

Balance in the In-Between

Category: Finding Balance

written by Pamela Adelstein | March 26, 2023

The voice of a dear yoga teacher echoes in my head: “It is easy to maintain your balance in the pose. The hard part is to stay balanced when moving from one pose to another.” Real life often evidences itself on the yoga mat, and life transitions are not my favorite events. Thus, unsurprisingly, I frequently rushed the transitions between poses in yoga class. As my legs, torso, and arms whipped about, my teacher would call out my name to remind me to pay attention and find my balance in between poses.

Recently, I started a new job after leaving the health center where I’d worked for sixteen years. Just as when I’m on my yoga mat, my emotions and thoughts have been whipping about, fueled by the discomfort and uncertainty of being new, facing unknowns, coming to grips with the steep learning curve ahead of me.

My yoga teacher taught me another wise principle: that the mind, body, and gaze are linked. When your mind is unbalanced, your body is also out of balance, and your gaze is consequently unfocused. Yoga uses the “drishti” concept to help. Drishti means “view” or “point of focus” in Sanskrit.

In my yoga practice, I strive to look at a steady place so I can keep my balance. But during transitions, I find it challenging to stay in the present moment, particularly during down time. Similarly, when I am engaged in a task at work, I am focused and present. But between tasks—in the transitions—my mind races, which creates stress and anxiety. The stress and anxiety signal my adrenal glands to pump out adrenaline, which feeds back to my body and mind to maintain the stress mode. This physiology was vital when cave people ran from the saber-toothed tiger chasing them. However, an exciting new work opportunity is hardly a predator, if only my adrenal glands could differentiate the two.

Why not savor this transition, I wonder? Learning and discovering new challenges out of one’s comfort zone can be exhilarating. Despite having set an intention to move through this process mindfully, as I do on the yoga mat, old habits die hard. Grit, stubbornness, and determination are my typical guiding principles. I long to savor a transition grounded by a soft focus on my internal drishti, allowing the unimportant and nonurgent matters in life to melt away.

Pamela Adelstein

Newton, Massachusetts