

# HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

July, 2011 \* Permission to copy granted

## OUR DEEPEST FEAR...

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our Light, not our Darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves – who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you NOT to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel unsure around you.*

*We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone.*

*As we let our own Light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

*-Nelson Mandela*

*from his 1994 inaugural speech*

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the *Motherhood Report*, women have been getting mixed messages about the shoulds and shouldn'ts of motherhood for years. Women also perpetuate mixed signals among each other. Sadly, what this has done is the following:

\*It has placed undue pressure on women to work or women not to work or women to be supermoms

\*It has made moms feel guilty about being stay-at-home moms or feel guilty for being working moms

\*It has caused self-conscious embarrassment if women aren't pursuing a career outside the home or self-doubt for pursuing a lifetime career inside the home.

**Friends! Sisters! What are we doing to one other? Maya Angelou states...**

***“If our children are to approve of themselves, they must see that we approve of ourselves!”***

**Ideas to help you stay balanced...**

**Ask for help and accept the help\*  
acknowledge times of vulnerability\*  
take the word perfectionist out of your vocabulary\* put yourself in someone else's shoes but don't stay in their shoes\* limit activities\* speak in “I” statements\* set boundaries\* learn to grieve**

**Amy Childers Counseling, LLC**

Amy M. Childers, MA LPCC

115 West Front Street, Perrysburg, OH 43551\*419-283-2732

email: [amychilders@amylistens.org](mailto:amychilders@amylistens.org) website: [www.amylistens.org](http://www.amylistens.org)

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## 5-Part Series on Balance...

Balance is about discipline, forgiveness, and creativity. It's about knowing who you are- what do you like? What don't you like? Do you set limits with yourself? Others? Your children? Do you know what you're good at... and do you do it?

The key to understanding balance is admitting to yourself that something is off-balance. One of my favorite comedian actors is Bill Cosby. He has such humor and truth about parenting. He says, "I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody." Isn't that great? He's exactly right. When we please everybody there is no balance in our life.

We are learning to achieve balance and learning to keep it in our lives. When I work with clients on balance issues, together we look at 5 areas:  
friends & community,

family, work, self, and spiritual beliefs/practices.

The order or importance is up to you; it's according to your beliefs and your worldviews. Oftentimes, these areas overlap, which is expected- there's no right or wrong way to look at this.

As humans at a very basic level, we come alive when our bodies and brain are in a state of pleasure. Physiologically, the part of the brain that operates this drive in us is the Limbic System.

This is a primitive, vital system in our bodies. It helps Control Emotions, Hormonal Secretions, Moods, Motivation, Pain and Pleasure Sensations. This state of pleasure could be anything from laughter to anger; having sex to eating some really good chocolate; cuddling with our kids to exercise.

When we submit to this basic need or this basic drive that is stored deep within us, we can then learn to unfold our tighten

muscles, overworked cells, and our tired bodies... all in the name of balance.

This is a very healthy habit to develop!

### ***Let's begin looking at friends and community:***

It's been said that if you can find humor in anything, you can survive it. Twenty-two years ago my husband was activated during Desert Storm/ Desert Shield. I quickly learned what it would be like to be on my own for the first time in my life. There was no other adult present to help me with the cooking, cleaning, paying bills, doing the laundry and making every day decisions. It also meant there was no one else to help raise our children Hope, who had just turned four, and Jacob who was six months old. There was no one to confide in, laugh with, talk with and just be with EVERDAY on the LEVEL that Rex and I had grown accustomed to. I was lonely, worried, angry, and confused why our family was ripped apart for seven months. As each day went by, I grew more and more

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depressed. My favorite grandpa died three weeks after my husband was activated. Our son, Jacob was very ill and had chronic ear infections resulting in surgery while Rex was away, and my father was in and out of the hospital due to a terminal illness. At this point I was HUNGRY for companionship, and THIRSTY for support. I wanted to be CLOTHED with kindness and CARED for by others. I felt imprisoned in my own home and yet I felt so vulnerable that I was too frightened to ask for help.

One day, a good friend of mine named Jill, who I had lost touch with after high school, called to see how I was. My pride got in the way and I told her I was doing fine. That night she was at my door. She looked into the depths of my suffering, rolled up her sleeves and indulged herself into both my children's and my life. Through the next several months, Jill stayed by my side. Three nights a week she stayed over and helped me cook, clean, do the

laundry, love my children and bring hope back into my heart.

I grew more confident each day. I found humor in some situations. I reached out to the military wives' support group and befriended a small group of women who took turns gathering in each other's home once a weekend. We laughed, we sat in silence, we cried, we played, we listened. We allowed our children to do the same.

**I began to understand the value of balance and it was a difficult lesson.**

No one took the place of my husband, no one took my pain away. What I allowed was a community of people to help BALANCE the pain, BALANCE the confusion, and BALANCE the anger.

I also allowed neighbors to mow my grass, install my window air conditioner and I even accepted a food basket at Easter time that was given to me by a church who didn't even know me. They received military names and decided their mission was

to support the families here at home. This was a very, very humbling experience. And it was needed!

**BY ADMITTING SOMETHING WAS OUT OF BALANCE AND BY ACCEPTING THE OUTREACH OF SUPPORT**, this sisterhood and brotherhood of people reaching out, were able to be a part of my life – my children's lives. I allowed these groups to see my vulnerabilities, and they reacted with an outpouring of love, friendship and community support.

Perhaps this could parallel a balance that you need in your life. Think about it and ask yourself, "What is out of balance?"

Remember: find out what you like and dislike; set limits for yourself, for others and for your children; know what you're good at, and do it.

*Know what you need help in, and ask. This is the balance of friends and community.*

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