

“A Balancing Act: 7 Steps to a Successful Life and a Relationship”

By Dr. Cindy Brown, “The Business & Relationship Dr.”

These days many of us must balance many things in our lives to be happy, healthy and successful. We may be juggling a career (or maybe you own and operate several businesses like I do), a relationship (and some of you may even have children) and then there's that much needed often pushed to the side personal time. How do we do it all? How do we balance all this and still be happy and successful?

Well, from my vantage point being a behavior specialist, relationship and business coach for many years, we are not doing it very well at all! Stress and stress related illness definitely is on the rise, and now women are keeping pace with men. Many of my clients complain of chronic anxiety, depression and physical symptoms due to the imbalance and stress in their lives. Addictions to legal and illegal substances and self medication with prescription drugs continue to be popular with many who need to numb themselves after a busy day or week.

Over the years as I have increased my client load, created new business ventures and recently began a new relationship, I too have needed to adopt certain behavior patterns and ways of being in order for my life to be in balance, as well as control my health and happiness. Below I share with you what I myself do to be successful and what I teach my clients to do each day as well.

Know Your own needs and limits. One of the ways I take good care of myself is by knowing what I need to function my best. I know that I need at least 7–8 hours of sleep a day and a power nap each day around 3pm for about 30 minutes. This allows me to stay awake and work an extra 3 hours in the evening after I finish with my clients. I also know that I need food every 2–3 hours. I get low blood sugar and “crash” when I go beyond that point. I actually feel my body and brain shutting down; first I start yawning, then I begin to get sleepy and shaky and then irritable; to avoid this I plan my meals daily and carry snacks and water wherever I go.

Honor your needs. Start becoming aware of what you need each day and begin to take responsibility of taking care of your own needs and see how much better you feel and behave around others. You know that when you take care of yourself you perform better, think better and are a nicer person to be around. When you take care of yourself first you can then take care of others better as well. When you are your best, people want to be around you. See my chapter (page 220) in *Power and Soul* for an expanded discussion.

Be courageous enough to honor yourself and set boundaries. Many times others will not know your needs. We must be willing to speak up and ask or nicely demand certain conditions from others (bosses, friends, co-workers, partners, spouses, family). When we speak up on behalf of our personal needs this is called setting boundaries. We must be willing to handle someone else not being ok with us doing this; this is where our courage comes in. Here you can use self-talk to help you be comfortable with someone else's feelings. I teach people a special method of setting

boundaries in my coaching sessions, using specific communication strategies and scripts.

Be a consistent planner. Planning is so important to balancing your days and weekly schedule of responsibilities and tasks with your personal needs. I use a paper planning sheet and even schedule in my workouts every other day, my daily naps and meal breaks just like they are appointments. That way I plan my other duties around my needs and I am happier and more successful. When planning time with my clients, friends and partner, I always have my planner with me to make sure it all balances out.

Set priorities and follow them. When you have deadlines for certain work related projects many times you must look at your schedule and adjust your needs like sleep and workouts and even relationship time to fit around the priority of getting the work done on time. Recently my boyfriend and I had a week where I was swamped with many deadlines in one week, we had a bit of a shuffle to meet each other's usual expected personal needs. Expectations of past behavior often get us in trouble when conditions change. Which brings me to the next step...

Communication and discussion are necessary. We are more successful when we communicate with others (family, spouses, partners, co-workers, bosses) and discuss schedule changes and our needs in detail to avoid others being upset with us. My boyfriend and I were able to discuss the above situation and prepare for the weeks ahead where we each have very busy days. We made a rule of letting each other know what space we will need from each other, what support we need from the other and what we can give back during these times.

Holding Your Vision— seeing and keeping the big picture. To be a balanced, happy, healthy person in life and especially in a relationship, you must first hold a vision of what you want and then know how you want to feel and work to create that goal/picture everyday. Holding that intention, following the steps above— you are surely to stay in balance and moving towards your vision. That's The Secret, the Law of Attraction that automatically moves you in the direction of your positive focused energy.

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