

Beyond the Balancing Act Manifesto



*Why the idea of balance is a bunch of B.S.
(and what really works)*

By

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PLEASE, PLEASE share this with others if you found value in it. My mission is to help as many people as possible create a lifestyle of their design and experience all the joy they deserve!

I'm all about sharin' the good stuff! This report is free and you may share it with as many cool people as possible...just please leave the report in its entirety.

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A Word of Caution:

Let me say right up front that I pretty much write as I speak. I use pauses a lot in my speech patterns for emphasis, and I'm quite sure I completely overdo the use of ellipses in my writing. I will also use terms of endearment, the occasional salty word, fragments, run-on sentences, and questionable grammar. I write in a very conversational and informal manner.

If you are a card carrying member of the Grammar Police, your eyes are easily offended, and you abhor ellipses then do us both a favor and do not proceed further. ..we'll be much happier☺; otherwise grab your beverage of choice and dive in...the water is delightful.

Introduction

Well Hello There Smart Cookie~

I don't know about you, but I feel like I have spent a good deal of my adult life trying to "achieve" balance. That's what we're supposed to do right? On one side of the scale we have our career, and on the other side we have family, relationships, and everything else (already *sounds* UNbalanced doesn't it?).

A few years ago, after some serious health issues, I threw away my balance scale in favor of a life that allows some UNbalance; indeed my creativity, energy and flow thrive on this state of UNbalance! This manifesto is about ditching the traditional thinking on balance and thinking about balance in a completely new way 😊

I believe in all of my now 46 yrs (I am writing this over my birthday) that everything we know about the idea of balance is...well, a bunch of **B.S.** (you know...**bull shitake**).

More often than not, when I work with clients around reinvention and transformation, the idea of a 'balanced life' is sure to come up in the discovery process of how a client wants to feel and what she wants to have in her daily life.

As an aside, knowing how you want to feel is the secret ingredient to absolute clarity...believe it. **Acting** on that clarity is what kicks the idea on being balanced on its well rounded ass.

The conversation usually goes something like this:

Me: “So tell me what are the feelings you’d like to experience in order to live your desired life and have success on your terms?”

Amazing Client: “Well, I’d like to feel more balanced and happier”.

Me: “And what does that (balanced and happier) feel like, look like, smell like, taste like?”

Amazing Client: loooooong silence...

Ahhh...do you hear the wheels grinding to a halt?

See what happens is that when we get honest with what we want to be feeling, well, it may seem self-serving or selfish and not “right”; as if owning it is a ‘bad’ thing and something we should not be doing.

We lose balance when we are doing things that make us feel the opposite of how we want to be feeling...and most of the time we’ve never even taken the time to figure *how* and *what* we want to feel.

We haven’t taken the time to figure out what sense of proportion and equilibrium is right for us.

Let’s change that shall we?

Deep Thoughts

What does balance mean to you?

How will you know when your life is balanced?

Why is balance important to you?

(Please answer these questions before reading ahead) Really...I’ll wait.

Let's Start at the Beginning

The logical place to start is with what, exactly, is the definition of balance?

OK~ According to our reliable friends at Webster;

BALANCE- Well, there A LOT of definitions, so I'm going to pick the ones that are most relative to our discussion here:

- 1. an aesthetically pleasing integration of elements**
2. equipoise between contrasting, opposing, or interacting elements (a super fancy schmancy way of saying everything is equally proportioned)
- 3. mental and emotional steadiness**

Right, so now we're going to play "Which One of These Things Is Not Like the Others?" (remember that game from Sesame Street?). So which one of the three **doesn't** belong? Well, my money is on **number 2** (if you have noticed it's the only one not bolded...hint, hint).

Nothing in our life is ever equally proportioned; and yet that is the definition we most closely associate with balance.

Ahhh...but look at the other 2 definitions:

An aesthetically pleasing integration of elements...that, right there, my friends, is total awesomesauce. More on this integration concept in a moment ☺

Mental and emotional steadiness...yep, I'm digging this one too.

