How often have you heard people say they live for the weekend, holidays or time away from work? We learn from an early age that work is bad, negative, a chore; time off work, on the other hand, is good, life affirming and pleasurable. But why is this? What if work and play seamlessly interacted so that you enjoyed all of the week equally instead of just the two days at the end of it?

The work thing

On average we spend some 40 hours a week working – until we are around 60 years old. We often spend more time with our work colleagues than we do our families. But instead of considering it the daily grind we should concentrate on what it is about our career that makes us happy. Think back to what made you choose this path in the first place. What aspects of your profession do you enjoy the most? And how much time do you actually spend doing them?

Some time ago, during a regular business meeting, my colleague Suzanne and I were discussing those aspects of our roles that gave us the most and the least pleasure. We independently concluded that we most enjoyed the interaction with clients, the creative planning process and the satisfaction that resulted from our clients’ financial security. From this realisation, we began to remodel our business to focus on what we were best at and derived the most pleasure from.

It is all too easy to become bogged down with aspects of the business that are emotionally draining, not financially rewarding and that make us miserable. As dentists it is your clinical work that brings financial rewards and it is practicing dentistry that made you want to go into the profession in the first place. Yet many dental professionals spend a considerable amount of time involved in non-clinical activities such as running the day-to-day business, despite the fact that a manager is employed to do so.

Time to de-compartmentalise

From earliest childhood we are taught boundaries, rules and limitations. We enter adulthood believing that our life is made up of three separate parts; work, rest and play. We talk about the work/life balance, prioritising our careers and ambitions with our families and personal lives. At the end of the week, you lock the practice doors and go home, leaving work behind. You take holidays to give yourself a break from work and return invigorated – for a day, if you’re lucky. You are that hamster perpetually running in the wheel.

By compartmentalising our lives, we are drawing down the shutters between different aspects of our existence. Yet how
We have to teach ourselves that work does not always equal drudgery. Financial planning today should marry seamlessly with life planning – a fine art with no set rules except that it can be enjoyable. It is liberating.

Life can become extraordinarily rich when we are able to juggle life, work and the big picture. The whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. We have to teach ourselves that work does not always equal drudgery.

Financial planning today
We have to teach ourselves that work does not always equal drudgery and learn afresh that it can be pleasurable to spend time meeting new people, who share a common goal, with like-minded colleagues.

Planning decisions must not be based on work, rest and play as separate entities but on your life as a whole. Financial planning can be enjoyable and can make your life more enjoyable. Financial planning is vital in ensuring you get the most from your newly united life.

Financial planning should marry seamlessly with life planning – and by that we mean considering what it is we want to achieve, the aspirations we have, what makes us happy.

By accepting the truth that work is an important part of our lives and not a compartmentalised aspect of our existence.

We have to teach ourselves that work does not always equal drudgery.