



In Search of Balance

by Cindy Silbert, Author, Creator and Life Cultivator

What's your number one challenge? Let me guess, "balance". So many of us are in search of balance but we have no idea how to get there. It's because balance isn't a function of what you do, how much you do or even how much time you spend doing it. Balance is a function of your relationship with yourself and the place from which you create your life.

Take a moment and imagine yourself on a normal day as if you're watching a movie. See yourself move through the day from waking up, getting breakfast ready, finishing last minute work, driving the kids to school, swerving in and out of traffic (putting on your make up or experiencing road rage), stopping at Starbucks, rushing to work, working all day, running errands on the way home, planning parties, getting dinner, doing homework with the kids, checking email and on and on and on. The visual picture I get is of a woman deity with eight arms juggling a variety of sharp objects while riding a unicycle and talking on her cell phone. Now with your picture (or mine if you like) in front of you, consider the likelihood of finding balance from this place – consider that what you've been doing is trying to find "balance" by balancing it with everything else on your to do list.

The practice of Life Cultivation says that the "place" from which we are create is as important as "what" we want to create. When we seek balance from the place of imbalance we're just creating more imbalance. Likewise, the balance we're attempting to create is more like juggling rather than experiencing pure balance within. So, perhaps we're misdiagnosing our own desire and it's not really balance we seek at all. I'm sticking my neck out to say that what you're really seeking is not balance but becoming whole or "you" again. Feeling lost and wanting to find ourselves is what leads us to be out of balance in the first place. Instead of taking the time to reconnect with ourselves, we just pile on more and more hoping the right thing will stick and bring us happiness and fulfillment. Each time we take on a new role or responsibility it's like splicing our DNA and creating yet another version of ourselves to handle the task at hand. We've become fragmented and frazzled to the point that we don't know who we are anymore.

So what's the solution?

Here are some ways you can alleviate imbalance and find true inner balance by reconnecting with you.

Alleviating Imbalance

1. *Take responsibility for everything in your life and on your plate.* Do a reality check and make sure you're not playing victim or martyr. Most of us slip into the victim role without realizing it so the first step is to take control and know that your life is exactly what you've created.
2. *Give up trying to do it "all".* The old saying of something's gotta give is true. If you don't give up something you may spontaneously combust or crash like a computer running too many applications. Examine what's on your plate (and your families plate) and remove items as if you were over packed for a vacation. Consider what is absolutely essential and get rid of everything else. If you're stuck, ask, "What's taking away from life rather than adding to it?" "What's been on my list forever that never gets done?" "Who can I delegate some of these tasks to? (you'd be surprised at what kids can do!)"
3. *Trade in perfection.* If you're going to over schedule yourself and your family SO BE IT but give up trying to do it "all" and do it "all perfectly". Make a choice to do more but loosen your expectations for perfection AND even learn to enjoy the craziness you create by trying to do it all. On the flip side, allow yourself to be O.K. with doing less knowing you can feel better about your quality and pace of life.
4. *Limit multi-tasking.* Recent studies show multi-tasking is not time efficient and may cause stress and imbalance. Try doing one thing at a time for a change. Drive without talking on your cell phone. Turn your cell phone off for periods of time through out the day. Turn off TVs, Music and other noise and allow yourself to be engaged in the task at hand.
5. *Find the off switch.* We all have an off switch to our minds and nervous systems. Consciously turn your switch off whenever you can. Notice how life lightens and comes into focus. You'll feel more present and more alive. Once you get use to doing this, it's quite addicting.
6. *Trust in life's process.* Trust that each day you will do whatever you need to do and that all is well. Visualize your day flowing and go WITH the flow instead of AGAINST it.

Creating Inner Balance

After alleviating imbalance, you can create inner balance by reconnecting with "you". Open your journal to a clear page and write the words, "I am NOT". Then make a list of all of your tasks, obligations and responsibilities saying I am NOT before you write each item. For example, I am NOT my children, I am NOT my errands, I am NOT my job, I am NOT my husband, and I am NOT my extra five pounds . Don't worry about making sense just continue until you feel clear. Now turn to a clean page and write the words I AM. Make a list of all that you are just for you. For example, I AM beautiful, I AM loving, I AM fun, I AM creative, and I AM a source for people to create their lives. Get a sense of how you feel when you read you I AM list. This is the place from which you can cultivate inner balance. When you find yourself feeling off balance, stop what you're doing and take yourself back to this place and your connection with you.

Cultivating inner balance from your "I AM" place will take and ongoing practice. I suggest picking at least two items from the list below to practice each day or create your own practice and commitment to inner balance.

1. Breathe deeply allowing air to fill your chest and move up your spine until you feel it touch the base of your skull. Practice this 5 times in the morning, afternoon and at bedtime. It's O.K. to multi-task if one of the tasks is breathing so do this type of breathing as much as possible while working, cleaning the house, paying bills, playing with the kids, or watching T.V.
2. Meditate for at least 15 minutes by breathing in and out with the technique above allowing all thoughts to clear. You can also mediate using the "I am NOT/I AM" exercise

- above by first allowing your “I am NOT” list to clear and then allowing your “I AM” list to come into consciousness.
3. Take a Yoga, Pilates or other movement class.
 4. Sit and do nothing in your favorite room or place. This is simple but amazing.
 5. Get outside and connect with nature by smelling the air and flowers, looking for beauty, expressing gratitude, or watching a sunset.

Remember balance is not something you can get by putting it on your to do list - it's a state of being that occurs from you taking the time to become “you” again.

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