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Every
Thought We
Think Is Creating
Our Future

NAVIGATOR

Why Bother with Balance?

By Ric Giardina

Something at our most inner core tells us that balance in life is important. We seem to have some Life Balance monitoring mechanism similar to that in the inner ear that tells us when we are off balance with the physical world.

Too often, though, we fail to heed the warnings of this Life Balance monitor until it's too late, and we may notice only when we have gone *off* balance—and even then we may ignore the warning signals because we have too many “important” things to do. When we do that, the results can often be the loss of productivity, the loss of health, the loss of relationships, the loss of aliveness and authenticity, and, if we continue to ignore the warning signs, most ironically, the loss of the very things—job, family, and friends—for which we might believe we allowed ourselves to go out of balance in the first place.

What is it about Life Balance that makes it so important? The answer, in one word, is STRESS!

Over 20 years ago, the cover story for *Time* magazine's June 6, 1983, issue called stress “The Epidemic of the Eighties,” and the article referred to it as our leading health problem. Since then, the situation has only gotten worse.

Everywhere, evidence is building that stress is on the increase. Numerous surveys indicate that adult Americans perceive that they are under significantly more stress than they were a decade or two ago. While job stress is certainly the leading cause of stress for adults, stress levels have also escalated in children, teenagers, college students, and the elderly (see <http://www.stress.org>).

The human body can deal with short-lived or infrequent episodes of stress and the body's autonomic response to it, which includes the release of hormones into the bloodstream to increase the heart rate and blood pressure, raise blood sugar levels, cause heavier breathing, and make other blood chemistry adjustments. But, when stressful situations continue—indeed, when the number of episodes increases geometrically and the frequency of such episodes seems to be accelerating—our bodies are kept in near-constant states of activation that increase the rate of wear and tear on our biological systems.

Even without reading the abundant quantity of studies, it cannot escape you that when the human stress response is repeatedly invoked, it contributes to cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension and heart attacks; to strokes, diabetes, and ulcers; to musculoskeletal disorders such as neck, shoulder, or lower back pain, and to other diseases and conditions. And that is just the *physiological* side of the danger of stress.

There are also important *psychological* and *social* effects of stress that may be harder to measure but are no less painful in terms of human suffering: none of us is “better” under the pressure of stress. We become short-tempered, cranky, argumentative, unreasonable, and even unfriendly. In the worst of cases, we reject the love, care, and support of the people who care the most about us. We socially isolate ourselves, which only serves to increase the pressure on us since social support is a powerful stress-buster.

Stress is killing us—millions of us—every year, and destroying our most precious relationships in numbers never experienced before, and most of us are doing exactly the same thing about it—absolutely *nothing!*



The only solution is an active one that incorporates all of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements that identify us as human beings. All of us must take stock of what we are actually doing with our time and attention, examine that information to determine how it fits with what we want in life, apply some right-brain thinking (read: “feeling”), and then make adjustments to bring our realities more in line with our heartfelt desires.

Getting your life in balance will not guarantee that you will live stress-free. But doing what you can to live a balanced life that reflects what is truly important to you results in less stress on you. Having what you want in life—spending your time and attention with and on the people and activities that *really* matter to you—is the best way to relieve some of the stress you face day after day, and that’s what Life Balance is, at its most fundamental.

(Source: Ric Giardina, attorney and president of The Spirit Employed Company (<http://www.spiritemployed.com>), writes and speaks on workplace authenticity, Life Balance, consciously creating community, developing gentle self-discipline, and engendering ethics. His books include *Threads of Gold* (poetry), *Your Authentic Self: Be Yourself at Work*, and *Become a Life Balance Master*.)

Interested in getting your life more in balance? Ric will be offering the Life Balance Workshop, also known as, “If I Could Juggle That Much, I’d Join a Circus!” at NASA Headquarters on Wednesday, September 14, 2005, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Preregistration is required. To register, contact Evelin Saxinger at esaxinge@hq.nasa.gov or 358-1311.

WEB SITE PICKS

<http://www.finance.cch.com/>



This Web site is dedicated to you and your financial future. It’s free, there’s nothing to buy, and it’s brought to you by a team of finance and business professionals with decades of experience.

“People do not attract that which they want, but that which they are.”

