

# thePLUM *line*

BY MICHAEL SHARP, MD

## picking up the phone

I've been writing in this column about trapped fight-or-flight responses as the origin of post-traumatic stress disorder. The theory is that the primitive part of the brain that controls our nervous system's response to threat needs to come to completion any time it is startled into action. The body wants to fight or flee and if it cannot, the energy of those powerful impulses are stuck. Imagine your accelerator and brake both on "full." This part of our brain doesn't easily listen to the more modern part of our brain—the part of our brain that is logical, verbal, and capable of abstract constructions. That rational brain can tell the more primitive part that everything is OK but the primitive brain might not believe it. The unresolved fear response (accelerator and brake on at the same time) sends out contradictory messages to the body. Over time the body is harmed by the activation that has no effective resolution.

As I've studied this way of understanding our bodies, I've observed my own reaction to anxiety, stressful situations and, yes, even fear. My rational mind keeps telling me "why worry—it only makes you uptight and all those things you worry about never seem to happen." As I've observed my reactions to stress and my rational mind's not-very-successful attempts to console, I've been observing things that make my worry worse and those that actually are consoling. What is it that calms the primitive brain?

Thinking doesn't seem to help. As I've said above, there isn't much cooperation between the cognitive brain and the part of the brain that is more intimately connected to the body. Isolation makes things worse. I am an introvert and do some of my very best problem-solving, creative, modern brain work by myself. But when I feel threatened I obsess, inflate negative possibilities, begin to blame—both myself and others. My head is a bad place to be when I'm worried or afraid.

I have begun to notice that being with other people whom I trust and can confide in can help. It is our secrets that hurt us. Of course we don't want to go blurting our secrets to people that will use them against us so we need to develop a network of allies. Allies are people that we have known over time and who know us

and accept us for who we are. We don't need to inflate ourselves with these people—that would undermine the solid ground where we can let down our defenses and be who we are and only who we are. Sometimes the power of these relationships lies only in the act of coming clean. Sometimes my friends have good, practical ideas about how to cope.

What is the negative power of secrets? In this formulation of an inner war between our modern brain and our primitive one, secrets are, in part, what the primitive brain is trying to tell us and what we don't want to hear. Our primitive brain can shame us and make us feel vulnerable, immature, out of control. So our civilized brain wants to suppress these feelings. Resolution of PTSD and other symptoms associated with fear such as panic attacks, pervasive anxiety, insomnia and many other somatic symptoms associated with digestion, nervous system and immune function may not resolve until the primitive brain is allowed to express itself.

That doesn't mean we need to act out our aggressions or our impulse to flee. It only means we need to get in touch with these somatic experiences and allow our bodies to feel them—not just recognize them cognitively. I don't think this can be done in isolation—that is by oneself. It looks like therapy for these disorders has to be done in partnership—with another—someone you trust and with whom you can allow yourself to share your secrets.

So my balancing act these days is to allow myself time to be by myself to explore information, concepts, plans. I am a woodworker and I love to be in my woodshop. I get great satisfaction from the creative work I do there. I may allow myself some escape through reading or watching movies or listening to music. But that time doesn't make me feel safer. I am learning that comfort comes from others. This is not my native recourse and it takes an act of extreme bravery on my part to call and invite a confidant to dinner. But I am observing that sharing secrets in that or in a therapeutic relationship is where I can calm the inner beast the best.

To Your Health. 

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## balance in the new year

**A** couple of years ago I joined *Bodies, Voices and Spirit*, a wonderful chorus for women, led by Kathleen Hannan, a gifted singer and songwriter in our area. I was worried that I couldn't carry a tune and went to Kathleen for a private lesson. Kathleen asked if I listened to the other singers when I sang as well as to myself. I said not only did I not do that, I had never thought of doing it and didn't know if I could. She showed me how and it has been wonderful to feel more self confident about my voice and able to participate more fully in the chorus.

