

## Relationships: Does Balanced Always Mean Equal?

Balance is a state of equilibrium for which we each strive, not just in relationships but also in all aspects of our life. Try to envision yourself with your feet planted on a narrow plank atop an oversized ball. With your arms spread out and your legs flexed to spring into action, you attempt to keep your balance; however, in order to do so you constantly waver from side to side, catching yourself and readjusting your stance. Perhaps, for a few moments at a time, you can be perfectly still and be *in balance*.

This is a simply a metaphor for life. A person's journey is to endeavor to reach that elusive balance, but, keep in mind that although balance might be the ultimate goal, it is the wavering back and forth that makes up the multi-colored threads and textured fabric of our lives. Thus, an imbalance is not a state to be feared, but to be revered; it is in this time when we are trying to regain our balance where we learn our greatest lessons on how to cope with that which confronts us.

We oftentimes hear the term "healthy or balanced relationship" bantered about, but what does that really mean? Does it mean that relationships should *always* be 50/50? I think not, for our lives are always in flux and so must be our relationships. Just as we wavered back and forth, as we stood atop the ball, sometimes they are 60/40 or 70/30, and, in extreme instances, they can even be 90/10 or 100/0 --- and each of these scenarios can still be healthy. For example, in the midst of a personal crisis, one reasonably could expect a partner to be totally supportive, thus, shifting the balance heavily to one side – and that's good thing!

Couples also need to learn that one person cannot be in charge *all* the time, and, just because you are not in charge, it does not mean you are giving up your power. Just consider, without having any agenda, that sometimes it is just nice to be taken care of, and just as pleasant to turn the tables and take care of your partner. This constant transfer of "power" *is* what keeps the balance in a relationship.

If you are presently not in a relationship and are considering entering the dating arena, keep in mind that inner balance, or striving to be the best possible version of oneself, is a necessary component to having a healthy experience.

It is important to remember that one must be a "whole" person before entering into a relationship; no one else can complete you or make you feel better about yourself. You must also love yourself before you can begin to love another. You must be happy with the circumstances of your life and not look for someone else to "fix" what you consider wrong.

It is only when two distinct individuals come together, who keep the boundary space between them visible, that a successful relationship can be forged and eventually flourish.

So, before embarking on a dating career, first do your own work, which may include a shift in attitude many degrees to the positive and self-acceptance of your own foibles before expecting others to do the same.