

# MISSION

Work-Life Harmony

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**Hay House Publishers India**  
Australia • Canada • India  
United Kingdom • United States

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## NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

CONTRADICTIONS AND PARADIGMS MAKE OUR LIFE interesting as well as bizarre. We want a meaningful and exceptional life, and yet we do everything in our capacity to pursue repetitive, mundane, and clichéd activities. Home to work and work to home is the pattern that emerges when we view the graph of our life. The lines and bars for the time spent at work and home look like a piece of sheet music with random musical notes. This is far from our need for pleasing music created from the harmony of professional and personal life.

Career and life are both important as one without the other becomes impossible. The pleasing harmony between the two may look like a distant dream but it is not impossible. This handbook takes you through a journey that unravels the various secrets to achieving this harmony between career and life. I have shared my personal experiences that have helped me attain this harmony, and I would sincerely hope the readers derive benefit from this composition. Take this journey with me and make your life exceptionally melodious and meaningful!

Ranjana Kamo



## SUPERHERO

*You don't need a cape to be a superhero. One who has survived the ups and downs of life is a superhero.*

LIFE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE HECTIC. I WAS loaded with work and was managing assignments that had unforgiving deadlines. It was impossible for me to be away from my desk even for a single day and here I was nominated for a workshop that was going to put me behind schedule by two precious days. Catching up on emails, especially the ones regarding time-bound assignments, was going to need extra hours of toiling, thanks to the workshop that seemed like an unthinkable task even before it commenced.

It was a two days' workshop on the causes for women to drop out from middle- and top-management positions at the peak of their career. The workshop was aimed at helping women find reasons to continue with their jobs and grow further in their career. I wondered why I was attending this workshop as I had no intention of leaving my job. I guessed that I had been nominated for this workshop by either HR or my boss. They might have had a premonition that I may be preparing to announce my resignation. I had no such intention though . . . not yet.

I was seated in the conference hall much before the designated time due to my unflinching habit of punctuality that fortunately flows through my genes. I used that time to make some phone calls and leave extra instructions for my team members. I picked up the notepad lying on the table in front of me and jotted down my macro-level plan for the day I would be back in the office. My mind was running through the checklist of activities and phone calls that I was supposed to have completed the previous evening. Though I had put an out-of-office notification and delegated important tasks to my team, the thought of a glitch or a snag was inescapable, given the impeccable track record of unexpected turbulences that could erupt during my absence from my desk.

I took a deep breath and tried to pacify the feeling of unrest that was dominant in my thoughts at that moment. I then closed my eyes to say a short prayer to calm myself. “Everything will be fine. I am sure of it. Even if there is an issue, I will be able to manage it easily. I know I am a superwoman and I will set everything right once I return to work. It is just for two days. It is manageable.” Having delegated my worries to God, I felt a bit at ease and smiled.

I have always considered workshops as paid holidays as you get to be away from work and still get paid. But there is this thought about work that gnaws at you when you know that work is waiting to pounce at you when you return to your desk the next day. That feeling has the power to unnerve you. So even though I was happy to be away from my desk, I was also worried about the workload expected to accumulate in my absence. I was getting away from my desk, but the desk was trying to accompany me in my thoughts all the way to the workshop. It was a hilarious

state of affairs though I was not in the mood to laugh at my plight.

\* \* \*

The hall was soon fully occupied by the participants and the instructor walked in with an air of authority following her with great loyalty. The usual drill of introductions and ice-breaking exercises preceded the presentation. There was great temptation to take a quick peek at my watch (which unfortunately had decided to make time crawl at its lowest possible pace) to know how much time I had before the day would end. My thoughts were wavering through multiple schedules that were flipping in succession across the screen of my hyperactive mind. The list of errands to run, e-mails to respond to, bills to be paid, appointments to be scheduled, presentations to be compiled, reports to be finalised, calling the carpenter to repair my cabin door, getting individual work reports from my team members, sending the car for servicing, scheduling annual appraisal discussion with my team members, vacation to be planned, groceries to be arranged, and so much more that I had to add to this list, left me feeling completely exhausted.

“I am a superwoman and will manage it all,” again I calmed myself down with my magic words. I went back to the slide that the trainer was emphasising on. Little did I know that the power of my magic was very soon to be rendered meaningless by the instructor’s differing point of view on my favourite subject of superheroes.

\* \* \*

The discussion trundled through various topics and reached a point where the instructor’s claim ‘you all are not superwomen’ smashed my strong belief in my mighty



‘superpowers’. I was taken aback by her remark which was contrary to all that I stood for. My identity was razed to the ground within seconds by her opinion and my superwoman cape seemed to slide down quickly from my shoulders. She went on to explain how one cannot take up every responsibility and hence cannot be a superwoman. I gave a perfunctory nod while my mind visualised my ‘to-do list’.

She had her point of view and I had mine and I knew in that moment that the latter held ground for me, whatever may be anybody’s perspective. “You are a superwoman! It takes a superwoman to manage the amount of work that you do!” I told myself. For me, every woman who manages multiple tasks at a time is definitely a superwoman. Juggling through life with tasks at every nook and corner of the house as well as at the workplace, and yet engaging with each moment to live a fulfilling life is an art that can be managed by a superhuman alone.

After this monologue with myself, my superwoman cape immediately returned to its rightful place and suddenly seemed to embrace my shoulders with an even greater affection. I smiled realising that nothing could waver me from my belief. It did not matter if the trainer had differing views on the subject. I was convinced of my belief and my powers alike.