

NOVEMBER MONTHLY THEME:  
**BALANCE—NEGOTIATING A COMPLEX WORLD**

Often in our lives, multiple responsibilities, concerns, and/or possibilities pull at our limited energy for engagement. Amidst this complexity, how do we find or maintain a sense of balance? In the physical realm, balance is the equilibrium of two weights or forces. What might an internal sense of balance feel like? How might the choices we make to engage or to say no impact this sense of balance? How might a sense of imbalance be telling us that we need something to change in our lives? And, if we carry with us a sense of balance, how might that shift our ongoing experience of life? As both a noun and a verb, balance may be something we not only find, but also something that we must actively do as we negotiate a complex world.

**Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?**

- What does balance mean to you? Do you prefer a different word?
- Are balance and perfection the same?
- What has feeling imbalanced taught you? What are the merits of imbalance?
- How do you know you feel balanced? Out of balance?
- What or who enables you to maintain a sense of balance in your life?
- Do you seek a balanced day? Week? Month? Year? Season of life? Why or why not?
- What kinds of balance do you find it difficult to negotiate in your life: Work/family? Talking/listening? Personal/political? Alone/together? Or?
- If you woke tomorrow to a sense of balance, what would look the same or different in your life?

**Wise Words:**

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. *Albert Einstein*

There is no such thing as work-life balance. Everything worth fighting for unbalances your life.  
*Alain de Botton*

To go beyond is as wrong as to fall short. *Confucius*

Any order is a balancing act of extreme precariousness. *Walter Benjamin*

You can't start with imbalance and end with peace, be that in your own body, in an ecosystem or between a government and its people. What we need to strive for is not perfection, but balance. *Ani DiFranco*

Balance is a word with many meanings, in many contexts. But in May, 1971, when I was a college sophomore, it meant "to become more complete." ... I started [a four-month hitchhiking journey] wanting to see the country, but I was quickly understood I was really on a mission to balance out who I was. *David J. Bookbinder*

You have to balance your passions, not your time. *Lisa Sugar*

“Here's a nice image for a life in balance,” she said. “You're juggling these four balls that you've named work, family, friends, spirit. Now, work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it bounces back. The other balls they're made of glass.”

“I've dropped a few of those glass balls in my day. Sometimes they chip, sometimes they shatter to pieces.”  
*James Patterson, [Roses are Red \(Alex Cross, #6\)](#)*

You just try to do everything that comes up. Get up an hour earlier, stay up an hour later, make the time. Then you look back and say, 'Well, that was a neat piece of juggling there -- school, marriage, babies, career.' The enthusiasms took me through the action, not the measuring of it or the reasonableness.  
*Ruby Dee*

Don't confuse symmetry with balance.  
*Tom Robbins*

It seems to me what is called for is an exquisite balance between two conflicting needs: the most skeptical scrutiny of all hypotheses that are served up to us and at the same time a great openness to new ideas. Obviously those two modes of thought are in some tension. But if you are able to exercise only one of these modes, whichever one it is, you're in deep trouble.  
*Carl Sagan*

Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.  
*Robert Fulgham*

I always try to balance the light with the heavy—a few tears of human spirit in with the sequins and the fringes.  
*Bette Midler*

Evermore in the world is this marvelous balance of beauty and disgust, magnificence and rats.  
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

In art and dream may you proceed with abandon. In life may you proceed with balance and stealth.  
*Patti Smith*

Feeling compassion for ourselves in no way releases us from responsibility for our actions. Rather, it releases us from the self-hatred that prevents us from responding to our life with clarity and balance.  
*Tara Brach*

When a man asks himself what is meant by action he proves that he isn't a man of action. Action is a lack of balance. In order to act you must be somewhat insane. A reasonably sensible man is satisfied with thinking.  
*James Baldwin*

The dogged determination and patience of one person to do what is Right and Necessary may not always win the day or even be noticed, but it will tip the balance just a little in the direction of good.  
*Terry Pratchett*

#### **Resources:**

- <https://thoughtcatalog.com/marisa-donnely/2018/01/sometimes-there-is-peace-in-imbalance/>
- “Balance”, <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/life/workshop5/159265.shtml>
- *The Art of Balance: Staying Sane in an Insane World*, David J. Bookbinder
- *The Balance Within: The Science Connecting Health and Emotions*, Esther M. Sternberg, M.D.