

Finding Your *Equilibrium*

By Mara Bishop, MS, ThM, CSC

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Too much information can pull us out of balance. Like any systems faced with too much input, overloaded bodies, brains and emotions can begin to malfunction. Because individuals have different temperaments in dealing with input, uncertainty, and change it's important to understand your own temperament in order to manage your health in an age of abundant, and often conflicting, information. And it's crucial to be able to regain your equilibrium if your systems have been overwhelmed.

IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND YOUR TEMPERAMENT

Does significant input about your health care decisions (or any other issue) from family, friends, practitioners, books, or online tend to increase your anxiety? If so, impose some limits. Perhaps get a second opinion, but not a third. Share your concerns with one or two close friends but not everyone in your circle. Spend an hour reading, not three. As in most things, prevention is the best medicine for this kind of overload.

Is your natural inclination to dispassionately research everything until you feel confident in your choices? Go for it! Put all the data in a color-coded spreadsheet and stop only when you feel convinced. If this is you, remember that research frequently yields conflicting results, so your "best" investigated choice today, may not be the "best" choice next month. Let that go, make your choice in the moment, and then step forward with confidence.

Whether your decision-making process is primarily internal, or one that relies heavily on the advice of experts, it is important at some point to give yourself a break from the process of decision-making. This is essential to keeping your equilibrium.

FINDING YOUR EQUILIBRIUM

From a place of relative calm, we have better perspective and are able to make better decisions. Finding equilibrium is sometimes as easy as remembering to make time for the



things you are already aware of that soothe you. Other times, there are psychological and physiological barriers to this state that are a little more challenging. You don't necessarily need to do esoteric or "spiritual" practices. Calming things are often pleasurable and simple.

Here is a personal example. I fall somewhere between the above two temperaments. I am sensitive and without my intentional practices and the work I've developed, could fall more naturally into the "easily overloaded" camp. On the other hand, I like to be informed and do my research. I take this middle position in finding calm as well. I do specific practices, like shamanic journeying and energy work, but some of the things that calm me are not really practices at all. In some ways that's the best part, I don't set out to do them as disciplines, I do them because I love them, notice that they calm me and bring joy, and then do them more. Watching the birds, lying on the moss and looking up at the tall tree tops, and simply sitting or ambling around outside in my yard are absolutely some of my

favorite things to do. They ground me and help me find my equilibrium. When I feel I've got too much to do or am worried, if I go outside for a while, I'm better equipped to deal with whatever it is. Others I know get this feeling from baking, singing or painting. Do what calms you and helps you find your equilibrium.

When you are having trouble finding this balance yourself, it may be time to get some assistance. In my practice I frequently notice that impediments to finding equilibrium can be removed with some healing work. When you are overloaded with energy that is not your own it's very difficult to find internal peacefulness. Shamanic techniques to help clear this energy that doesn't belong often help reduce anxiety and mental overload, and can even relieve physical manifestations of too much input, like headaches and fatigue. Healing methods that return parts of ourselves that we have become disconnected from help us stay embodied and present during stressful times. This helps us stay present to what our bodies are communicating, allows us to absorb and retain information better, and counteracts a tendency to "check out" when things get stressful.

From a place of relative peacefulness, not only do we make better decisions, but we are better equipped to sort out whether we have internal resources to answer our own questions or whether we need to seek outside help. Even if you do not know your "answer" in a given moment, a rootedness in your core provides necessary stability to move through the process of decision-making in a healthy way. The ability to find your calm before overload causes your system to malfunction or shut down is an important part of dealing with any intense issue, including managing your health care today. ❧❧

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