

Your journey towards achieving a balanced life!

Everyday life can seem busier and more demanding than ever; expectations of you become higher, both those set by yourself and by others such as your boss, partner, children or parents. In a series of new articles, *Life and Business Coach Melanie Firth* explains how to re-tune your life balance.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND EXAMINE!

Finding balance in your life is hard, particularly as it often takes quiet contemplation to realise how out of sync you actually are, which takes time, time you either don't believe you have or don't believe should be focused on yourself.

What does a balanced life look like?

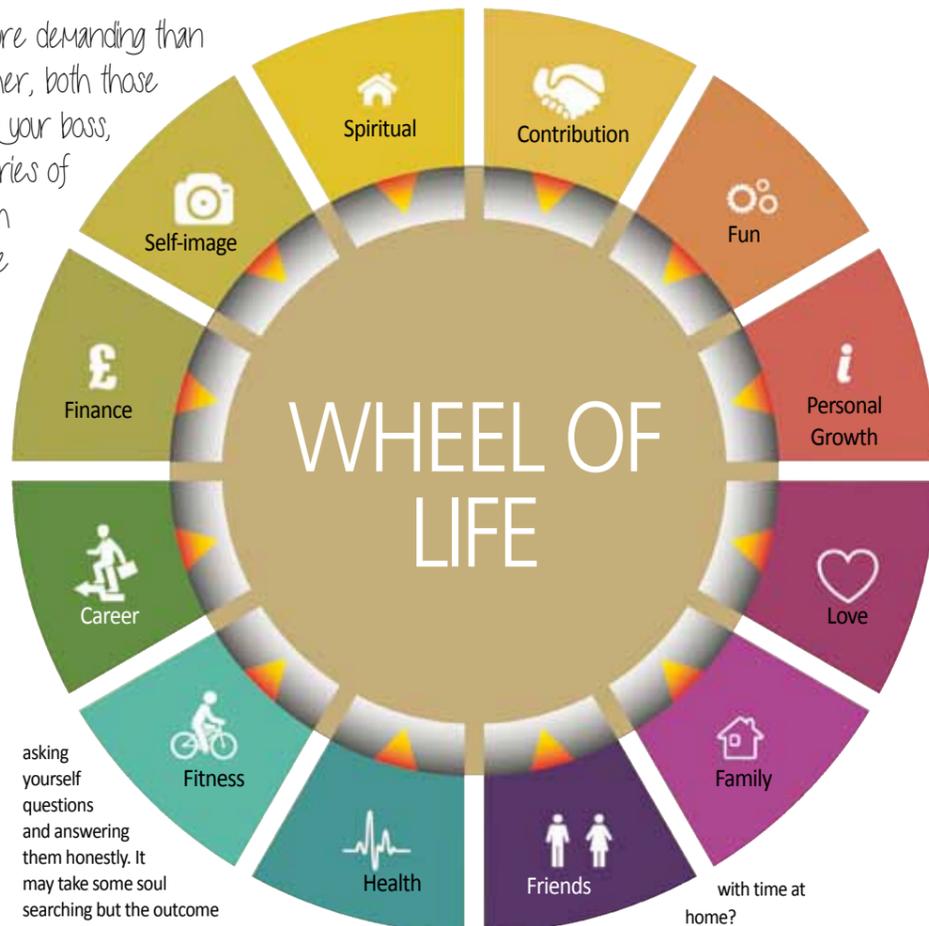
The truth is your 'life scales' will be balanced by different things in different amounts, depending on who you are and your life experiences. Some people will need more time with their family than others; some people will wish to focus more on their health and well-being, whilst others will wish to prioritise their career. So the first step on the journey to balance is to identify and examine your life driver categories.

Identify

Take some time to identify what your life is actually comprised of, The Wheel of Life diagram is a good prompt in this process, this one includes some basic areas, but creating your own version including categories that drive your self-satisfaction and happiness will be helpful. To get started try putting these driver categories under external and internal headings, for example internal may include the things that affect your health (exercise/diet), your mind (study/personal development) and your heart (your relationships), whereas external driver categories may include your career, your social life and hobbies. Once you have identified all your driver categories, take some time to examine them.

Examine

Examining these driver categories should be about



asking yourself questions and answering them honestly. It may take some soul searching but the outcome should offer some clarity. This important self-reflective process will highlight the areas of your life that work, those where you are truly fulfilled, but as importantly it will clarify the areas that don't work, the areas that are having a negative impact on you; these are the areas that will require future focus in order to create a better balance. Here are some key questions for some of the main driver categories to help get you started...

