



Work Strife Balance

Mia Freedman

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"Whenever women are honest about their struggles, they give other women a gift. Mia delivers."

Elizabeth Gilbert

This book is for every woman who's been told success is as simple as *Lean In, Say Yes, Live Your Best Life, Beat Your Fear, Follow Your Dream...* and then feel #soblessed.

It's for guilty friends, bad mums, crap wives, imperfect feminists, rebellious daughters and any girl with a big mouth and at least one foot in it. It's for any woman who's ever asked: 'Am I the only one who isn't quite coping?'

Here is Mia Freedman's low road to the top - a fearless, hilarious, inspiring and surprising collection of modern misadventures to read, relate to and rejoice in, then share with all the women in your life.

MORE PRAISE FOR MIA FREEDMAN

"Funny, raw, fierce and - at heart - profoundly generous." Annabel Crabb

"There are few writers in Australia who care as much about what makes women tick as Mia Freedman and who reveal so much of themselves." Leigh Sales

"Mia Freedman is one of the most inspirational, informative and accessible voices among contemporary Australian writers ... She is dedicated to improving the lives of other women. Hers is an important unique voice in our national conversation." Cate McGregor

Work Strife Balance Details

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From Reader Review Work Strife Balance for online ebook

Danielle says

As a working mother increasingly contemplating the concept of work/life balance, I thought this would be a fun, thought provoking holiday read. Whilst Freedman is very candid and generous in detailing her personal struggles and victories in the hope of helping others (and I genuinely believe she wants to help other women), I can't help but find her to be a little too Oprah like in that the ego seems to get in the way of all those good intentions. There was little here that I found new or particularly revelatory. Some things made me feel better - that work/life balance is basically bullshit and that mother guilt needs to be continually quashed within yourself and others at all costs. However, I found some of the anecdotes to be completely unrelated and quite far removed from most women's experiences. For example, whilst I'm certain Freedman worked hard to establish Mamamia with small children and no income, she still did it while being supported by a successful businessman husband, a nanny and a very handsome redundancy payout from her previous job. I'm sure other women will read this and gain a lot, but for me there are much better current feminist texts out there.

Toni says

I borrowed this from the library as I expected it to be a quick read, and one that I would skim at times and chapters that wouldn't always interest me and I was right. I do like that Mia is very open about her life and she's not interested in selling the story of being a super mum, who bakes cakes, makes her kids nutritious lunches, volunteers at school, has a perfectly curated Instagram account, all whilst having a high-powered career (whilst looking effortlessly beautiful and perfectly groomed!). I would have liked more chapters on her early career in magazines, her experience at Channel 9 and starting her current media company. She touched on it at the beginning of her book but I would love a book by her just about that!

Jodie Warner says

Part-memoir, part life-advice. Mia is an engaging writer and a bit of a force to be reckoned with. She claims this as a "warts and all", but she's still in control of how she portrays herself, so is it? Her career has been incredible and her work ethic is amazing. Do I want to be like her? Nope. Would I like to meet her? Yep.

Sarah Jones says

Some parts v interesting; even enthralling.
Most parts: I did not enjoy at all.
Absolutely no idea what stars to give it.

Kate says

While I felt - as some do - there are some things that needn't have been put in this book because it's either just too much information, or not necessarily relevant. I loved this book. I used to be current in my reading of women's information and magazines etc, but it was great to get an update on how things have changed, and Mia's perspective on things. I respect most of her reasoning and really appreciated her ideas and feelings. If you're out of touch, as I am, because life gets in the way, I thought this was a terrific read and I really enjoyed it. Sad that some things are the way that they are in this world, but best if we move forwards united as women supporting each other.

Esther says

My knowledge of Mia Freedman before the book was based on sporadic encounters with Mamamia articles (which I usually avoid, apart from Bachie recaps) and a vague awareness of some sh*t going down between her and Sarah Wilson regarding their different perspectives on quitting sugar.

I admire Mia more now, having read this memoir-style book on how "balance is bullshit", partly because I feel I know her better, and partly because I can respect where she's coming from in opinions that differ from mine.

I was particularly interested in her thoughts on feminism, abortion, parenting, how our food choices are not moral choices, and of course, how the idea of work-life balance is bullshit - just another way for the world/patriarchy to pressure women into measuring up in some way. So, pretty much most of the book.

