

Finding Balance

by Shawn Nevins

People talk in reverential tones of finding balance on the spiritual path. It sounds so reasonable and wise to proclaim, "I am a spirit and a body." That thought is often followed by this type, "Pleasure exists, so I must partake in it. Please pass the beer." Not that there is anything detrimental to drinking alcohol. What is detrimental is that such proclamations prevent us from discovering what we really are.

Only a fool proclaims he is a spirit and a body. What you are is a body attempting to discover if it has a spirit. Our body, as it currently exists, focuses on the outward world and survival in the jungle of life. We must change our focus to the inner world and to ultimate survival. Those who protest about finding balance are letting the body hide the potential spirit.

In your current state, you cannot presume to know what a balanced life is. Society enables you to sit at a desk all day, sit in front of a tv all night, and still meet your basic physical needs. Such a lifestyle is not healthy for the body, much less conducive to undertaking a spiritual quest. Any balanced or middle way should not be modeled on the average lifestyle. Merely adding meditation (a contemporary alternative to Sunday church attendance) to mundane life will give you a meditative mundane life.

You must be willing to change to become a truth-seeker. You must discover the lies you live, and that will require much purposeful unbalancing. Such disciplines as fasting, dietary modifications, meditation, celibacy, and challenging fears may elicit howls of protest from the body and mind. For example, a beer-drinker might abstain from drinking for a year (perhaps seriously distorting his lifestyle), and discover he doesn't need or want it. Thus, he refines his self-definition and discovers a new position of balance, grace, and strength. Such seeming distortions of normal life may lead to further interesting experiments that challenge your deepest assumptions about your needs, likes, and identity.

Do not worry about finding balance. Rather, identify what prevents you from focusing and thinking about a single goal -- the discovery and answering of your deepest life question. You must discover through experimentation the lifestyle your particular body and mind combination needs in order to unravel the mystery of its existence. Balance will naturally flow from meeting this need. As truths about your self are discovered, balance will be discovered. This is a unique and dynamic process, changing as we change and clarify our question. A question we live, breathe, and become.