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Child Custody Life Coaching

Monthly Motivation 8 - Balance

One of the Olympic events that I like to watch is the floor exercises. Particularly I am intrigued by the parallel bars and the balance beam. I have an official size balance beam in my home. The bodies of those gymnasts so gracefully flow from one position to another, going from a stationary pose to mid air flips and back to a pose on a ten centimeter – about four inches -- wide beam. I won't say I will never be able to do that but I'd need spend many hours suspended by a wire harness like Keanu Reeves while filming the Matrix. I do have good balance in other areas though. I regularly ride up to red lights while cycling, stop and sit on my seat with feet locked to the pedals while the wheels roll no more than a few inches. Back in the day we used to compete against each other for fun often doing this for a half hour or longer.

If you have been doing yoga then you have likely found that your balance has improved. I find it quite comfortable to stand on the top platform of a step-ladder rather than the steps. A general sense of balance and agility can be critical to your overall health. Previously I wrote about balance in *The paradox of time - or - slip and fall on the ice*. Today, though, I want to present to you another form of balance. Competing demands for your attention.

By now I trust that you are realizing that much of the stress in our lives is self-imposed either through over-committing ourselves or striving to attain unrealistic or false measures of success. The most common competitors for our attention are our jobs, family and self. Often times it is self that is relegated to last place. Our sense of obligation to the provider of financial compensation may override our commitment to family although family is the end beneficiary of our pursuit of said financial compensation. Ultimately as we chase our tail through that circular paradigm it is we who suffer.

Today I want for you to do a simple exercise to help assess your balance. Write a list of your daily workweek obligations and activities such as employment, grooming, transporting children, eating and so forth. Next make a similar list but for the weekend or your days off from employment. After you have completed those you may need to make some adjustments to arrive at your “typical work day” and “typical day off”. Once you have those refined lists then attribute who most benefits or is the end beneficiary of the activities. Grooming on the weekday may be to conform to the expectations or requirements of your employer whereas Sunday it may be part of the pre church service ritual. Saturdays may just be because you like the feel of a fresh shave or brushing your hair is relaxing.

Our goal together is your life satisfaction. The psychological impact of being emotionally overtaxed and not attaining life satisfaction can become a downward spiral if we don't arrest the process. It may take some abstract thinking but by not giving to

ourselves we are actually taking from our dependents or other beneficiaries. You may be bound to a pattern of self denial through abatement of cognitive dissonance – the conflict between logical thought and exercised actions. Logic tells us that we should sleep until our body is rested but instead we wake up to an alarm clock so as to avoid the opprobrium of a boss. We rationalize that the benefits of the job outweigh the adverse effects of lack of sleep – a simple cost/benefit analysis. Or is it?

That lack of sleep may cause irritability resulting in distressed interpersonal relationships. Over time this can cascade to chronic stress and depression in which one feels less like cooking a meal and more like picking up the high priced garbage at the drive-thru which clogs arteries, raises blood pressure and results in more time demands and expense.

So I again stress the need for you to set aside time for yourself daily. Find a place for you that is yours during that time. Make sure everyone knows that is your time and your place – it can be a closet, it can be a warm bath. Meditate about the now, massage your scalp, ponder your day or just stare at the ceiling. Make it yours for you and then, by residual means, for everyone else. By harmonizing competing demands everyone will be better served.

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