

BALANCE YOUR LIFE – NO NEED TO STRUGGLE

By Ellen Harris, LMHC, CEAP

Do you ever get a grocery cart with a bad wheel? It pulls to one side and you struggle, while it appears everyone else is pushing their carts up and down the aisles with ease? It's frustrating. But, more often than not, instead of choosing another cart, you continue to shop with the stubborn cart!

This is what it's like when our life is out of balance. It appears as though we're struggling against the current of stressful experiences. There are barely enough hours in the day to do what *needs* to be done. We push aside or forget about our own needs and desires – our *self care*, and spend too much energy just trying to keep the status quo.

When our lives are in balance, we *feel* good. We are productive and are taking care of ourselves. Yet, too often we find ourselves out of sync. We become too focused on an area of our life concerned with survival – our job, financial situation, or family; and neglect other important aspects of life - our health, creativity, spiritual life, or personal development.

To evaluate whether your life is in balance, acknowledge that you have basic human needs: survival, love, belonging, power, freedom and fun. Are you fulfilled in these areas? What are the barriers that prevent you from meeting your needs? What would you do differently if you were fulfilled? Make a simple, but concrete plan for change that will ensure your needs are met.

The well-known author, Wayne Dyer advises us how to live through the words of an old familiar song. "Row, row, row your boat." (Don't row your spouse's boat, your children's boat, or your friend's boat. Row YOUR boat.) GENTLY! (Working too hard is a struggle and signals a need for finding a better way.) Down the stream – (Go with the flow of life. If you are struggling against the current, stop and re-evaluate your path.) Merrily, merrily, merrily – (Enjoy the journey. Find joy in life.) Life is but a dream – (Your life can be anything you desire and dream it to be.)

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Ellen Harris

Licensed Mental Health Counselor

239-404-0862

www.ellenharriscounseling.com

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