

WHAT WORD COMES TO YOUR MIND?

Look at the partial word below. Before trying to solve it, notice the first word, thought, image, memory or feeling that comes to mind.

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What came to mind first?

What might your response connect with in your life today?

NOW REVEAL THE WORD

BALANCE

Balance is often presented as if every part of life should receive equal time and energy. Real life rarely works that way. Balance can shift from day to day depending on health, work, relationships, caring responsibilities, sensory needs, stress and capacity.

The aim of this reflection is not to create a perfectly balanced life. It is to notice where too much is being asked of you and where something important may need more room.

WHAT DOES BALANCE MEAN TO YOU?

A balanced life does not have to look symmetrical. During some periods, one area genuinely needs more attention. The question is whether the pattern is workable and sustainable for you.

The parts of life currently taking most of my energy are...

Something important that keeps getting pushed aside is...

I notice my balance slipping when...

Something that helps me feel more steady is...

Balance is not another performance target

Trying to optimise work, relationships, exercise, sleep, home, social life and self-care all at once can become another source of pressure. Sometimes balance means deliberately doing less rather than becoming better at fitting everything in.

Capacity changes

What is manageable on a good day may be unrealistic on a difficult one. Adjusting expectations to your current capacity is not failure. It can be an important part of preventing overload and protecting wellbeing.

REBALANCING WITHOUT STARTING OVER

You do not need to redesign your whole life. Look for one pressure that could be reduced and one neglected need that could receive a little more attention.

Something I could do a little less of is...

Something I would like to make more room for is...

A boundary that could protect my balance is...

Something I do not have to carry alone is...

One realistic change I could try this week is...

A simple balance check

At the end of the day, ask three questions: What took energy from me? What gave something back? What do I need tomorrow? You are not looking for equal scores. You are building awareness of patterns so that adjustments can happen earlier.

Rest belongs in the picture

Rest is not only what happens after everything else has been completed. If the list is endless, waiting until everything is done can mean rest never arrives. Recovery time can be planned as a legitimate need rather than treated as a reward.

A MESSAGE FROM MAGGIE

I think the idea of balance can become unhelpful when it makes us believe we should be managing every part of life equally and doing all of it well.

There will be times when work needs more from us, times when family does, times when health changes what is possible, and times when simply getting through the day takes most of the available energy.

For me, balance is less about dividing life into perfect portions and more about noticing when something has been taking too much for too long. It is also about noticing what has disappeared from the picture - rest, connection, enjoyment, movement, quiet or time to simply be.

You do not need to fix everything at once. Sometimes one boundary, one request for help or one protected piece of time can begin to shift the balance.

Maggie Learoyd MNCPS - Space to Breathe Therapy

THERAPEUTIC CONTEXT & FURTHER READING

Person-centred practice encourages people to identify what is meaningful and workable for them rather than imposing a universal model of a balanced life. ACT can support values-based choices while recognising limited time and capacity. Occupational and stress-management approaches also consider the relationship between demands, recovery, meaningful activity and wellbeing.

Suggested reading: Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*; Russ Harris, *The Happiness Trap*; Emily Nagoski and Amelia Nagoski, *Burnout*; Greg McKeown, *Essentialism*.

This resource is for reflection and psychoeducation. It is not a diagnostic tool or a substitute for individual medical or mental-health care.