

Forgot to shave the other leg! Insights into balance in our lives by Janelle Fletcher

Walking down the promenades of the eastern beaches of Auckland today, with a warm, almost summery feel to the day, I gleaned a few insights into balance.

Removing ourselves from the daily grind

I overheard a father strolling with his young child in the pram saying, “Hey this gets me away from the office. It’s great!” The woman, probably his better half, replied, “Yeah I’d love to get out of my daily grind as well!” Both were seeking balance in their daily roles and responsibilities. The difference was the man was removed from the people and environment that was part of his working life. She however was not feeling that being with her child in this way had removed her from anything much different from her daily routine.

Changing our point of balance can change the balance for others

The beach front promenade had two divided lanes – one for cycling and one for walking. On a few occasions, we saw some collisions (and near misses) because people chose to cross the median line – destroying the flow and balance of “foot and cycle traffic.” I guess the insight here for me was about the “grooves” and “moulds” we sometimes settle into – whether moulded by ourselves or society. Sometimes it’s just good to get ourselves out of the mundane and the “expected” and try out something different. Sometimes however when we do remove ourselves from the familiar, the comfort zone or the seat of expectation, it affects the balance for others around us (=collision) often requiring a new compromise or plan to stay upright.

Forward planning for balance

Sometimes we have to plan for balance and a smooth event. Before we even made it to the beach, we noticed one of my son’s bike tyres was flat. Thank God we noticed at the early stage and we had a chance to “remedy the imbalance” otherwise the look and feel of the whole day could have been destroyed!

Balance is contextual and individual

On entering the bakery, my son’s eyes went immediately in the direction of the sweets department. “But it’s got fruit on it”, my son pointed out as he devoured his fruit, custard pastry tart. My other son thought there was great balance in the savoury potato topped pie and his sweet chocolate croissant! Guess it’s about our point of reference. Don’t think it would have been seen as balance from a Weight Watchers point of view however.

Forgot to shave the other leg – a symptom perhaps of over-responsibility

The comment that topped it all off however was from the woman sitting on the beach with her young child, husband and a woman friend. She said “Well I must be losing it. I had a shower this morning and I got out and noticed I had only shaved one leg!” Probably the result of a very busy lifestyle, multitasking, lack of sleep, huge responsibilities, the daily “stuff” and goodness knows what else. Quite a delightful example though of being off centre and out of balance.

Here are some other common examples of imbalance:

- **Physically** – carrying our babies around on the same hip or carry our handbags on the same shoulder
- **Emotionally** – smouldering and keeping things in or frequently taking out our frustrations on someone else
- **Work** –working 24/7 or spending loads of hours at the office, working on our days off
- **Dietary** – eating or drinking too much of the wrong thing or totally restricting ourselves
- **Exercise** – extremes of exercise – total slothing or over-exercising
- **Responsibilities** – doing everything for everyone else and little for ourselves
- **Financial** – not being in control of our money and spending
- **Leisure** – working or not resting in our leisure time
- **Sexual** – low libido and disinterest or only one thing on your mind
- **Communication** – dominating a conversation or being unassertive

These are quite common and well-talked about balances, but what about these ones? Talking down about yourself and others, constantly complaining and being negative, talking over others and not listening, entertaining lots of negative thoughts, being fearful or anxious, lack of discipline or extreme rigidity, “over-pedantic-ness” or lack of preparation, lateness.....others.

Have you only shaved one leg this week?

Take a look at your own life. Where are you out of balance? Out of whack? To get you started, check out what you are presently frustrated with and complaining about. Listen to what others also have to say about you – either positively or negatively. They could also be good clues and indicators of where you could start.

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