



Busting the Balance Myth

I'm celebrating a milestone this month. It has officially been one year since the Wellfinitiy newsletter began and I would like to take a moment to thank my loyal readers. May I continue to inspire you to wellness in body, mind, and spirit for years to come!

This month I'll explore the third component of my mantra for living – balance. An often elusive, sometimes cliché topic, yet an important one. Case in point, a majority of women who attended my recent Spirited Woman retreat mentioned balance as being an important part of their vision for wellness. And I don't think they are alone. Why?

Because unless we're intentional, it's easy to swing out of balance. To let the daily "to do's" take over; to see the world through a narrow lens and only see challenges; to care for others leaving little reserve to love and care for ourselves.

When we work towards balance, we feel grounded, we experience health, and we find a place from which we can launch, grow, and be our best selves.

The myth presented in many pop psychology articles is that balance is finite and static; an ultimate destination. When in reality, balance is a dynamic concept. We constantly need to re-calibrate our actions to align with what will bring us into balance. We also need to honor that what might bring one person into balance would throw another person out of balance. One shoe does not fit all here. Even within an individual person there might be elements of their life that are in balance, and others in which they have swung too far to an extreme.

While the bad news is there is no magic bullet to achieving balance, the good news is there are a multitude of strategies to cultivate it. Here are a couple of different ways of approaching balance.

Physically

This is not an exhaustive list, but just think about the ways the body can either be in or out of balance. A body in balance simply functions better.

* **Literal balance** – as in can you balance on one foot for 30 seconds? An often neglected part of fitness yet an important skill to practice, especially as we age. Go ahead and have fun with it.

Yoga and tai chi are great practices for balance. Or go to a playground and walk on the bouncy disks, balance beam, etc. This could be a great way to bring more play into your life too!

***Strength** – do you have muscular imbalances (strong in some places, weak in others) that create pain or discomfort or make you prone to injury? What can you do to even those out? Perhaps consider contacting a fitness professional or physical therapist for help in this arena.

***Flexibility** – are you tighter in some areas, more flexible in others? Is your exercise program all about cardio or resistance exercises and you've forgotten flexibility is part of the fitness triad? How is this affecting how you feel? Take time to stretch the tight spots each day.

* **Biochemically/hormonally** – Do you have imbalances that create health conditions, unpleasant physiological symptoms or mental health issues? Seek medical or psychological help if necessary but also look at what you can change yourself. Are aspects of your diet throwing your system out of whack? Could you learn some stress management techniques to lower levels of stress hormones? Would getting more sleep help?

Time

Is there a balance of how you use your time? **Do you only engage in the necessary components of life (i.e. daily grind) or do you protect some time for those activities that bring a sense of joy, fun, purpose, and play to your life?**

If you're feeling out balance give yourself a time audit. Note how much time you spend on specific tasks (work, chores, leisure activities, personal relationships, etc.) or thinking about certain topics and then note how much time you WANT to be spending. If you're out of alignment, think of a few actions steps that will help you move towards a state of balance.

For example, if you're spending 10 hours a week on housework but only want to allot 7, what changes could be made? Is it financially feasible to outsource some of that work? Could you enlist the help of family members? Could you ditch some of the work that really doesn't have to be done? (this may entail letting go of your inner control freak)

Energy

Energy balance relates not only to physical energy, but also mental and emotional energy. It can correlate to time, but also function independent of time. For example, you can do something for a short period of time, but if it is really intense (say an emotionally charged situation) it can drain you of energy.

Are you engaging in enough practices and habits that restore energy so that energy going out is met by an equal, if not greater, amount of energy coming in? This relates to the classic idea of needing to "fill your cup" so that you don't run dry.

Review your day and for each event or activity place it either under the category of "energy consuming" or "energy boosting". Again this will be highly individual. Some people may find

their work highly energy boosting while others will find it draining. If necessary, subcategorize further (aspects of your work that are energizing vs. draining).

What stands out to you about the lists? If you notice a pattern of expending more energy than is getting restored, what needs to change in your life? Maybe you need to come up with more ideas for energy boosters. Maybe you need to protect more time to engage in said renewing practices. (See how living with intention and loving yourself come into play here?)

The goal isn't to obsess or be rigid. Don't forget that balance is a fluid, dynamic concept. You will have days or even weeks that are out of balance, but the key is to avoid having this state become the norm.

So while you are doing your spring cleaning this month, take a moment to identify the areas in your life that are out of balance and screaming for change. If you brought more balance into your life, how would your life improve?

Remember, the point of balance is also the point of power!

If you want help implementing those changes be sure to contact me at shelly@wellfinity.com or 319-330-8382 to schedule your consultation and find out how wellness coaching can help.

In my work as a wellness coach, there are a few things I can honestly say most of us need more of in our life in order to cultivate balance. So I'll leave you with these words of encouragement:

Play more

Savor more

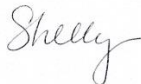
Be gracious

Love more

Laugh more

Be still more; do less

Honor your intuition

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelly".

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!