

# Balancing Act

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**Display:** Books, videos, pamphlets, on balancing your Life, Body, Mind and Spirit.

Having difficulty balancing your life? Feel like you're walking a tightrope? Most women feel like that. Balancing the daily routine of family, friends, work and leisure time is challenging. Create an evening for outreach into your community to assist women with one of the main issues of life — balance. Invite guests to speak for 15 minutes on issues of balancing life.

## KEEPING YOUR BODY IN BALANCE

**Body:** Balance your life through exercise. Invite a nutritionist, or a public health nurse to do a presentation on healthy eating and daily exercise.

Care for your body through a massage. Invite a massage therapist in to speak. Care for your body with regard to eating.

**Walking:** It is easy, safe and inexpensive. Walking is an injury-free way for you to keep fit. It burns calories, and it's an ideal fat-burning activity. It conditions the heart, improves muscle tone and strength, relieves stress, and can help with back pain, osteoporosis, respiratory problems, diabetes, arthritis, cardiac rehabilitation and a variety of other health problems.

**Biking:** This is a good exercise option for women with osteoarthritis of the knees who can engage in stationary cycling by using a high seat adjustment, low resistance setting, and toe clips.

**Swimming:** Swimming will help in strengthening the muscles, tendons and ligaments that support the joints, and thus improve stability and flexibility. Aim to exercise for 15 or 20 minutes at a time in the beginning.



*Caring for the spiritual well being of the soul is vital to a balanced life*

**Low-impact aerobics:** This is no jarring, jumping, or knee harming, heavy-duty swiveling, but rather stretching and then sustained exercise. Aerobic conditioning is the best way to strengthen your heart rate, which will allow you to keep exercising at your full capacity as you age and may protect you from heart disease later on. This can include dancing, aerobic machines, light step aerobics, square dancing- or any other exercise which fits the guideline of always having one foot on the floor.

## KEEPING YOUR MIND IN BALANCE

**Mind:** Balance your life with wisdom on the subject of "A healthy outlook on life" Our minds are often so cluttered that we can't seem to find balance in our thinking. Invite a social worker to speak on the topic of health and wellness.

## Personal Values

Values are the broad principles and frames of reference that we rely on. They emerge from personal choices and from beliefs acquired over time. Values greatly influence our way of seeing the world and interacting with people.

Values develop through experiences we've had or were told about by the people around us. They can change throughout our lives.

## You're Values

It was only a dream! — Your most secret dreams and desires often reveal a lot about your values. For example, if you dreamed of getting married and having children, one could conclude that you believe in marriage, family, and commitment in a relationship.

**Action/reaction:** When a friend tells you what they are doing, do you surprise yourself sometimes by reacting or by feeling like telling them what to do because their behaviour isn't what you think it should be? Could your values be behind this reaction?

Take the time to think about the way you behave and the way you react to things. Can you name a few values that are important to you?

**Think about your behaviour:** Is it consistent with your convictions and values? For example, if you're against violence and you slight people around you, isn't that a contradiction between your values and behaviour? What can you change so that your behaviour is consistent with what you believe?

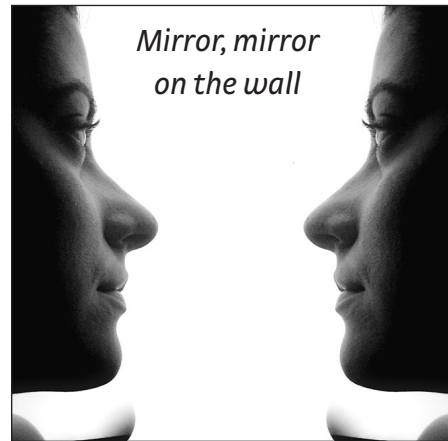
Learn to know the situations you're comfortable in and the ones you're better off avoiding. You'll find it easier to stick to your first instincts if you make smart choices that allow you to avoid embarrassing situations.

**Respect yourself:** It's not always easy to act in accordance with your values! In fact, you may sometimes be tempted to behave in a way that

contradicts them. If you want to maintain your self-respect you'll stay true to your values!

Our values help us to be comfortable with our decisions and resist pressure from others. They are a part of who we are.

**Self-esteem:** Mirror, mirror on the wall — Self-esteem is the way you see yourself and what you think your own self worth is as a person. Having high self-esteem means having an accurate idea of yourself, knowing your strengths, weaknesses and accepting yourself, as you are.