Balance is all about the ability to listen to both sides of any question, need, or desire and to find that place of harmony where both sides are integrated into (in Webster's words) "a pleasing and consistent whole." If we are to thrive as individuals and as a planet, balance and harmony will have to be our guiding principles. If we are going to be able to enjoy this beautiful world we are going to have to "listen" to our environment as well as our own needs. If we are to be good parents we must listen to our children and to ourselves. If we are to be good leaders we must hear our own wisdom as well the collective wisdom. If we are to be good friends, lovers, human beings we must listen to our own voice as well as the voices of others. If we are to be centered as individuals, we need to be able to listen to our hearts as well as our minds, our bodies as well as our spirits and our own needs as well as what is good for others.

We cannot pretend that we are unrelated any longer. What we do affects others and the health of our planet. This interrelatedness may sometimes feel like a burden, but in fact it is a blessing, a pearl of great price. I love You Tube for the amazing, uplifting snippets it can bring, especially the ones where seemingly ordinary and sometimes unrelated people are dancing, laughing or playing together. When we are engaged with each other from a place of love, we are at our best and we are happiest.

If we are to thrive as people, a nation, a world we must move from competition and hierarchy to cooperation and equality. Instead

of trying to "win" arguments we must look to consensus so that everyone wins. Instead of aggression we must look to peaceful solutions. Force is always the simplest solution but the negative consequences are profound. In parenting, it is pretty easy to hit a child to force them to comply, but the effects on the relationship and the child's self esteem are devastating. If we "fight," it must be against ignorance, intolerance, poverty, inadequate health care, tainted water, famine, and to be most effective we must come from a place of love and compassion. John Lennon sings in his song *Imagine*: "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one..." Dreaming of a better world is the first step, but of course it is not enough. We must each find our own small way to bring balance, harmony and peace to our world.

I want to close with two quotes from President Eisenhower and my wishes for us in the New Year:

*"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."*

and

*"I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it."*

In the New Year this is my hope for each of us:

May the love of family, friends and the Divine

Surround us

Sustain us

Strengthen us

May the stream of infinite compassion flow through us

For ourselves

For our families and friends

For the whole world and every being.

May hope be our constant companion, and

May peace fill our hearts and our world. ❧❧

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# healing words

BY MARK W. McCLURE, MD, MEDICAL EDITOR

## swan song

**F**orty-two years ago, I embarked upon a career in medicine with a clean slate. Over the ensuing nine years of training, my slate became jam packed with a plethora of didactic and clinical information. Thereafter, I spent the next three decades revising or replacing most of the information that had amassed on my slate during the formative years.

With the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, I will embark upon another journey: retirement! Once again, I'd be starting with a clean slate, but this time I'll be traveling with my best friend and wife, Cheri Elliott, and our beloved pooch, Abby. Before setting off, I'd like to share a few pearls of wisdom that I've gleaned over the past four decades.

**When Things Go Awry:** Two sayings—"All is in Divine order" and "This too shall pass"—have sustained me through many dark nights of the soul. These perennial truths help assuage life's vicissitudes.

**Lighten Your Load:** Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves. I learned first-hand that carrying a grudge is a heavy burden. My epiphany came when I realized that forgiveness is not blaming someone else for my experience. When I finally accepted my experience exactly as it was without judgment, resistance, or control, my load vanished.

**Reduce Stress:** go on a "news fast." Turn off the talking heads on the radio and TV and stash the newspaper. Try it. You'll like it. I've been on a news fast since 1993. Without the endless diatribe of gloom and doom, I've enjoyed a profound sense of inner peace.

**Pay It Forward:** I embrace the adage, "to whom much is given, much is expected." When viewed from poverty consciousness, donating money to a worthy cause reduces net worth. Spiritual arithmetic, on the other hand, yields a different result. Giving abundantly with joy and thanksgiving, sends a message to the universe that one is willing to share and receive abundance. The universe responds in kind.

**Embrace Complementary Medicine:** Conventional medicine is primarily geared to treat disease. People without evidence of disease are deemed healthy. Unfortunately, an organ can lose up to 80 percent of its function before disease manifests. Complementary

medicine, on the other hand, is geared to promote health by taking into consideration cultural, environmental, nutritional, lifestyle, psychosocial, and spiritual influences that promote well-being.

**The Hero's Journey:** When patients confide that their illness has been one of the best things that has happened to them, I know that they have completed the hero's journey. Read the verbatim text of a speech that I gave about the hero's journey; it's my favorite. Log on to [www.auncurology.com](http://www.auncurology.com). On the upper task bar, click on 'What's New,' 'complementary medicine,' 'presentations,' 'Spirituality and Prostate Cancer.'

