

THE ART OF BEING HUMAN by Donald B. Backstrom, M.S., D.C.

The subject of balance and how it applies to the totality of human existence can be a beautifully simple concept and intricately complex issue all at the same time. The definition of balance as it applies to this situation is: a state in which various parts form a satisfying and harmonious whole. The simplicity of this concept is that when one sees or experiences balance it is obvious and usually very clear. It is that felt sense that “it’s just right” or that it feels very natural. The complexity of balance arises when one starts to look at all of the components that fit together to allow balance to occur. The intricacy of the human body and all of its manifesting fields can be a daunting and overwhelming study of dynamic interrelationships between systems, fluids, structures and energies. Let us focus on the simple concept of balance as a felt sense and let us allow the beautifully orchestrated flowing of the totality of our human nature to dance with the patterns of being whole (i.e....the more complex part).

The areas of focus for our workshop will be directed to four main topics. These four topics are in no way encompassing the totality of the human condition and, in fact, are purposefully limited due to the nature of our time constraints. These areas of focus are, I believe, the basic and fundamental components of balance, for without these in a state of homeostasis the evolution of human consciousness would be tenuous at best. **The four topics include grounding, posture, breathing and hormones.** Evaluation of these areas and having feedback about how we are progressing in the development of balance or homeostasis will be an experiential part of our work this week. This is something that takes practice, persistence and patience.

When entering into an evaluation of these four areas, or any areas of concern, there are two main ways of gathering this information. One is physician or healer directed and the other is self-directed. Of course, the practitioner directed is a more practiced, and hopefully, deeper look into the presence or absence of balance and the effects these imbalances may have on our systems. The self-evaluation can be just as deep, but in all likelihood won’t have the directed educated template of understanding that the practitioner has been able to obtain through years of schooling and practice. With this being said, please don’t underestimate how much you know about yourself. Having worked with many patients for over two decades, the knowledge that they have about themselves (coming from experience and intuition), can far outweigh what the practitioner may be able to ascertain. How does the old Star Wars saying go? The knowledge you are able to obtain from your being can be the spark of insight that may allow you to see more deeply into yourself than ever before. So, don’t underestimate the power of “your” force.

The first main topic in our series of four is grounding. Entire books have been written on this subject and two to three day workshops have also been given. There are meditations and postures and many other practices used in the process and experience of grounding. **Through my experiences on a personal level the single most important factor in this process of connecting to all of the cells and all of the parts of our body is this: giving ourselves permission to be fully present, from the deepest place in our heart and with the felt sense of love and acceptance.** One can do all of the visualizations and meditations they chose, but until one connects to ones heart and gives permission to be fully present, everything else is just an exercise. We have all had many early life experiences that encouraged us not to be grounded. This usually arises from some unpleasantness that can range from profoundly painful and tragic to simply

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falling or being yelled at by someone. No matter what the reason for the disconnect from our physical body, **the choice** is ours to reconnect and become grounded again. Although unweighting from these early life experiences can be done in many ways, when one is fully present and grounded these moments of emancipation can become more permanent. **Grounding starts** by giving yourself permission to be here now from the deepest place in your heart. **Grounding continues** by making the commitment to YOU to be here in every now. **Grounding becomes** a state of being when one allows oneself to feel the love of the divine beating in one's heart. (Please see handout entitled Emotional Connection-Serenity Cleanse)

Our second topic is posture. Back in the thirties, forties and fifties much investigation was made about posture. They talked about how "good" posture affects the health of every organ in our body. Research was actually done correlating organ health, spinal arthritis and posture. **What they found was that poor posture led to spinal stress which was connected to thinning of the spinal nerves and a diseased organ that was connected to the nerve.** So a reduction in normal nerve activity correlated with a poorly functioning organ which was connected to spinal arthritis. Nerve activity on all levels affects our electromagnetic field (part of which is the chakras) which in turn affects every cell in our body. Is posture important? My simple answer is yes, and our spine is the column of central support that houses our central nervous system that protects and directs the nerves that are the structural component of our energetic makeup. What is good or even ideal posture? The main purpose of upright posture is to have the head over the pelvis. This allows the body to move in almost any direction in a balanced manner. This also allows our feet to be in a centered position so that we are in balance in all four planar directions which are front to back, left to right and all points in between. In an ideal state your head is centered over your pelvis and you have two forward curves, one in the neck and one in the low back. You also have two backward curves, one in the thoracic spine and one in the pelvis. **Much can be said about posture, but the primary problem for most of our culture is what is known as "forward head syndrome". Simply put, 80+ per cent of our population has their head way out in front of their shoulders and is making the spinal muscles, joints and bones work 20 to 40 times harder in every upright moment.** To start the correction process, what you can do is to stand against a wall and have your head; middle thoracic spine and sacrum all touch the wall at the same time while your eyes are level with the floor. Sounds simple, but it takes practice and feedback which we will review.

