



## The Balanced Lawyer

---

Jeff Davidson

### The False Promise Of Multitasking

*Editor's note: In addition to our regular lineup of feature columns, we are happy to bring you a new one, The Balanced Lawyer, by Jeff Davidson. Jeff Davidson is the internationally recognized expert on work-life balance and holds the registered trademark from the USPTO as the Work-Life Balance Expert®. Jeff has offered his cutting edge, hands-on strategies for a balanced career and a balanced life to audiences across the U.S. and around the world and will offer the same kind of insights and advice in his articles.*

In our rush to operate successful firms, service our clients, make a good living, and stay on top of it all, we often find ourselves handling too much at once. What's more, all around us we encounter social and cultural cues which confirm that it's "okay" to double up or triple up on activities. Is this, however, an effective way to manage a practice, let alone lead a life?

When you attempt to do two or more things at one time, you are multi-tasking and, unfortunately,

you're more likely to do unsatisfactory work. So, let's take a look at this phenomenon and understand its ramifications.

#### One Thing At A Time

Researchers at the Medical College of Wisconsin have found that if you perform as simple a task as tapping your foot, you activate the primary motor cortex in your brain. If your task is more involved, if it includes planning in order to tap your foot to a sequence such as one-two, one-two-three, one-two, one-two-three, then two secondary motor areas in the front portion of the brain are engaged. You are drawing upon more of your brain's functioning capacity.

Don't worry, your brain can handle it. The point is that when you engage in multi-tasking (i.e., attempting to watch TV while eating, or doodling while you talk on the telephone) your brain functioning changes to incorporate the extra activities.



---

**Jeff Davidson**, on the web at [www.BreathingSpace.com](http://www.BreathingSpace.com), holds the registered trademark as "The Work-Life Balance Expert®." Jeff is the leading personal brand in speaking, writing, and reflecting on work-life balance issues and he has a passion for speaking to law firms that want to help their professional staff members make rapid progress in this arena. Jeff is the author of *Simpler Living*, *Breathing Space*, *The 60 Second Self-Starter*, and *The 10 Minute Guide to Managing Stress*, as well as 24 iPhone apps in his *Work-Life Guide* series on iTunes. Jeff's books have been published in 18 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Malay, Turkish, and Russian.