

Finding your life balance

Caroline Sproule



Finding the right balance can be hard

With the pressures of modern life, it is becoming more and more difficult for us to find quality time for ourselves.

For some of you that may mean an hour at the gym, a shopping day or sipping a cappuccino and sharing time with a friend. On the other hand, for those more adventurous among us, quality time may be escaping to the hills for a hike followed by a pint at a pub along the way. Thrill seekers or adrenaline

spend more time gazing with frustration at computer screens in an effort to answer the emails demanding our attention.

I have found in my life that when the pain of whatever I am doing becomes more than the gain, then I stand back and try to make changes. For example, when I have less patience and time for my daughters, something is telling me that an area of my life is becoming unbalanced.

One of the best small decisions I ever made was to pay someone to do my ironing once a fortnight. Nothing feels better than coming home to a table covered with small, neat piles of perfectly ironed clothes after being at work all day.

In order to improve the balance of our lives and find that time for ourselves or our family we need to make changes. Sometimes big changes are required, like changing our career, looking at the



The little things can make a big difference

good food, water, exercise, love etc. the body's adrenal glands begin to complain and try to let us know that all is not well. Stress is the leading cause of ill health and if we look at the symptoms of adrenal dysfunction it is easy to understand why.

The adrenal glands are small glands which are situated on top of the kidneys. They produce a hormone called adrenalin which helps give us mental and physical energy. When they are worn down by worry, grief, lack of sleep, poor diet, overwork, divorce, money problems etc. they cause a myriad of symptoms in the body.

These include, excessive fatigue, poor concentration, weakness, being more prone to common colds and flu, tearfulness, depression, weight gain, inability to make decisions, insomnia and many more.

So when the going gets tough it's a good time to evaluate your life balance. Are you working long hours and coming home too exhausted to talk to your partner or children? Do you find your tolerance levels with your children becoming less and less? Do you find that you are often ill when you take a holiday or at Christmas time? Do you feel like escaping everything? Do you find yourself crying for no apparent reason? Is everything an effort?

Then you may be a candidate for adrenal burnout. There is only one option and that is to STOP everything you are doing and look carefully at your life. Find a way of balancing your work load and seeking some time out for you. Perhaps a half day to catch up on paperwork so you can have more time in the evenings. Hire that ironing person so that you can forget about the weekly burden which constantly glares at you from the corner of the room. Book that night away in a Bed and Breakfast and enjoy a change of scenery. Plan a night at the theatre or a music concert in your diary. Have a date night with your partner. Join a local walking group and see more of the country side and blow the cobwebs out.

But most of all keep a balance in your life and you will find that the pace of living will gently slow down and you will gain more patience, energy and satisfaction in your life. After all, we only live once so enjoy it!



It can be difficult to find time for family activities

junkies may take it a step further and spend their free time paragliding or kite boarding, a new craze I have noticed when I have been out walking on the hills in some areas.

With the convenience of on line shopping and emails which are supposed to save time, there should in theory be more time for pleasure and leisure. But seemingly, this is not the case. Instead, we simply fill our time with more jobs which need doing and

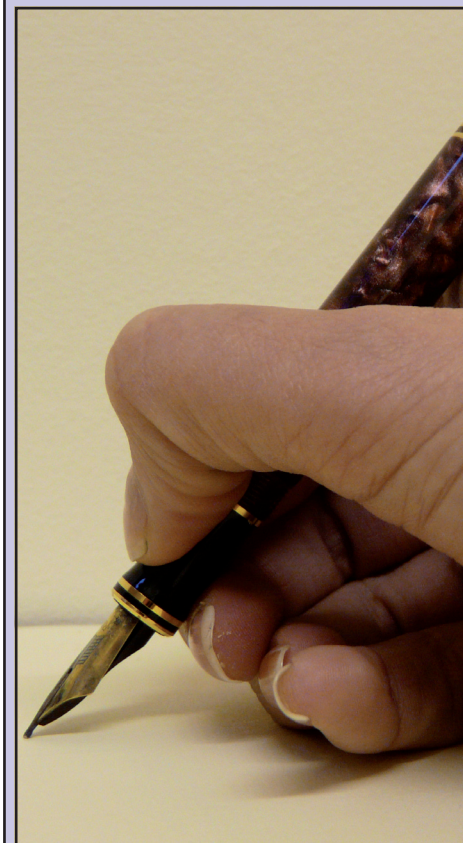
relationship we are in, moving house or country. On the other hand small changes may be enough to find some balance in our lives, like finding a good babysitter and having a regular night out with friends or our partner. Either way, we can try to make these changes in 'baby' steps. One slow step at a time in the direction we want to go to get to the place we want to be in our lives.

When our lives are not balanced with equal amounts of work, leisure, peace,

The gift of writing

Susan Wood

Writing is special. No one else can write like you. You can experience the joy of this gift every single day. Whether you keep a diary, jot down poetry on the bus or enjoy writing e-mails to a friend.



Your experience of life is unique. The colour, texture, smells and sounds of your world are laid out in front of you, and guided by you. If you take just a moment to realise and appreciate their richness, you have all the material you will ever need to start writing.

You may ask, what is the point of writing? Who is going to read it? Actually, this does not matter. The first point of reference is for yourself. Putting down on paper the specific details of your life, the good moments, disappointing times and special happenings help you to appreciate what and who is around you all the more.

In the future this has the potential to develop further. Your family or friends may enjoy the fruits of your jottings. Or as you progress (and you will, if you write regularly!) you may find yourself wishing to share your poems or articles with a wider audience.

People love to read about the detail of life. What makes us tick? What did you think about the man on the bus carrying a large, scruffy brown bag with his tiny dog's head poking from the top? What was it that made your Auntie Doris carry on about her cold plate of chips in the pub last Thursday? The humble blade of grass between your toes is worthy of a poem or two and your thoughts really do count.

We are fascinated, shocked and inspired to read more, write more and take away a nugget of wisdom. Do you discover boredom or frustration as you write? Watch yourself as you read your own work out loud and see how you feel.

Give yourself permission to give it a go. It is the cheapest hobby imaginable. (Though that description doesn't do it justice.) Take one pen, one piece of paper or notebook, and let the words flow.....