Anna says

This book has some important messages for women, but I found the writing style irritating so couldn't rate it more highly. The conversational style would be fine in a blog post or magazine column, but it quickly became wearing. Many sections were repetitive, and the same themes were rehashed multiple times. There were many sweeping generalisations about women's feelings and experiences, presented without any real evidence in most cases. I also found the name-dropping off-putting.

Some tighter editing would have made this much more readable. It's a shame because the book has helpful messages, with added weight from the author's own experiences. I particularly appreciated her openness about her mental health issues.

Anna says

Exactly what I expected. Some chapters were interesting- I appreciated Mia's candidness in her chapter about anxiety, and Luca's candidness in his chapter about Mia- but many chapters felt a bit same-old as someone who listens to Mamamia podcasts and checks the site semi-regularly. Clear feminist message, which is great for anyone reading who may not be there yet but as a well-established feminist this offered me little new food for thought.

Louise Umehara says

Mia is candid about her life and comfortable sharing the highs, lows and mistakes in order to encourage other women. She isn't interested in creating a public image of perfection and actively works to debunk such obsessions. This is refreshing because we all learn far more effectively from our mistakes than we do our successes and no one wins when we are duped into believing perfection is attainable.

My journey has been quite different in many ways and my values diverge in some areas however the central ideas around not comparing, keeping it real, understanding your limits, creating a firm foundation, learning from mistakes, not comparing your real life to other peoples highlights, and choosing your friends wisely would resonate with many women. The chapter written by her son was particularly beautiful and must warm her heart in the best possible way.

It was a good read with some valuable insights. Importantly though it gives us permission to admit we don't have all the answers but we are a work in progress and that just might be enough.

Kathbick says

Lots of interesting reflections on women in Australian culture. As a woman who is not an avid feminist and doesn't have a career I was left feeling a failure at the end of the book. Whilst there was much about not comparing yourself to unreal people that are splattered over the media, I felt I fell far short of the author's definition of who a woman should be.

Shahedah says

2.5 stars for me - right in the middle.

There were certainly many parts of this book that I enjoyed - such as teaching young women to protect themselves (does not equal victim blaming), on understanding the context of 'empowering' yourself as a woman by making choices that actually reinforce the patriarchy, and thoughts that first time parents have BEFORE having a baby.

I genuinely appreciated Mia's honesty in sharing about anxiety, miscarriages, abortion and bulimia. But for me she failed to find the line between 'I'm sharing my experiences so other women can connect and not be afraid or ashamed' and 'I'm giving advice for other people with these same experiences'. She purported not be giving advice or writing a self help book, but then fell into generalising experiences more than she perhaps realised, and using that to give advice and 'teach life lessons' to other women. She was very careful not to do this with 'controversial' topics, like bulimia or anxiety, and clearly stated that her experience does not speak for all. But the smaller experiences she shared that I personally have been through or identified with (like overcommitting to things), I found that she made assumptions about how I, as a woman, feel, and this made me annoyed and defensive - and generally put me offside.

I thought the chapter by her son was really irritating and contrived, and I didn't appreciate a lot of the advice she gave her daughter either.

I sadly also don't think that this book adds anything new to the conversation about feminism. She touches on many concepts but doesn't give any insight or add any value.

By the time I got the end, I also realised that her concept of 'balance' or 'work life balance' is actually flawed - or at the very least it doesn't tally with my own. To me I think of life as a balancing act - it's constantly a work in progress - it's not about having perfect 50/50 of work and life. Work is one of many parts of life and it's about finding the right mix for you, and THAT is balance.

Final thought: why so much name dropping?

Shell Turner says

She writes exactly as she speaks. If you're a fan of Mia's read the book.

I absolutely loved the lessons she has written for her sons and her daughter. Invaluable lessons which I read out loud to my own daughter.

If you listen to her podcasts there will be some things you've already heard but as a massive fan of hers I was OK with that.

As a full time working mum it's so good to know the feelings I have are normal and not everyone has their shit together. ?? #girlpower #beafeminist

Deborah says

I don't usually read non-fiction. Indeed, I usually don't touch it with a ten foot pole. However... sometimes I find myself stretching out of that comfort zone (as I've done recently in relation to romance and historical fiction).

And although I'm not entirely sold on the structure of the book, I LOVE Freedman's writing. Like, LOVE love it.

As is obvious from the title, Freedman's talking about the old 'work / life balance' chestnut. Utopia. The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. First division of gold lotto and similarly unattainable goals.