Doing Something Different

So what if we flip this balance thing on its head and instead of thinking of it as everything in your life being equally proportioned (which, let's face it, aint' evah gonna happen);

How about if we consider all the different parts of our life as an integration of elements that are pleasing to US! Can I get a "woo to the hoo" on that one?

And mental and emotional steadiness...yes ma'am I'll have a double scoop of that thankyouverymuch!

Why are we so obsessed with balance? Because in today's society, balance= **happiness. We are told we need balance.**

And don't get me wrong...the concept itself is brilliant...the outdated definition is not.

As women, we have been brought up to believe that balance is something to be sought after and achieved; that if we could just obtain that ever elusive balance we will be happy. Here's the deal: NO ONE lives in balance; particularly women who have careers, children, family, responsibilities, and who want to pursue the things that matter to them.

You and I have been fed a total line of BS about the concept of balance. We think of it as a static point, a destination, when in reality balance is dynamic, it moves, and it is unique to YOU.

As I mentioned earlier, balance is a big topic of conversation with the clients I work with and this is kind of language I hear:

“I want to **find** balance”,

“When my life **is** balanced, I’ll be able to...”,

“I’m **looking** for balance in my life” and my personal favorite;

“I want to **achieve** balance”, like it’s something that you can proudly display in your living room as a piece of art; because that’s what we’ve been conditioned to think!

Balance is different for every person.

Balance is the nirvana of all practices, and it is never-ending. You *continually find* your balance, you don't *achieve* balance. Even if you were able to find your perfect balance and hold it, life itself will throw you off balance continually. There is no state of motionlessness for a tightrope walker, the person who spins plates, or a juggler. It is about constant adjustment, timing, and course corrections.

Picture those scales I mentioned earlier...got it? OK, think about those scales being perfectly balanced...equal on both sides.

What *feeling* does it suggest?

It’s static; in other words, nothing is moving. Now if you were to achieve that state of balance in life, it would mean that you were stuck wouldn’t it?

I'm going to let you in on a huge secret that is going to change your life. (Ok, I may be a wee bit of a drama queen) Are you ready? Queue the angels singing Hallelujah baby; here it is:

You can never achieve balance, nor do you want to...at least not in the conventional sense of the word.

And in the words of that famous pitchman Billy Mays, "But wait...there's more!"

Here's the thing, you can get better at ***balance-ing***. You can become more skilled at figuring out the proportions that are correct for you.

You can increase your self-awareness and your knowledge of who you are so you can detect *sooner rather than later* when balance is being lost and how to restore it.

Blend Not Balance

In fact, instead of getting better at balancing, we need to become better **blenders** of our lives.

Balance is a verb, not a noun. Balance is a flow and ebb of energy and time.

Blending suggests movement, flow and proportion.

Life is like a recipe. Certain ingredients, certain amounts, in a certain order yield a certain result. Some ingredients need to be eliminated, some need to be added, and some need to be adjusted so the taste is delicious to you. And here's another tidbit for you:

Your 'tastes' will change. Your ingredients will change. YOU will change.

Often, we look at other women and think, "damn, how in the hell does she do that?" It seems as though this other woman has really got it all together. She baking cookies, she's running a 7 figure business, she's traveling, doing all of these amazing things and tweeting that her life is absolutely awesomesauce.

And maybe it is, **or** maybe she has discovered a life/work blend that works for **her**. That there are ebbs and flows and some areas of life are going to be out of balance at different points in time.

Women (particularly women entrepreneurs) find joy in many different things and doing the work that you are passionate about is at the top of the list. For those who are doing work that inspires and infuses them with energy, balance is not a necessary goal.

The term work-life implies a duality. Work is set against the rest of life. These are now in competition for our precious time and energy.

If one wins, the other loses.

For those who find personal fulfilment in their work, struggling to achieve balance can be a frustrating and futile experience. In fact, they are often made to feel bad for their lack of balance, regardless of the fact that it works for them. On the other hand, for a woman who finds true contentment in family and spending time with their loved ones, working 12 hour days will never be satisfying.

