

1

They define what a balanced life means for them. They realize true balance is knowing and living your priorities; therefore, well-balanced people clearly define their priorities. They have a vision for what they value, where they are going, and (most importantly) where they are not going. They recognize the temptation to look around and compare themselves with others—but they are experts at tuning out all the voices contrary to their values.

2

They simplify. They are masters of minimalism and efficiency. I don't mean they all have a capsule wardrobe and sparse home décor. I mean, if they can make something simpler, they do it—their schedule, their closet, their routine, whatever.

They recognize that it takes a little work on the front end to declutter a home or unsubscribe from unwanted e-mails, but the results will carry through for months or even years. Ultimately, their simplification clears up time to pursue the things that truly support their values.

3

They set goals related to and supporting their priorities. Once they have a vision of what balance means for them, they set goals that directly support that vision. Some may actually write down their goals and others may not. In fact, some of them may not even think of themselves as “goal-setters.” But if you were to ask them what they are doing to pursue their priorities, they could tell you, without hesitation.

4

They use “yes” and “no” wisely. They say yes to things that clearly matter to them, and they say no to everything else. They understand time is a valuable and finite resource, so they don't waste it on things that are contrary to their mission. They know how to minimize distraction. They are really great at living out what is most important to them—and they delegate, hire out, or simply ignore everything else.

THE *scoop* ON *balance*

by *Sandy Cooper*

5

They establish meaningful routines and rituals. If a relationship with God is an important component of balance for them, they establish a daily ritual of prayer, meditation, or Bible reading. If debt-free living is an important component of balance for them, they routinely keep a budget. If intimacy in marriage is important to them, they have regular times of connection built into their week. Well-balanced people realize routines—good or bad—become habits. And habits determine the outcome of their lives.

6

They prioritize their health. They aren't necessarily running marathons or keeping detailed food logs (some are, though!), but they all understand that feeling well physically is a key component to a well-balanced life. This means they take good care of themselves. They try to get adequate rest. They generally watch what they eat. They make time for some sort of exercise on a regular basis. They minimize stress and know how to recharge when they feel depleted. In short, they have routines and rituals in place that support physical health.

7

While they are resolute in their values and have good routines in place, they remain flexible. This doesn't mean they quickly abandon their routines or their priorities. It means they regularly reflect on what is working and what is not, and they make necessary adjustments, as needed. They realize life is complicated and messy, full of endless moving parts and ever-changing seasons. So, they periodically examine their priorities, their routines, their rituals, and their commitments and adjust them to fit their circumstances.

8

They invest deeply in relationships. No matter what their definition of balance, whether introvert or extrovert, well-balanced people know they cannot live a well-balanced life in isolation. They are relational to the core—even if their core consists of only a few people. They have a healthy network surrounding them and supporting them—family, friends, co-workers, and/or church. They make time for regular interaction, regular conversation—preferably, face-to-face. They look to someone else for wisdom and encouragement—maybe a parent, a mentor, or a spiritual leader. They have at least one confidant—a best friend, a spouse, or a sibling. And they are regularly pouring into someone else—perhaps their children, a younger adult, or maybe a group of people through a volunteer effort. The people in their posse may change periodically (see #7!), but once they identify their people, they go deep.

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8 THINGS WELL-BALANCED PEOPLE DO DIFFERENTLY

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