

A practical guide to work-life balance

Conciliation means integrating all dimensions of life for both personal and professional success, says a new book.



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Talk of work-life balance often narrowly refers to flextime or maternity leave, but real "conciliation" should go beyond that limited definition. It's actually about eliminating conflicts between the different dimensions of our lives. And achieving this harmony is in everyone's interest, not just women's.

In a new book, [*Integrating life: how to lead successfully your professional and personal career in a global world*](#), IESE's [Nuria Chinchilla](#), [Esther Jiménez](#) and Pilar García-Lombardía propose using leadership competencies to manage the various dimensions of our lives at the

personal, familial, professional and social levels. The authors present a series of exercises to help readers find the right fit.

The personal comes first

It starts by developing self-awareness, understanding the motives, both conscious and unconscious, that drive your decisions.

As part of this process, the book stresses the importance of discovering your life's mission. Once that is clear, you can start to set priorities and manage your time accordingly.

In this process, self-management becomes essential. Knowing the consequences of actions taken (or not taken) makes it possible to take charge of your life, so that you begin to make choices that integrate the multifaceted areas of your life.

Familial, professional and social

Next, the book explores the familial factors that contribute to a full life. Family life can help calm the emotions that cause stress, which in turn can improve work performance. This applies to men as well as women, as both learn to reconcile their roles inside as well as outside the home.

The book's final two sections tackle professional and social leadership, both of which have positive effects on personal development.

Professional leadership is key because it impacts quality of life overall. The authors point to the [U.N. Sustainable Development Goals](#), which stress, among other things, the importance of education and gender equality in economic opportunities and domestic responsibilities in achieving a better, more sustainable future for all.

Social leadership relates more broadly to a sense of citizenship. These bonds can be fomented through active civic engagement.

Conciliation doesn't just happen but requires a plan for self-improvement, with objectives spelled out in specific terms. There will inevitably be some rough edges to smooth out along the way, but if both men *and* women commit to this agenda, integrating the different facets of our lives is achievable, until we find balance with a capital B.

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