others overfill their plates. As these attorneys mention, work and exhaustion are part of the
daily grind but it does not mean neglecting one’s happiness. One attorney stated she must always be available to the partners, or else she would be passed over, giving someone else the work shows despite measures and changes made at law firms that the law firm culture has not changed making happiness a part of our lives more difficult to control and achieve.

**Part V: “Advice”**

One prevalent trend among this study’s participants is the lack of time spent on themselves which is highly recommended to create, and make time, for yourself to de-stress, catch up with yourself, enjoy things you want to do and to relax. Many of the respondents cited activities they would do if they had free time for themselves--hiking, reading, and being with family and/or friends. Several attorneys noted after working during the week, their weekend is their free time, but that it takes a day to catch up with themselves in order to enjoy themselves the following day. This indicates attorneys, and many others, do not give themselves enough of a break, which is needed physically and mentally to be efficient in daily responsibilities without being exhausted.

**A. Prioritizing**

The one way to achieve time for yourself is to prioritize, as mentioned by nearly all the attorneys in the survey, what is important to you, not necessarily what is needed or required. As Slaughter, a high ranking government official said, she realized she wanted to spend more time with her children because she was indispensable to them but not indispensable to her work. Anne-Marie Slaughter, *Why Women Still Can’t Have it All* (The Atlantic, July 2007). The idea of prioritizing and re-prioritizing if necessary at moment’s notice is something several respondents propounded and really applies on a day to day basis, but not to life in general which is the focus in this article. To prioritize your life, one needs to do this exercise: schedule quiet, alone time to think about your life, where you are in life, who you are, and to
define these terms as to what they mean to you, not the dictionary: happiness, life, balance, needs, wants, work, family, and free time.

B. Reflection

This requires deep thinking and reflection as the study hoped the participants would do. One cannot achieve happiness in their personal life without reflection and while other factors such as family and work obligations play a larger role, happiness is the most important factor because without happiness with oneself, one is likely not going to be happy with other areas of their lives. Once your quiet, alone time is over, think of how you will achieve those terms and to get where you want to be in life. If you are already there, then great, but the reflection time is highly recommended anyways.

C. Group Involvement

Another suggestion to become happier and balanced is to join non-work related groups to engage with others and to engage portions of your brain you do not utilize much, if at all, such as mentoring a child, teen, or AA member, volunteer, learn or do something new or something you have not done in a long while, find a mentor, etc.

Some may be concerned with this article because they like to work full-time. The ability to like working full-time or more hours is great, and does not mean one thing or another, such as a person being a “workaholic”, but a workaholic is not synonymous with the idea of work-life balance. Just be aware and respect your colleagues who work less than full-time because, as the survey results indicated, they have other things in their lives they focus on more or less, and have different obligations than others. “Free time” is also consumed by work-related mandatory activities and commuting which raise the issue of living near work to increase free time which would have been spent commuting. Stambor, supra.

D. Equal Compensation
If you decide less than full-time hours are for you in order to achieve happiness you want in your life without reducing your opportunities at work, you have to ask and negotiate for it. Preparing for negotiating your reduced hours schedule is like any preparation for negotiation or litigation research: information about other organizations’ policies regarding reduced hours, why and how you are indispensible, even at a reduced hours schedule that your work quality will not decrease, what your employer’s interests are, your interests, understand the reasons behind each interest, etc. One thing that is a must to bring up during a negotiation is your work’s treatment of part-time work and betterment of such within the organization and for the organization’s image for positivity and flexibility. Many attorneys and non-attorneys alike hesitate to request a reduced hours schedule in this economy where many are grateful for a job, which is warranted, but is also a temporary issue. If you do not ask, you will not find out if your organization is willing to work with you or not.

During negotiations for balanced hours options, you must address equal and proper compensation and ask for a monthly or so review of the amount worked and to check compensation received. If your organization is not willing to include some things in the first negotiation, re-negotiate the terms at a later time if the current terms do not work for your schedule after trying the first agreement of the balanced hours work schedule. In Slaughter’s article, she notes women usually do not speak up or ask for reduced hours, pay raises, etc. but women need to speak up and men need to listen more. Slaughter, supra.

Part VI: Conclusion

The journey delving into work-life balance and being happy with the balance led to a different result than the hypothesis that one is happier when one works less hours. Working less hours does increase well-being as to less sleep deprivation, etc., but working less does not necessarily increase happiness. Happiness, regardless of work and personal lives, is wholly dependent on the person who can control at least 40% of their happiness. There is no such thing as complete control over one’s happiness.
because external factors impact happiness. Reflection, effort, and awareness of happiness permits one to “take control” as one respondent stated, and as another respondent stated, there is “life besides work” that needs to be the focus, otherwise, one’s purpose is to just work. There is such a thing as work-life balance and being happy—it is just a matter of how one defines such terms and how much effort one puts into it.

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i Available at: http://www.attorneyretention.org/Publications/Part-TimePartner.pdf
ii Available at http://www.attorneyretention.org/Publications/BetterOnBalance.pdf
iii See Calvert, supra.
iv Available at: http://www.attorneyretention.org/Publications/DiverFlexConn_BestPractices.pdf
v Available at: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124611210
vi Available at http://www.worklifelaw.org/pubs/european_issue_brief_printversion.pdf
vii See Calvert, supra see note 1
ix Available at: http://psychologytoday.com/basics/conscientiousness.
x Available at: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/