

Mind/Body Balance: Blueprint for Living

People are stressed out whether self-employed, working for someone else or caring for the family. Lee Iacocca, former chairman of Chrysler Corporation, said that most of the 242 million workers "swing out of bed, yawn, and figure 'Oh hell, I've got to make it through another day of drudgery'."

Some of the obstacles that prevent us from getting out from under the drudgery and living a life we love include:

- **A belief that being selfish is inappropriate.** We become frustrated and resentful about commitments we make because we find it difficult to put our needs before those of others.
- **The feeling of being drained by people, places and things.** That long list of things to do never seems to get completed.
- **Schedules do not reflect our priorities.** We don't get to the things that are important to us because our time is taken up by other "shoulds".
- **Lack of a supportive community in our lives.** Without sharing a deeper connection with like-minded people, we feel isolated and disconnected.
- **A body that is fueled by adrenaline.** Constantly running from one appointment to the next, we find it impossible to slow down and enjoy peace of mind.

Are there better ways for an individual to thrive in a world of uncertainty? There is if you put yourself at the top of the list. As a work-centered culture, we've lost touch with ourselves. Years of conditioning have taught us to look towards the world of work for the meaning and fulfillment we desire. It's time to give ourselves permission to make the quality of our life a top priority; to put ourselves at the top of our "to do" list.

There are a number of steps we might take to achieve that goal:

- (1) Establish a purpose for your life from a perspective that is unrelated to your daily activities. Your purpose is the essence of what you contribute to the world simply by virtue of who you are, rather than because of what you know, own or can do. You should ask yourself "What is my mission in life?" "What will I remember and cherish on my 80th birthday?"
- (2) Having established that purpose, commit to a vision, decisions and actions that will help you achieve your purpose. Also, spend a few moments considering the alternative.
- (3) Determine where your energy is being used and what's draining you. Make a list and then begin to focus on handling the things you've been putting off or putting up with.
- (4) View the changes in your life as natural processes that bring new opportunities for personal growth. Embrace the change and avoid getting caught in the victim stance.
- (5) Let go of beliefs, perceptions or practices that are no longer valid in your life. Distribute your time and energy differently, creating a sense of balance that leaves you less vulnerable to crisis when changes occur in one area or another.

- (6) Become involved in community affairs. They provide opportunities to learn, socialize and strengthen a sense of belonging and contribution.
- (7) Slow down and connect your head with your heart. It's difficult to feel anything when you're moving too quickly through life.
- (8) Build fun and adventure into your life on a regular basis. Fun has a positive, powerful impact on your health and well-being and will help you to take life less seriously.
- (9) Improve your health by eating more **whole, fresh** foods (did you know that a processed, totally unnatural "food" like a Twinkie has a shelf-life of 20 years?); drinking more water (cleansing and hydrating); increasing physical activity; taking in more sunlight (builds Vitamin D and can help lower blood pressure); and getting plenty of sleep (8 hours a night).

Life is made up of many facets. Give yourself permission to expand your view of life beyond work to other areas - your emotional, physical and spiritual well-being, your relationships, your leisure time and the sharing of yourself with others. By putting your attention on these areas, you become more aware of what's missing in your life. Awareness comes first; then you must take the appropriate steps to make a change.

"There is nothing we can do that will bring us more in the way of rewards than daily striving to become better adjusted, happier, more productive human beings. It's a lifetime job and worth every minute we spend on it" --- Earl Nightingale