**Child Rearing 101:** Did you ever notice that children don't come with an instruction manual? Here are a few pointers I've learned as a parent and grandparent:

- First and foremost, love your children unconditionally and don't keep it a secret.
- Teach your children to be tolerant of religious, racial, and sexual differences.
- Encourage and teach your children to become lifelong learners by exposing them to quality art, music, dance, and literature instead of mindless television and video games.
- Teach your children how to become responsible citizens of their community, state, nation, and world.
- Teach your children how to achieve optimal health by modeling a healthy diet and lifestyle.
- Discipline your children with dignity. Be firm, yet loving; consistent, yet reasonable. Avoid idle threats, ultimatums, and shaming.
- Encourage your children to do their best, but make sure that they know this doesn't mean that they have to be perfect.
- Allow your children to chase their dreams, even if it doesn't conform to your dreams for them.

**Follow Your Heart, Not Your Itinerary:** This is the manifesto for the next stage of our journey; may it be yours.

In closing, please accept my heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of sharing my musings with you these past 18 years! Ciao! 🍷🍷

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# Regaining *Hormonal Balance*

**“Hormone replacement therapy is an important quality-of-life issue—an opportunity to regain balance in a vital, fundamental way.”**

**P**harmacist Zoe Stefanadis, founder and owner of Chapel Hill Compounding, emphasizes that for many pre-menopausal and menopausal women “hormone replacement therapy is an important quality-of-life issue—an opportunity to regain balance in a vital, fundamental way.

“Hormones affect every cell in the body, not just heart, bone and brain cells, and the only way to supplement what the body has stopped producing, or is producing in lesser quantity, is to put back exactly the same natural hormones, including estrogen, progesterone, DHEA and testosterone.”

The BHRT process with Ms. Stefanadis invariably begins with saliva testing. “I like this approach because it reflects the cellular level of the hormones, and empowers the patient, as well,” she says. “On occasion, they come to us after they’ve seen other providers who, after a routine exam, tell them they’re fine. With saliva testing, we learn not only the level of various hormones, but also how they fall in the normal range. Sometimes the balance is off. If estrogen, for example, is on the upper level of normal, and progesterone is on the lower end, the patient is out of balance—and they physically and intuitively know that is true.

“What is also true is that hormones are essential for every cell in our bodies, and this is not just about menopause. The key issue is to retain hormonal balance as we age. An important question to consider for all of us is: How can I grow old avoiding frailty? Falling is a significant problem for the elderly, and staying stronger on our feet is an important part of hormonal replacement therapy.

“The understandable inclination is to talk about BHRT impact on the lives of women, but in fact the process is also important for men. Testosterone starts to decline now at a younger age for men, because of environmental factors. Midsection fat is tied into the issue of balance, as well as adrenal function and cortisol.”

## THE PROCESS

The BHRT process varies from one patient to the next—depending to a large extent on the initial level of imbalance. “We find in our experience that the body needs about 12 weeks to begin to move into hormonal balance. Typically I check in with clients at least every 12 weeks for a thorough progress report. If we don’t see significant improvement within six months, we’ll retest and confer with the client’s physician, as well. That balanced triangle—the patient on top, supported by physician and pharmacist—has been the underpinning of our health care system since its inception.”

When it comes to replacing hormones, Ms. Stefanadis says, “We’ve learned that transdermal delivery has many benefits, especially important because you don’t have to go through the liver to deliver the hormones. It’s in the liver where these substances are converted into the more carcinogenic and heart damaging forms. And in going through the skin, we can optimize cellular blood levels. The skin acts like a reservoir, allowing for slow delivery via blood and lymphatic system. These levels are far less even when substances are taken by mouth.

“We tailor our medication schedule to fit the woman’s cycle; the entire process is individualized. It is critical to monitor this process with lab tests. The art of this process is determining the dosage of the hormones, to achieve the right balance between estrogen and progesterone.