- Your health:** Do you balance healthy eating and exercise with treating yourself on occasion? Do you balance time in the gym with quiet relaxation?
- Your relationship:** Do you give more energy to your relationship than your partner? Do you balance time together with time alone?
- Your work:** Are you able to balance financial success with every day job satisfaction and/or intellectual stimulation?
- Your social life/having fun:** Do you balance social fun

time to consider the balance of one driver category against another, for example your social life versus work life, this will give you a more rounded view of what's really important to you.

Remember, everyone's driver categories and the balance between them will be different, but spending some quality, self-reflection time identifying and examining your own internal and external drivers marks the start of a journey towards creating balance in your life.

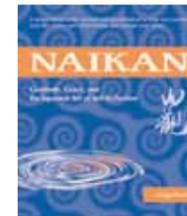
Next Month Step 2: Prioritise and Goal Setting!

Melanie Firth is a leading Sussex Life and Business Coach, helping clients to overcome challenges and move forward in their lives. For more information see her website www.lifepracticebrighton.co.uk.



Natural tools, tips and remedies to aid self-reflection...

INTRODUCING NAIKAN, THE JAPANESE ART OF SELF-REFLECTION



Gregg Krech is Executive Director of the ToDo Institute, a Naikan education and retreat centre near Middlebury, Vermont. Drawing on Eastern tradition, Naikan ("nye-kahn") is a structured method for intensely meditating on our lives, our interconnections, our missteps. Through Naikan we develop a natural and profound sense of gratitude for blessings bestowed on us by others, blessings that were always there but went unnoticed. This collection of introductory essays, parables, and inspirations explains what Naikan is and how it can be applied to life and celebrations throughout the year.

■ **Naikan: Gratitude, Grace and the Japanese Art of Self-Reflection** by Gregg Krech is a Kindle eBook published by Stone Bridge Press, £8.99 available from Amazon



GENTLE INTROSPECTION WITH TWO BACH ESSENCE FLOWER REMEDIES

According to Leila Abachi, Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner, if you feel stuck and unsure about the direction of your life and can't decide what would be the best choice, or if you feel life is drifting by and you haven't found your vocation, then utilise the positive potential of Bach Original Flower Remedy Wild Oat and be clear in your choices. If you know what you want and need, yet feel the need to constantly seek advice, reassurance and confirmation from others rather than listening to your inner wisdom then harness the potential of Bach Original Flower Remedy Cerato and be self assured and trust in your own judgment.

■ **Cherry Plum and Wild Oat**, both cost £6.99 each, from www.nelsonspharmacy.com



SETTLE INTO YOURSELF WITH MYRRH AROMATHERAPY OIL...

Myrrh oil is made from a resin produced by the Commiphora myrrha tree. When the bark is damaged or cut the resin is released to seal the wound and this action is mimicked by the essential oil, which is used in deep and difficult wound care. Laura Hoy, Manager at NHR Organic Oils says, "Myrrh is a great oil for supporting connection with self, its subtle aroma encourages a level of stillness to allow an appreciation of the scent. Gently massaged around your wrists it brings focus to this delicate area of the body".

■ **Myrrh Oil costs £10.95 for 5ml from www.nhrorganicoils.com**



ONE TO WATCH FROM JANEY LEE GRACE

While you're busy reflecting on a new you – renew your skin too!



Nourish Argan Skin Renew from Nourish is a gorgeous moisturiser, only a tiny amount is needed and it really seems to firm up the skin. Argan oil is very healing and rejuvenating and this argan oil is produced in Morocco. It's

an excellent source of vitamin E, essential fatty acids and antioxidants. This particular blend is ideal to topically deliver collagen protective vitamin E, supporting skin structure, reducing fine lines and improving the skin's feel and texture.

■ **Argan Skin Renew, £25 from www.nourishskinrange.com**

"Problems arise in that one has to find a balance between what people need from you and what you need for yourself." Jessye Norman

LINK WHAT YOU EAT AND HOW YOU FEEL...

Self-reflection can be a valuable tool in the process of discovering what's important and of value in your life. We are currently bombarded with messages about what's "good" and "bad" for us. Miguel Toribio-Matea, Chairman of the British Association for Applied Nutrition and Nutritional Therapy; "If we recognise that there is a definite link between what we eat and how we feel on a daily basis, we can then reflect on how we feel after certain meals, making more mindful diet and food choices". A Registered Nutritional Therapist can help you in your journey to better health by critically appraising the scientific evidence behind generic statements about what's healthy and what's not, suggesting options that really work for you as an individual, so you can enjoy the rewards of an improved health and sense well-being.



■ **To find a Registered Nutritional Therapist in your area visit www.BANT.org.uk**