

November 2003

Keys for Living: Balance

As some of you may know, I am in the process of designing and planning the building of a new home. It is quite a process, and one that is a constant opportunity for me to practice balance. The creation of a new home is a lot like an intensified version of the **on-going process of healthful living:** It is a **mixture of creativity, trust, exploration, self-education, finding helpful people, rational and intuitive decision-making.**

The trick in all times of stress or change, is being mindful and bringing all your resources into the mix: a rational mind; a trusting and open heart, a cared-for body; intuition; others of integrity and skill. I recently **went to a workshop** by Sonia Choquette, Ph.D., about creating personal balance. Her book, ***True Balance***, is a practical guide for evaluating and enhancing how well you access all of who you are and can be. As Sonia's book goes through some of the major chakras,¹ she reminds us how valuable it is to attend to our universal and unique needs: Our needs for nurturance; our needs for pleasure and joy; our needs for right and clear thought; compassion towards ourselves and others; genuine personal expression; intuitive knowing and action; and Divine inspiration and peace.

For me to be my best, I need a lot of quiet time. I do not do well with on-going high stimulation for too long. I love to visit New York City, but living there sanely would be a challenge! **It is important to know your unique make-up, then make choices that support you to be your best.** We are all different, and **though others may not understand your choices, you will do your best and feel the greatest peace when you know what you need and are true to your core being.**

In times of stress, most people over-emphasize or under-emphasize particular areas of need. I tend to enjoy getting things done. Often, my challenge in times of stress is to wait or include enough laughter, pleasure and joy in the mix.

I recall one time of stress in which I asked the Universe for clear guidance about what to do. As I meditated, the answer was clear and direct: "Wait."

"N0000," I wailed. "Anything **but** that!!" I learned in that experience that waiting and "doing nothing" can be a challenge for me. I learned how important it is to maintain a calm, balanced center, so I can make the best choices and feel the greatest peace. If I cannot access easily my calm center, then I know I am off-balance. **What tells you your own balance is off?** How do you behave, think, react? What can you do to notice whether you are at peace and balanced, or in need of personal nurturance? **For personal balance, it is crucial to know your vulnerabilities and recognize the individual clues that tell you special care is needed.**

As the busy and sometimes stressful season of the holidays approach, you may wish to take inventory of what behaviors, people, routines, places, colors, foods, meditations, or activities support your most balanced and peaceful, joyful self. Enlist the help of those around you if necessary. Use a journal or book as a support. Spend some time in quiet. Surround yourself with beauty. Exercise. Paint. Dance. Take a walk. Read a book. Visit a place that surrounds you with peace. As a unique and precious expression of creation, do what you need to do to be your best self.

May your holidays and new year be full of love, peace, joy, hope, and an ever-present realization of how precious you are.

¹ Chakras are believed to be energy vortexes; each human has various chakras that influence and reflect different areas of personal experience.