"Work-life balance is like thigh gaps. It's yet another rotten external pressure women are putting on ourselves. Another impossible standard against which we're measuring ourselves and our lives. And for what?" p 332

I've not read Freedman's previous work and what surprised me the most is that she'd not covered any of this earlier. Although she doesn't talk a lot about her magazine roles, we kinda kick off with the fallout from her short stint in television.

Freedman then goes into detail about the establishment of Mamamia - starting off with the website which she wanted to be a voice of reason and inspiration for women - a huge gap she saw in the market - and from

those early struggles to the building of a media empire of sorts.

As someone who floats on the outside of that world I liked that she didn't shy away from some issues which often get raised when she, or Mamamia come up - namely paying of interns, clickbait-y headlines and her moderating of comments on the site.

I have to admit, the Strife and Balance sections (though the latter to a lesser extent) were a little random for me. I enjoyed the anecdotes about her losing her virginity, pregnancy scares, the selfie culture and the notion of the Patriarchal Bargain - taking a tool of female oppression and using it to get ahead. But some of the chapters, such as the letter about porn to her son, blurb about botox and even the chapter on therapy seemed a little left-field and I wasn't sure of their purpose.

However, I mostly liked that Freedman tells it like it is. Her writing is hugely accessible, engaging and often wittily self-deprecating. I loved it and it was as if I was talking to a friend. In fact, in writing this I kept thinking I was trying to recall a conversation, rather than words on a page.

Read the full review on my site: <http://www.debbish.com/books-literatu...>

Rina says

I have loved Mia's writings since Cosmopolitan, but surprisingly I wasn't even aware of the mass backlash against her. I guess I hadn't been following her whereabouts as religiously as I thought.

Mia's story is honest, unapologetic and straightforward. Qualities I always admire in people even when I don't necessarily agree nor have the same outlook and values (or feel as particularly strong as them).

I like the combination of autobiography and personal advice in this book. Also, Luca's chapter (my favourite part) is such a breath of fresh air. I don't give this book more stars because although I like the sneak peak into Mia's life, the life tips part has nothing particularly ground shattering for me. They're funny, nice reminders of things I have read before. And I also have a completely different personality than Mia (I guess I'm more like Luca) so I don't feel as strong affinity to apply her views and ways (not that she's asking her readers to).

All in all, still a good book, which I probably re-read in the future.

Louise Heart says

As a member of the Mamamia community, I had been eagerly awaiting the release of Mia Freedman's second book, Work Strife Balance. Mia's weekly podcast 'Mamamia Outloud', which she co-hosts with Monique Bowley and Jessie Stevens, is at the top of my list of favourite listens.. I think it is because of this that I was a bit disappointed. I felt like I had heard it all before. There wasn't anything new, some of it was word for word what has been said on the show, there were snippets from her articles, it's all a bit repetitious.

It was about 100 pages in before I had dog eared my first page for future reference, so it's a bit of a slow start. The first third of the book focuses on work. The 'lessons' that she shares here is probably targeted at a

slightly younger or less experienced audience than myself. I felt that is was all a bit obvious. I definitely found the second half of the book more enjoyable with Mia's future lessons to her daughter a highlight chapter, I felt it summarised the book and its messages, and was well placed. I am a big fan of footnotes which were well used throughout and added a teaspoon of humour at all the right spots.

On reflection, once I had finished reading, my opinion began to change, I started to appreciate the book as a whole. The topics Mia tackles are important issues that very few address. She delivers her opinion and beliefs in a way that felt informative and inoffensive while still being clear and to the point. She has a wide range of life experience which I believe greatly attributes to her success. Chapters such as "The babies that could have been", "The time food nearly destroyed me", and "That time my marriage ended" are honest, heart felt, and very relatable for a lot of women although sadly in society not openly or frequently discussed.

In some ways this collection of stories felt more private, like it was written for her family rather than to be published for public consumption. There was a chapter written by her eldest son Luca on what it is like to have Mia as a mother, a letter to her youngest son about porn, the mentioned future lessons for her daughter, and a conversation with her mother on feminism. All up it felt like a memoir to future Freedman generations on who Mia was and what her 'voice' was like.

Ultimately Work Strife Balance is a very easy read and brings important societal issues to light told through interesting, funny and often heart breaking anecdotes. I would most recommend this book to young women early in their careers, parents of toddlers, tweens or teens and those looking for something quick to devour poolside. If you are a fan of Mia Freedman you will continue to be so but it just may not rock your world.