Third, we have potentially the most important connection between your conscious awareness and your unconscious awareness: this is your breath. More has been written, said, instructed and discussed about this than grounding. This is one of the most powerful places that your autonomic nervous system gets its direction. Using the diaphragm to breath allows the nervous system to relax, become balanced autonomicly and your blood to get the most oxygen with the least amount of effort. **Holding your diaphragm tight (which is what the majority of the population does) and breathing with the rib cage causes an autonomic nervous system imbalance and leads to a chronic flight, fight, fright or freeze wave to constantly move through your body with each breath.** Given the amount of stress that is pandemic in today's world it is easy to see why the majority of the population is in an exhausted and fatigued state. **Learning to breath diaphragmatically helps slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure, aids in digestion, helps one to focus, helps balance blood sugar and helps balance muscle tone (among many other things).** You may be asking how we do this. The first step is to ground; the next step is to sit in an upright

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position with your head over your pelvis and then slightly raise your rib cage so that your diaphragm is open in the front and can move freely. Place one hand on your abdomen and the other on your rib cage. Each time you inhale let your lower hand move forward in a relaxed manner and the hand on the rib cage should not move, or at the least move very little. When you exhale, your lower hand moves inward in a slow steady manner. Ideally the breath will be smooth, even and calm with no jerking or stopping. The inhalation and exhalations would be of the same length, about three to five seconds long each way. Try this for three minutes and you will feel the shift in your consciousness into calm and centered state.

Our fourth area of focus is hormones. The endocrine system includes the following glands: pineal, pituitary, thymus, thyroid, parathyroid, adrenals, pancreas and gonads. These organs have a beautifully orchestrated feedback system of checks and balances that allow our body to grow, repair, transport fuel and remove toxins. We are focusing on the adrenal glands because they are the ones most intimately connected with our stress reaction and breathing. The stress reaction was mentioned in the breathing section of this paper. **When our body starts ramping up the reaction to stress it is usually mediated in the breath first by short, fast, shallow breaths that stimulate stretch receptors in the rib cage that set off the flight, fight, fright or freeze response through the autonomic nervous system. If this occurs for any longer than a short period of time then the adrenal glands start preparing the body for battle by releasing adrenalin and cortisol.** The adrenal glands are wired by nerves directly into the autonomic nervous system. **The crisis in our culture is that we as individuals are always in crisis.** We are in a constant usually low grade state of flight, fight and fright connected to many times of high stress and a much stronger reaction. **People even have difficulty falling asleep due to adrenal exhaustion.** This may sound like a paradox, but it is not because it takes energy to turn the systems off enough in order to be able to sleep. **Many people are so exhausted that they don't have enough energy left to shut their systems off.** Their mind just keeps on traveling from one subject to the next and so on, so that they have great difficulty falling to sleep. Once they do fall asleep they wake up very easily because the stress reaction is just below the surface and it takes only a slight stimulus to start again. Sometimes this stimulus can be what we are dreaming. Have you ever woken up from a dream with your heart racing, in a sweat and having difficulty breathing due to the tightness in your chest? **What all of this does is cause the adrenal glands to become depleted of the reserves of adrenal hormones and we end up in a chronic state of fatigue.** In order to combat this state we then rely on stimulants like coffee, sugar, refined carbohydrates, artificial sweeteners and many other chemicals. What this does is cause further depletion and the vicious cycle of fatigue and over stimulation ensues. The way to correct this is first find out how hormonally depleted the adrenal glands are. This is done by a simple salivary test which you can request from my office. This will reveal your adrenal glands, stage of health. After we have this knowledge, a course of adrenal recovery can be plotted. Each individual is different and a combination of nutritional supplements and other health nurturing techniques are typically used. This will allow the body to get back on track and start the process of balancing the adrenal glands, which will then start the process of balancing the rest of the hormones. Other nutritional products are usually indicated since the majority of our population is depleted of nutritional in multiple areas and multiple organ systems. But, without starting with adrenal repletion first, any other nutrients will have very limited and ineffective effects.

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