

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

October, 2011 * Permission to copy granted

4th 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 Work. **This month we will be taking a look at the BALANCE OF SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES.**

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 SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES:

Let's look at the spiritual part of you. Regardless of your beliefs, we all operate under some type of higher power.

Whenever I say that someone always questions the statement by asking, "What about agnostic or atheist?"

For someone who is atheist or doesn't believe in God, the power comes from within. The power could come from friends or family or work.

Similarly, for someone who is agnostic, there is power from within, power

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in nature, or power from somewhere else manifesting in the universe.

Even people who are unsure, there are still times of pondering, searching for meaning...searching for balance.

For people who believe in a higher power, whether it be God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, or Universe, for example they submit to the will of a higher deity or being other than themselves.

For this purpose, apply your beliefs as you see it. Apply your center of faith, stability, power, love, god to the depth of how you experience it; to the depth of how you want to nurture it and grow it.

It is deeper for some than others. It is more or less dogmatic for some than others. It is, for some, social. It is for others sacred.

Spirituality as a balance is crucial.

It impacts...it shapes...it forms...and it nudges us towards growth.

It allows us to connect, to love, to reach out, to strive

for a belief in something that represents good and something bigger than ourselves.

Our spiritual self can pray silently, pray aloud, pray alone, pray with others.

Our spiritual self can meditate, sing, dance, read, devote, give, contemplate.

Our spiritual self can strive to do good, strive to be good, strive to reach out, strive to reach within.

Our spiritual self can succeed, fail, love, hate, fall, get-up and try again.

Our spiritual self can ground us, heal us, loosen us, confuse us, understand us.

We can learn it, teach it, be it, show it, feel it, will it, laugh it, scream it, curse it, love it, experience it.

We can describe it with words or feel it with emotions.

Our spiritual self can tug at our heart and be funny!

Our spiritual self is for children, adults, males and females.

Our spiritual self can come in many shapes and sizes, colors and creeds, nationalities and ethnicities.

Our spiritual self can be inside or outside and many miles in between.

Our spiritual self can lie, cheat, steal and be redeemed.

Our spiritual self can be free and can cost a lot; it can be liberating and painful.

Our spiritual self is necessary.

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

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