—As a Man Thinketh

THOUGHT DU JOUR

Putting Yourself First

Meeting Your Own Needs

In life, we are encouraged to think of others first. It is seen as a virtue to selflessly address the needs of parents, children, friends, and loved ones before, or sometimes at the cost of, our own needs. But this virtue, like any, is best and most meaningful in moderation. Overly caring for others can easily be an unconscious cry for love or can be used as a crutch. Devoting all of your time to others can stand in the way of caring for yourself. Taking care of yourself can feel selfish, while taking care of others can seem easier than dealing with your own issues. But addressing your own needs first in some cases is beneficial and vital not only to your own health and well-being, but also to your ability to care for others when necessary.

We often find ourselves faced with too many responsibilities, and those most readily given up are often those most important to us. Ask yourself why. Do you feel the need to prove yourself by being selfless or hope your sacrifice will be acknowledged? Do you feel selfish for wanting things for yourself? Or is it simply more stressful to contemplate your own needs because they are the ones requiring the most personal effort on your part? Selfless dedication can be frustrating when we don’t find the appreciation or love we desire, which ironically leads to our putting more effort into helping others. But when you care for yourself, you affirm your own worth and boundaries. Don’t be afraid to put yourself first now and then. Listen to your inner voice and be fair to yourself as well as to others. Have the courage to face your needs and issues head-on instead of putting them off by helping others with theirs.

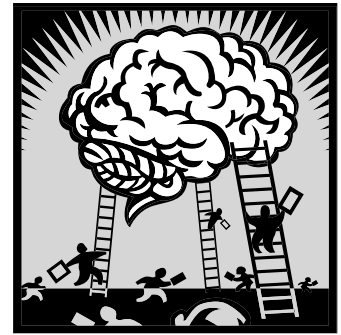
Avoiding caring for oneself is often indicative of great internal struggle. It can be helpful to recognize that you are as deserving of care as any other human and that you, too, function best when your needs are met. Try, when possible, to do something special, take a break, ask for help, and give your own needs the attention they deserve.

(Source: <http://www.DailyOm.com>)

HEALTH

Keeping Your Brain Fit: A Global Impact

When people think about staying fit, they generally think from the neck down. But the health of your brain plays a critical role



in almost everything you do: thinking, feeling, remembering, working, playing—even sleeping.

The good news is that we now know there’s a lot you can do to help keep your brain healthier as you age. These steps might also reduce your risk of Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia.

In an article entitled, “Together We Can Win the Fight Against Alzheimer’s Disease,” Sheldon Goldberg, president and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association, commented on the leaps modern medicine made in the 1980s and ’90s toward the battle against this debilitating disease. He further stated that the Alzheimer’s Association is “urging all Americans to maintain your brain.

“Simple lifestyle modifications would have an enormous impact on our nation’s public health and the cost of healthcare.” If you make brain-healthy lifestyle changes and take action by getting involved, we could imagine a future without Alzheimer’s disease.

Here are some ways you can maintain your brain:

1. Get tested.

Most of us don’t realize that a simple test done in a doctor’s office can predict whether you are at risk for getting Alzheimer’s disease. Brain mapping can mean the difference between detecting a devastating, debilitating disease early on so that proper treatments can be implemented, as opposed to never even seeing it coming.

2. Adopt a brain-healthy diet.

This means a nutrient-rich diet consisting of whole grains, lean meats, fish, vegetables, and fruits. Aside from that, a supplement regimen incorporating all the nutrients that boost brain health, metabolism, speed, and energy is essential.

3. If you don’t use it, you lose it.

Exercise your brain like you would a muscle. Participate in activities that keep your brain sharp: playing games, solving crossword puzzles, attending lectures,

helping your child or grandchild with his or her homework, and so on.

4. Keep the blood flowing.

Working out or engaging in some form of aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes per day is a must. Exercise increases circulation to the brain, thereby providing the brain cells with vital oxygen in order to stay alive longer.

5. Replenish your brain.

Aging and toxins in the environment deplete our brain of hormones and vital neurotransmitter chemicals, causing a constant decline in brain functioning. Mitigate this process by taking in fresh air, drinking 8 glasses of water each day, meditating, and taking time out for relaxation.