Balance means having a relationship with your life right now that is a reflection of what is really important to you.

This means you've got to take some time to figure what you value right now at this time in your life.

Deep Thoughts

Do you really need or want (not everyone does) balance? Why?

Are you willing to let go of preconceived notions of what balance is?

Are you making conscious choices based on your definition of balance?

Deep Thoughts

Values directly correspond to feelings, so get out your I Spy magnifier, a notepad and start noting clues. These questions will help get you started:

1. What are you doing when you feel energized and full of your personal power?
2. How do you feel (besides energized) during those times?
3. In contrast, what activities drain your energy?
4. What would you like to stop doing?
5. It's a good day when I feel...because I did...

It is about having aspirations you work toward in your career as well as a life today that makes you feel happy and alive, honors the important people in your life (including yourself), feeds your soul as well as your bank account and floods you with energy and power.

Do not be 'guilted' into feeling bad because your version of balance does not fit the 'norm'. So what?

Are you ready for a mindbender?

There will be periods of your life that will be greatly **Unbalanced** in order to achieve greater equilibrium over time. Really take some time to consider the implications of this concept. It's HUGE.

Stop Juggling

I know...you're probably snorting at me right now and rolling your eyes...its ok, go ahead, I can take it. Get it out of your system, grab your favourite beverage and hear me out.

I have always thought I was a master juggler. In fact, I prided myself on my ability to juggle multiple people, things, events, etc. Three kids, grad classes, full time teacher, exercise, community activities, relationships, family...oohh look at all that juggling.

And guess what...I sucked at it.

Oh, on the outside it looked like I had it all together, but it was at the expense of sleep, spending time with my family, and being deeply unhappy, but I made it work for awhile...until I couldn't anymore.

The funny thing about juggling is that the more you think you can handle it, the more things you try to incorporate in your juggling act.

Sort of like the guy that can juggle chainsaws, cats, flaming batons, and bowling pins...impressive right?

Not.so.much...

The best description I've heard regarding this comes from Marcus Buckingham in his book, *Find Your Strongest Life, What the Happiest and Most Successful Women Do Differently*.

He suggests that juggling is an act of actually throwing the important things away from you. Think about it: A juggler is constantly throwing something away in order to catch the next ball, chainsaw, whatever...there is no catching and holding onto anything...good or bad.

When you juggle, how can you possibly hold onto the energizing moments and activities in your life? The answer is you can't because you're concentrating so hard on the act of juggling.

I've had more than one client say to me "I need to be a better juggler."

No, sweet thang, you do not need to become a better juggler, you need to have more fulfilling activities in your juggling act and less draining ones. You need to do more catching and less throwing the good stuff away from you.

It's all about your own sense of proportion. When you are doing more activities that fill your energy base rather than activities that drain it, then there's no need to become a better juggler...or any type of juggler at all.

Not sure how to do that?

Well read on darlin', I'm about to lay it out for you.

The Energy Juggle

For some of you this exercise may be the equivalent of trying to poke your eye out with a spoon...but I promise you it will be worth it.

For one week track your activities. Get your calendar, day planner, favorite app, or whatever floats your boat (and a really cool pen).

Now I want you to track your activities for one week...everything.

Put an **"E"** for everything you do that gives you energy (a smiley face will work too). 😊

Put a **"D"** next to any activity that drains you (or a frowney face) ☹️

Do not categorize anything by 'good' or 'bad' labels, just whether or not it energizes you.

Why am I doing this Danielle?

Ahhh grasshopper, I am super glad you asked.

First, it will give you the opportunity to really take notice of your activities and target which ones energize you (and which ones don't).

Second, you can start to look for patterns, themes and see what shakes out.

Third, you will see how the majority of your time is spent (hopefully there are many, many more 😊's than ☹️'s).

Please do not underestimate the power of this simple exercise. Big shifts often occur from small attentions.

A quick example from my own life:

I did this exercise about a year ago and found that grocery shopping was a ☹️. I did the same thing a few months ago and gave grocery shopping a 😊. Huh??? What the hell??

