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<http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/32396>

Dear friends and clients;

Happy Fall! In this Newsletter, I will finish the discussion I started last time about **balance** as the key to a healthy, contented lifestyle. We have looked at how your physical self needs nurture, your spiritual self needs attention, and how your relationships need priority. We have discussed the importance of balancing your financial needs of saving and spending. Now we turn to the last three areas: career, recreation, and inner life.

Career

Whether it's a wage-earning endeavor, volunteer work, or child rearing, it is important that we have a place to express our adult competence and feel rewarded for our gifts. The tricky part is when this becomes our identity or consumes all of our time and energy. So many people (especially full time moms) come to me with what I call the "empty well syndrome." They have drained themselves dry giving to others and neglected to "refill the well" by taking care of their own needs. This imbalance of what we DO becoming more important than who we ARE leads to job burnout. Take a tip from the universe—balance your day with eight hours of sleep, eight hours of work, and eight hours of play. If you believe you are trapped into working more than that, then you are—trapped, that is! Change your beliefs and change your life. After all, we are human BEINGS, not human DOINGS.

Recreation

Have you forgotten how to play? Many times patients will just stare blankly when I ask them what activities they do for fun. Taking time to play refills that "well" I talked about previously, and is vital for optimum mental health. Sometimes I have to take clients back to their childhood to rediscover what used to make them happy. Do you know how to play? Do you know who and what makes you smile? Do you prioritize these people and activities?

Inner Life

Most disasters in our personal life—affairs, financial dishonesty, stress-related illnesses—come from what is called "the unexamined life." We are a society intensely uncomfortable with being still or being alone, when we should in fact welcome the company of our own thoughts. Research shows that journaling—"venting" on paper- three or four times a week to detect trends in our thinking can keep us from mistakes and hasty decisions that may cause trouble later. It also relieves the body of the burden of the thoughts somewhat to express them on paper. I often give my patients sentences to finish to get them started. For instance, try to finish this sentence for yourself:

"I am frustrated lately because..."

See what happens when you turn yourself loose with that thought! If you're worried about it being found, simply tear it up when you finish. It's not necessary to keep the writings.

Yours for happier living!

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