1. ElderCare, vol. 4, issue 4 (11–12), 2004.
2. <http://www.alzheimers.com>, About, Inc. All rights reserved. A PRIMEDIA Company, Copyright 2005.
3. Alzheimer's Association, all rights reserved. Copyright 2001–05.

(Source: Dr. Eric Braverman.
<http://www.pathmed.com>)

"Faith can move mountains. Doubt can create them."

—Howard Wight

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

212°: The Extra Degree™ (an excerpt)

By S.L. Parker

At 211 degrees, water is hot.
At 212 degrees, it boils.
And with boiling water comes steam.
And with steam, you can power a train.

One degree. Applying one extra degree of temperature to water means the difference between something that is simply very hot and something that generates enough force to power a machine—a beautifully uncomplicated metaphor that ideally should feed our every endeavor, consistently pushing us to make the extra effort in every task and action we undertake.

Two-twelve serves as a forceful drill sergeant with its motivating and focused message while adhering to a scientific law—a natural law. It reminds us that seemingly small things can make

tremendous differences. So simple is the analogy that you can stop reading right now, walk away with the opening thought firmly planted in your mind, and benefit from it for the rest of your life. That's the goal of 212—to help you internally define and take ownership of the most fundamental principle behind achieving life results beyond your expectations—a simple idea with a singular focus, an actionable focus.

Two-twelve.

It's this dramatic—three numbers joined together to form one, crystallizing a message that absolutely ensures life-altering, positive results for those who choose to apply it.

212.

Why do we enter into any activity with anything but a commitment to achieve our objective? Not a desire to achieve our objective, but a commitment?

Emerson said: "All great masters are chiefly distinguished by the power of adding a second, a third, and perhaps a fourth step in a continuous line. Many a man had taken the first step. With every additional step you enhance immensely the value of your first."

Vince Lombardi tightened it up with "Inches make a champion."

Two-twelve distills it even further.

Often in life, we miss the opportunity to do more and create better results because we are not aware of the possibilities that could occur if we applied a small amount of effort beyond what we normally do. For instance, consider the impact of making an extra contact each day at work: a sales call, a customer follow-up, a brief discussion with a colleague, or an encouraging talk with a member of your team. With contact comes opportunity. At the end of a year, you'll have opened more than 200 additional doors of possibility. On the personal side, imagine the exponentially positive results of investing an additional 15 minutes of quality time each day with your children or spouse—an equivalent of more than 2 weeks each year at work.

Fortunately, because you're reading this, you're now aware of "212°: The Extra Degree." No longer will you be able to do only what is required and expected of you—because with awareness comes responsibility, both to yourself and to others.

And, again . . .

You are now aware.

The excitement has begun. Are you smiling yet?

212 . . . a new target for everything you do.

(Source: *212°: The Extra Degree™* is an e-book by S.L. Parker, cofounder of MaxPitch Media, Inc.—producer of the Web's community and resource for sales and marketing, [justsell.com](http://www.212club.com/learn). <http://www.212club.com/learn>)



HUMOR

To God—From the Dog:

Dear God: Why do humans smell the flowers but seldom, if ever, smell one another?

Dear God: When we get to heaven, can we sit on your couch? Or is it still the same old story?

Dear God: Why are there cars named after the jaguar, the cougar, the mustang, the colt, the stingray, and the rabbit, but not ONE named for a dog? How often do you see a cougar riding around? We do love a nice ride! Would it be so hard to rename the "Chrysler Eagle" the "Chrysler Beagle"?

Dear God: If a dog barks his head off in the forest and no human hears him, is he still a bad dog?

Dear God: We dogs can understand human verbal instructions, hand signals, whistles, horns, clickers, beepers, scent ID's, electromagnetic energy fields, and Frisbee flight paths. What do humans understand?

Dear God: More meatballs, less spaghetti, please.

Dear God: Are there mailmen in heaven? If there are, will I have to apologize?

Dear God: Let me give you a list of just some of the things I must remember in order to be a good dog.

1. I will not eat the cats' food before they eat it or after they throw it up.
2. I will not roll on dead seagulls, fish, crabs, etc., just because I like the way they smell.
3. The sofa is not a 'face towel'...neither are laps.
4. The garbage collector is not stealing our stuff.
5. My head does not belong in the refrigerator.
6. I will not bite the officer's hand when he reaches in for Mom's driver's license and registration.

