

How To Love Yourself Completely Part 2

Bringing Your Life Into Balance

Class #7

As human beings we have physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs that we are always juggling. If our bodies do not get the proper amount of sleep, exercise, and food, we quickly become very dysfunctional in our life. If we do not experience enough mental stimulation and creative expression, we become bored and restless. If we do not have a social network of friends or family who can give us a sense of belonging, feeling seen, heard, and loved, we become lonely and isolated. We are unable to thrive. If we lack a spiritual connection to something much larger than ourselves it is difficult to have a sense of purpose and meaning in our life. We cannot find our center. We become out of balance because we are then only focused on the material world, and we have not included our full identity as a spiritual being.

What does it mean to be in balance? For a gymnast it means that you can move in different directions and yet still maintain your equilibrium. A gymnast can somersault high in the air and land on the ground without falling to one side. A gymnast can walk a beam and hold a position on one foot perfectly still. A gymnast knows that to be in balance you must have a clear sense of your center. This is an ability that we need as well to maintain balance in our lives.

We must have a strong center because balance often requires a sense of equilibrium between two opposing functions. There needs to be a balance in our life between time with others and time alone. There needs to be a balance between giving and receiving. There needs to be a balance between work and play. There also needs to be a balance between times of focus and times of non-focus, or times of being "on" and times of being "off duty" when we can relax and "chill out". Too much of any one of these, at the expense of the other, knocks us out of our center and we suffer because of it.

How this looks in your life will differ from person to person. You do not need 50% of one thing and 50% of another to stay in balance. Given who you are you may need 10% alone time, and 90% with others. But if you need 10% time alone and you don't get it, you could feel out of sorts very quickly. If you are an introvert, you may need to have more alone time to be energized enough to be with others. But there is no right or wrong, or perfect formula to follow. What is important is that you are receiving as much as you are giving. Some people can receive a lot from other people while others get drained very easily. You need to discover what your natural rhythm is so that you can stay in balance.

The process of breathing is a helpful metaphor in this regard. When you inhale you are taking in valuable oxygen into your system. When you exhale you release carbon dioxide from your system. If you only exhale you will not survive and likewise if you only inhale you cannot survive. Both are needed. Similarly, you cannot keep giving out in your life without getting replenished. Your body, mind, emotions, and spirit need revitalization.

Esther Hicks, in one of her workshops, says something interesting about the balance needed between work and play. She says, *“Reduce your workload by 30% and increase your fun load by 30% and you will increase your revenues by 100%. And you will increase your productivity by 10,000%. (If there could be such a percentage.) More fun, less struggle -- more results on all fronts.”* The key here seems to be less struggle. When you work too hard, or try too hard, you start to work against yourself. Rather than flowing with what life offers and being flexible, you exert too much control, try to cling too tightly, and you get bounced around in the process.

You need to know your spiritual center, particularly when you take yourself and your life too seriously. You need to have an inner place where you can stand and get a larger perspective. This is the place where you encounter the Divine within--where your small self can let go into the larger spiritual reality and you can be one with the flow again. This is the place where you remember how safe and loved you really are and that you deserve to take care of yourself.

How do you know when your life is in balance? When you are in balance you feel good! Energy is flowing. Your life is working. When you are out of balance you feel wobbly. Life is stressful and you feel exhausted trying to keep up. Your life feels precarious as if you are juggling on shaky ground and the addition of one more thing could send everything crashing down on top of you.

You need to know yourself well enough to recognize what it means for *you* to be balanced. It doesn't help to compare yourself to others because their needs are different than yours. You are the one who needs to recognize the signs that your life is out of balance. Your emotions are the best indicator. Are you feeling irritable and angry, depressed, or overwhelmed? Perhaps your signal is that you become shut down emotionally or feel disconnected from yourself and others. Maybe you notice an increase in addictive behavior, such as sexual promiscuity, drinking, eating, or spending that is out of control. What is your best indicator that your life is off center and out of order?

When you feel out of balance you need to stop and listen to what is needed to bring things back into equilibrium again. Whatever you are feeling, take time to be present to yourself and look at what you need physically, emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually that you are not receiving. Examine what is missing. What do you need to increase in your life and what do you need to reduce? What do you most need in your life right now, and what choices do you need to make to allow for more of that? When you love yourself, you keep adjusting your life so that it stays in balance. If you don't, you have nothing to offer. Your happiness is paramount. Your well-being is what is most important.