

# HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

September, 2011 \* Permission to copy granted

## 3rd of a 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? With others? With your children? Do you know what you're good at...and do you do it?

Last month we looked at the BALANCE OF Family. **This month we will be taking a look at the BALANCE OF WORK.**

Remember, the key to understanding balance is admitting to yourself that something is off-balance; something needs tweaked.

In this 5-part series, we are learning to achieve balance so we can experience the long-lasting effects of balance throughout our lifetime. With this, we can also pass this practice of balance to our children, our friends, family, co-workers, and anyone we interact with.

When looking at the "whole self", remember the five areas of balance: friends & community, family, work, self, and spiritual beliefs/practices.

Also remember 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.

I want to keep putting in front of you the physical part of balance as a reminder of the importance of the mind-body-spirit connection and how it plays a vital role in our lives: **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 Limbic 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! This is important physically because of the above reasons. It is also so important because it taps into the emotions in us, thus affecting our relationship with self and others.

### **Let's begin looking at WORK:**

When we look at balancing work, it is important to understand that all moms and dads are working moms and dads!

Somehow over the years, there has been a battle and lots of controversy about women (and men) with children working outside the home, working inside the home, staying at home, working part time, working full time, being contingency workers, volunteering their time, and the list continues.

**There is a trend showing that even men are experiencing this controversy as some choose to or are forced to be stay at home dads.**

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According to a study called *The Motherhood Report*, Women (and I will add men) have been getting mixed messages about the shoulds and shouldn'ts of motherhood (fatherhood). 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 and self-doubt, for pursuing a lifetime career outside the home.

**Co-workers! What are we doing to each other?**

**Maya Angelou says, "If our children are to approve of themselves, they must see that we approve of ourselves!"**

Remember, you do what works for you and your family according your likes, your dislikes, and your beliefs.

I was doing a meditation, and it started out with a devotion that explained a woman was very concerned and therefore talked to her spiritual leader because her neighbors were dancing and whirling about in the front yard.

**She told him that they claimed they are whirling dervishes - Mystic people who praised and connected with god through hours and hours of this outlandish whirl of a dance and they wouldn't get tired or dizzy...and they did it in the frontyard!**

**"Help cried the woman - they just don't get it - what do I do?"**

**The wise spiritual leader replied, "Let em' whirl."**

His advice was accepting. It was non-judgmental. What the neighbors were doing was no harm to anyone. They weren't a cult, they weren't sacrificing animals or people, they weren't poisoning or brainwashing anyone. It was simply a different belief system than the woman had. The women still could connect on other levels - their

children could still play together, they could still support one another, share recipes, carpool, laugh, share struggles.

Regardless of your line of work, the key to balance is knowing yourself and setting limits.

You work a 40-hour week? Then work only forty hours. Set limits on your voice mail, email, facebook, texting - check these on your break or lunch hour or limit checking it 2-3 times a day (and not at home).

Are you trying to decrease hours at work? Then get creative - talk to others who may share a similar position and see how you can job share. Brainstorm, type up a proposal, and talk with your supervisor.

Oftentimes employers are willing to make shifts in your hours or pay or benefits. First, you need to determine what YOU want, then decide how to go about it.

Remember, all men and women are working men and women. So, if you are a mom who stays home with your kids during the day, make sure you

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balance that time. If you're a dad who stays at home with your kids, make sure you balance that time.

Kids need space, time alone and quiet time. Give that to them. If you are home, you usually have more of the housework to do.

So, find a system that works for you. Set limits with others. Teens can wash their own clothes, tots can match socks, your partner can cook or grill on the weekends. Find out what works and do it!

For men and women working out in the workforce, there are a number of issues and stressors. Think of a few at this very moment and list them on paper. Rank them in order as to what is a big stressor (give it a "10") and what is a mild stressor (give it a "1") and list a few in between.

After reviewing your list, do you notice there are any stressors that are not your business but you make it your business? If so, cross it out. That's someone else's worry and not yours.

Look back over the list. Are there any stressors that

are really "hitting your buttons?" List them. This is what I call your "core." Our core is a part of us – our life experiences, our DNA, our upbringing, our culture, etc. It's what makes us who we are.

**It's important to note that when we experience our "core" being pushed a lot, we are usually struggling with something that is more than "just a work issue."**

That's a good indication to see a therapist who can help roadmap these thoughts and feelings to some of the roots of who you are.

Through this process, you may be able to realize you've created some poor coping techniques or blaming patterns or denial that is blinding your vision of what's really going on.

**For your positive mental health and for healthy interactions with your co-workers, talk with a professional in dealing with some of those core issues.**

Even if you wish or will them away, the issues will come back in another form. The difference next time is that you will have

worked on understanding your beliefs, the way you act or overact and be able to develop healthy coping skills to assist you in dealing with others.

Make sure whether you are working outside the home or inside the home, you and your partner have an understanding of what your wants and needs are.

For example, if you need a half hour to unwind when you first get home, tell your partner that, because she may want to talk right away. Communicating that is very important for a healthy relationship.

**ADMIT SOMETHING IS OUT OF BALANCE, SET BOUNDARIES, AND BE CREATIVE... THIS IS THE BALANCE OF WORK!**

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