7. I will not play tug-of-war with Dad's underwear when he's on the toilet.
8. I don't need to suddenly stand straight up when I'm under the coffee table.
9. I must shake the rainwater out of my fur before entering the house, not after.
10. I will not throw up in the car.
11. I will not come in from outside and immediately drag my butt.
12. The cat is not a 'squeaky toy,' so when I play with him and he makes that noise, it's usually not a good thing.

WORTH KNOWING

Blocks to Listening

COMPARING: Comparing makes it hard to listen because you are always trying to assess who is smarter, more competent, and more emotionally healthy—you or the other person.

MIND READING: The mind reader doesn't pay much attention to what people say. In fact, he often distrusts it. He's always trying to figure out what the other person is really thinking and feeling.

REHEARSING: You don't have time to listen when you're rehearsing what to say. Your whole attention is on the preparation and crafting of your next comment.

FILTERING: When you filter, you listen to some things and not to others. You pay attention only enough to see if someone is angry, or unhappy, or if you're in emotional danger. Once assured that the communication contains none of those things, you let your mind wander.

JUDGING: Negative labels have enormous power. If you prejudge someone as stupid or nuts or unqualified, you don't pay much attention to what they say. You've already written them off.

DREAMING: You're half listening, and something the person says suddenly triggers a chain of private associations. And you're off in "la-la land."

IDENTIFYING: In this block, you take everything a person tells you and refer it back to your own experience. They tell you about a toothache, but that reminds you about the time you had oral surgery.

ADVISING: You are a great problem solver, ready with help and suggestions. You

don't have to hear more than a few sentences before you begin searching for the right advice.

SPARRING: This block has you arguing and debating with people. The other person never feels heard because you're so quick to disagree.

BE RIGHT: Being right means that you will go to any length (twist the facts, start shouting, make excuses or accusations, call up past sins) to avoid being wrong. Your convictions are unshakeable.

DERAILING: This listening block is accomplished by suddenly changing the subject. You derail the train of conversation when you get bored or uncomfortable with the topic.

PLACATING: "Right, Right, Right. Absolutely I know. Of course you are incredible. Yes, really!" You want to be nice, pleasant, and supportive. You want people to like you, so you agree with everything.

(Source: Listening Leader newsletter, by rick@listeningleader.com. Dr. Rick Bommelje)

INSPIRATION

Paradise

Just could this be paradise
right here where you are?
Nirvana within you
not somewhere afar?

Tho' some would decry it
and say it can't be
just follow along
if you long to be free.

Your life's what you make it—
your choices each day
the thoughts that you harbor
and words that you say
determine the status
of your life today.

So if you want more
than you think you have now
watch closely your mindset
and you'll find out how.

Just live in the present.
Think only the best
about yourself first

and then all the rest
of your brothers and sisters—
you'll find that you're blest

and really in paradise.
It's all in your mind.
Whatever you look for
is just what you'll find.

—Author unknown

The art of making your dream a reality is simply remaining committed long enough for reality to catch up to your dream.

TECH TIP

Setting the Distance Between Text and Borders

One common formatting effect within Microsoft Word is the application of borders around a paragraph. Word allows you to apply borders to all four sides of a paragraph—you can even have the borders be different from each other, if desired.

After applying border formatting, you may decide that you need some more room between the actual border lines and the text within the paragraph. You can easily adjust this distance by following these steps:

1. Select the paragraphs you want to affect. (If you only need to format a single paragraph, just make sure the insertion point is within that paragraph.)
2. Choose Borders and Shading from the Format menu. Word displays the Borders and Shading dialog box.
3. The Borders tab should be selected.
4. If you had not previously done so, make sure you select the borders you want to appear around the paragraph.
5. Click on the Options button. Word displays the Borders and Shading Options dialog box.
6. Use the Top, Bottom, Left, and Right controls to specify, in points, the distance between the respective border and the paragraph text.
7. Click the OK button two times.

(This tip works with Microsoft Word 97, Word 2000, Word 2002, and Word 2003.)

(Source: <http://www.VitalNews.com>)

Questions/comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codecc/cc/navig-8_05.pdf