



## **Balance, Peace and Harmony**

by

Prof. Barry Austin Goodfield, Ph.D., DABFM

The world's body count in wars and armed conflict is usually preceded by someone uttering the words, “Balance, peace and harmony.” These words exist in most all languages. The body count however, continues to grow over our disputed definition of these words. Balance, peace and harmony are at the heart of any settlement issue. They are equally at the core of conflict.

We, as people, strive for balance. Perceived imbalance is equally at the core of the conflict. It is a critical factor in all of our lives. Without balance we have compensation to fill the gap for what is absent. Moreover, there will be no lasting peace and harmony unless balance is perceived to exist between combatants.

This is true on all human levels, be it, intra-psychic, psychophysical or interpersonal. We are often confronted with statistical realities that encourage us to modify our habits. Smoking is a perfect example. We all know that smoking relates to various catastrophic diseases. So millions each year try to stop the habit. For many of us we suffer side effects in our efforts to improve our health. We gain unwanted weight, we become irritable with our colleagues and loved ones. Focus and concentration is often

compromised. And then we start again lying to ourselves that I'm just going to smoke one cigarette. The noble effort results in feelings of guilt and frustration and continued health risk.

On a psychophysiological level we promise ourselves that we will regain our lost youthful appearance by increased diet and exercise. For many of us this is a short-term effort. Again with frustration, feelings of failure and ultimately returning to the good old days of forbidden food and overindulgence.

On an interpersonal level we strive for balance by promising our mate after first promising ourselves, that we will do better in our relationships. We paper over differences that need to be discussed, try to deny factors that cause irritation, frustration and anger. We shove feelings down as opposed to addressing systemic problems and underlined difficulties.

When we address these concerns on a national or international level of human existence, peace becomes a metaphor. Balance and imbalance exist on a continuum or spectrum. Peace is a state of perceived balance and harmony within ourselves and the environment around us.

It becomes even more real, when we see others attempt at finding balance that is antithetical to our basic belief system. If you were raised in an authoritarian environment, then you look to that type of structure to answer the basic need for balance.

We see things in what we call in General Semantics a two valued orientation. Right versus wrong, good versus bad, fair versus unfair and just versus unjust. This mind set leaves little room for negotiation, arbitration or conflict resolution in general. It often results in a closed mind calling another mind closed. We tend not to accept responsibility for our behavior. When we point a finger at someone else regarding his or her behavior four of those fingers point back in ourselves. In crisis and conflict this is hard to recognize and even more difficult to accept.

The two valued orientation is often found in well recognized and excepted establishments such as the military, police or legal profession.

If on the other hand, you were raised in a Laissez-faire manner, then the harsh imposition of divergent values upon a person or group is seen as completely unacceptable in means and philosophical approach.

Justice self defined, is another way of looking at balance on an intrapsychic level. If a person has suffered injustice on a deep level as a child, then it is always at the forefront of his/her awareness, as is the experience of loss and powerlessness.

Our basic need as people is to resolve the deep unconscious feeling from early childhood of loss, powerlessness and injustice. When projected outward you have the peace builder or conversely the peace wreckers of our world. All striving for their own definition of balance within themselves.

If this is so we must strive to create dialogue with those people who seek to impose their means and methods upon us. Finding balance with those who hold another viewpoint, first is a major challenge.— We must first ask ourselves the question what balance means to me. Second - we must focus on the world we perceive around us in a genuine attempt to find keys to balance, peace and harmony for us all.

The ultimate peacemaker in our world looks back at us every time we stare into the mirror and reflect upon our day and the events we will face. We can and do shape our world, and the great challenges that we confront by the issues and answers that filter our gaze, as we look to the image before us. We need to not complicate our existence. We need to use the tools available to us. The capacity to reflect in the marvelous capacity we have to change the life we live and the values we uphold.

Think about your automobile. It comes with solutions to problems as yet experienced on the first day you drive away with your new car. The day may be sunny but you have windshield wipers when you need to clear the water away so you can see. When you open the trunk of the car there is a tire for the unforeseen time when you may have a need for it.

We as people come with equally useful tools for moments of need and distress. Chief among those tools is our capacity to re-symbolize events, and forgive those who are seen as the cause of pain, injustice or loss. The use of re-symbolization is often the key defining balance within our lives.

Winston Churchill said, “All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.”

*Picture: [Bill Dan sculptor](#)*

©March 2016 Goodfield Institute LLC