**Profiting from experience:** Self-esteem is the outgrowth of all your experiences, both the positive and the less positive ones. Your experience helps you develop an idea of what you like about yourself and what you'd like to change. Your experiences and your attitude to challenges can help improve your self-esteem.

Everyone has talents, skills, strengths, and weaknesses. What are some of your strengths? (Be realistic!)

**Choose what to focus on:** You can decide to focus on what you're not and what you don't have, or on what you are and what you have. Which glass do you choose? The one half-full or the half-empty one?

### **Take the time to enjoy your successes:**

When you have success or do something great, do you take the time to savor the occasion, congratulate yourself, and enjoy receiving compliments from others?

**Stretch yourself:** Sometimes, the best way to stop a pattern of saying “I can’t!” is to take on challenges that prove the opposite forcing a change in the way we see ourselves.

**Learn from your experiences:** You can choose to see things that didn’t go so well either as failures or as experiences that teaches you something about yourself.

**Stop comparing yourself to everybody else:** Comparing yourself and envying others can cause you discomfort. Everyone is different and has characteristics that make them unique. Don’t become a clone?

**Tone down your expectations:** Everyone has weaknesses and weak spots. Are you too hard on yourself? Do you put too much pressure on yourself? Do you think you absolutely have to succeed at everything? All that pressure doesn’t help!

**Ask questions:** Sometimes, we’re the worst judges of ourselves! Think of a way to ask your family and friends what they think of you?

Talking about what you’re going through and what you’re feeling can help relieve your pain.

### **When you talk about things, you...**

- see things in a different light and a different perspective
- feel other people’s support and realize that you’re not alone
- feel understood

### **How Can I Communicate?**

To favour communication, you should...

- choose whom you’d like to confide in.



*Talking ... can help  
relieve your pain*

- clearly state what you expect of the other person, what you need from them, and what you’d like them to do for you. Do you want them to give you advice, go with you to a resource-person, or simply listen to you non-judgmentally, without telling you what to do?
- choose a good time for both of you.
- be open — the more the other person knows what you’re going through, the more they can help you.
- talk about yourself (using the “I” form) and what you’re feeling, rather than accuse others of being responsible for what you’re experiencing.

### **You Always Have a Choice!**

When things aren’t going well or when there’s an obstacle in your path, you may feel that you’ll never make it, or that you’re a victim of circumstances or someone else’s actions. You always have the option of changing your behaviour or the way you see things.

Examples:

- you can choose to be pessimistic, or to stay in a relationship that isn't working for you any more, or decide that you're bad at this and terrible at that.

OR

- you can choose to leave an abusive situation, or to communicate your needs, or try to change a difficult situation.

Doing nothing, complaining, playing the victim, and seeing everything as pointless are all choices too!

Seeing every decision and thought as a choice can give you the power to change your behaviour and ways of thinking.

### **When there isn't much to be done...**

If you feel that you can't do much about a situation or problem, you can always choose to move on or to change the people you associate with. For example, if you're always fighting with your girlfriend or boyfriend, you can decide to stay in the relationship despite everything and live with the negative consequences. Or you can decide to leave the relationship for your own good, and move on to something new. You always have this choice.

Don't forget — you cannot change other people or make decisions for them. You have control only for yourself, at all times and in every situation. This control gives you the freedom to build your

life and allows you to avoid situations out of your comfort zone!

## **KEEPING YOUR SPIRIT IN BALANCE**

**Spirit:** Balance your life through soul care. Caring for the spiritual well being of the soul is vital to a balanced life. Jesus, exemplified the practice of spending time with his Father to be replenished in his spirit.

**Prayer:** An important aspect of our spiritual life is Prayer. Introduce 'prayer journaling' — ask the ladies to write out their prayers. Set aside a prayer corner where they can sit quietly to pray.

**God's Word:** Another aspect of our spiritual wellbeing is God's Word. Providing they are comfortable doing so — invite any one of your ladies to conduct a short Bible study. Allow God's Word to speak into the lives of your women.

Provide a practical handout for each of the above areas to guide the ladies through a balanced day.

Leave adequate time for everyone to ponder on what has been shared and for them to share ways in which they feel they can put into practice what they have heard.

**Conclusion:** Conclude your evening with refreshments.



*“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)*