Here's what I found out:

The first time I went grocery shopping it was on a Friday at 5:30, I was tired, I didn't have my list, the store was crowded, I waited in line for a ridiculous amount of time, and no one was home to help unload the groceries. ☹️

The next time I went it was on a Tuesday, late morning, I breezed through the store, remembered my recycled bags, didn't have to jockey for position around the tuna fish, and had a son at home to unload the bazillion grocery bags. 😊

My point: Sometimes activities we may think are drains are in reality disguised by environment, external circumstances, our individual thresholds and tolerances.

I actually enjoyed going grocery shopping the second time...hmmm...wonder why?

So look at your Energy Drains carefully and determine what it is about the activity that was draining. In my case, it wasn't the act of grocery shopping; it was a lot of other external factors that I could, in fact, control.

The other point is that I am not a coach who is going to tell you that all of your activities should be or will be Energizing...that's silly and unrealistic.

BUT,

Are there ways to control some of the variables of certain activities you are doing? Are there options or alternatives?

Check It Before You Wreck It

I so wish I could take credit for the above lovely turn of phrase, but alas, I must give Bethenny Frankel her due. I had a bit of a sick fascination with The Real Housewives of New York at one time and when I heard Bethenny coin that phrase I literally laughed my ass off.

I believe she actually said "Check yourself before you wreck yourself", but you get the idea...which is quite brilliant really.

I believe that most of our definitions of balance revolve around what I call the 'doublement' twins.

Enjoyment

Fulfilment

I used to think that it was fulfilment and meaning, but really does everything have to have meaning or passion? (that's a whole other manifesto right there)

That tends to be one of those canned self development beliefs we hang onto.

Everything we do does not have to have meaning, but ideally most of the activities we do should be fulfilling in some way, and if not enjoyable, at least something we like to do.

And how do we make that happen?

Self awareness and conscious choice baby. Those two things are the real keys to having your own sense of equilibrium and proportion.

There are other strategies and techniques that will help you be a better blender. Things like:

- Boundaries
- Learning to say no
- Self care and nurturing
- Prioritizing
- Asking for help
- Letting go of self limiting beliefs
- Energy management
- Getting over perfectionism

Ultimately, you decide what the idea of balance looks like to you. There are no cookie cutter molds, formulas, or blueprints to 'finding' and 'achieving' balance. There is, however, a method to uncovering your own individual brand of balance. Interested in creating your own balancing act?

You can contact me at <http://www.daniellemiller.com> and start Creating the Life you crave.

Busting the Balance Myth Mantras

- *Balance is a blend of all the different parts of your life*
- *Balance is action; it is always in motion*
- *Balance is different for everyone*
- *Balance is not a destination*
- *Enjoyment and fulfilment are essential ingredients to your blend/balance*
- *Know what is important to you*
- *Engage in the present moment*
- *Self awareness and inner knowledge are your own personal balance experts*
- *Periods of Unbalance will lead to greater equilibrium over time*

I invite you to contact me to discuss what you want to achieve and learn more about living a life that consists of doing the work you love **now**, at Danielle@myrecipeforlife.com for a consultation. Isn't it time for you to Create the Life You Crave?

About Danielle



I have worked in many different fields over the course of my professional life. From healthcare, to sales, to advertising, to teaching...I've been there and done that. Teaching is where I found my "home" for a long time. I went back to college full time, worked 2 jobs and managed to be a mom to 3 children under the age of 8 at the time.

My Shift

BUT....4 years ago I was burned out and challenged by numerous health issues before being diagnosed with fibromyalgia. I knew there had to be another way to do what I loved on MY terms. All my life I had done what I 'should' be doing and I made the decision after a serious surgery that I was not going to keep living my life that way.

My Mission

My mission is to touch women worldwide in finding the work that makes their heart sing, while having fun and fulfillment. My goal is to help you reimagine, reinvent, and reignite your life. Visit me at <http://www.daniellemiller.com> and let's get started on your encore.