“When we fine tune in this manner, the results are quite wonderful. Women come in feeling fantastic, and their doctors are pleased. One of the most compelling reasons for women to do this is the fact that we now live much longer. It’s one thing to live longer, it’s often another to live well. Bio-identical HRT offers anti-aging benefits, in terms of protection of the brain, nervous system, prevention

Pharmacist Zoe Stefanadis observes her pharmacy technician, Melissa Morrison, at work. Together, they spend their days creating a remarkable range of custom medications for both humans and their pets.



of degenerative illnesses, neurologic problems, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, and other health problems. There’s an abundance of research that shows these connections. I am myself in the category of ‘menopausal’ women, so I can share with my clients, based on my own experience, the details of how bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) has been a blessing in my life.”

Her clients confirm the value of BHRT on an almost daily basis, she says. “While I treat some men with hormone replacement, by far the most typical patient is the menopausal or pre-menopausal woman who comes to me complaining of hot flashes, sleep disturbance, mood swings, low energy, and depression. They feel wildly out of balance, dragging themselves through each day. BHRT is not an overnight fix, and I usually find 12 weeks is a target time to begin seeing positive results: reduction or elimination of hot flashes, restorative sleep, higher energy levels, and moodiness giving way to joy!”

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# Smile in All Parts of Your Life

**B**alance is a challenge in all the stages of our lives, observes Bobbie Barbrey, a registered pharmacist and owner of Medicap Pharmacy in North Raleigh.

A long-time pharmacist, Mr. Barbrey is a Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN) in addition to being a compounding expert. Medicap Pharmacy recently achieved PCAB accreditation, the highest compounding standard possible. It is the first pharmacy in Raleigh and only the seventh in North Carolina who meets this standard.

"Recently in a nearby store I saw a child, no more than three years old, who walked by me and offered me an absolutely open, enchanting smile—radiating profound levels of physical, emotional, and spiritual health," said Mr. Barbrey. "Her presence made me think of the challenge of maintaining that same level of joy and health through all the stages of our lives.

"I'm convinced it can be done. In fact, I work with clients every day who are on that same path, many of them achieving stunning success. Without question however, it requires commitment and discipline. And the rewards are worth it."

"Too often," he says, "with the best of intentions, we focus on one part of our health and pay little or no attention to other, equally important aspects. One of my clients, for example, is dedicated to working out and is also good about taking needed supplements. But she is less attentive, you might even say somewhat derelict about providing quiet, meditative time in her busy life. Her water intake is barely adequate, and her diet is fair at best. Thus, she can feel good about some of her life style choices, but she is short-changing herself from reaching her full potential of robust good health. She's out of balance in important ways. Does this sound like you?"

"We're all authors and directors of the play called life. Because of this we have more control over the outcome than many people realize. If we have written our play in a way that fails to promote long-term health, we can change direction and rewrite the script," Mr. Barbrey says. "When working with my clients, I want them to see that their participation, what they do in their daily lives, greatly affects their long-term health.

"One of my roles is to explore these opportunities for change in detail and in a way that works best for my client. There are almost always more effective ways to improve one's long-term health. Together, we develop a health road map that will serve them for years to come—helping to create the balance that will provide the highest return on their investment in their health."

## WHAT DOES BALANCE MEAN?

"Balance is that perfect place between the fluctuations of life. Many of my patients live their lives on a roller coaster while others mimic the motion of a tree gently moving with the breeze. Which one best describes you?"

"It is not realistic to do every single thing we know to be good for us every single day," notes Mr. Barbrey. "There aren't enough hours in the day to do that and still lead a normal life. But the goal is to find a way to include enough healthful habits throughout the day and week, each with enough frequency to make a positive difference.

"Take exercise as an example. It is important to keep the body moving to stay youthful and limber. If you know that you are sitting a lot without balancing it with some form of movement, commit to finding a form of exercise that speaks to you. Walking is great and is something most people can easily do, but when was the last time you went dancing? The options for fun exercise are endless – riding a bike, hiking out in nature, yoga, tai chi, or qi gong are just a few. Watch children outside to see how effortlessly they make movement fun."

## SEEKING BALANCE

Even as you work to achieve your highest level of health, unwanted symptoms may still emerge, notes Mr. Barbrey. "If you find this happening to you, you may go to the doctor and be prescribed a medication to control that symptom. But that is also a good time to explore and look deeper. What has moved out of balance in your body to allow this new symptom?"

"Remember that you are not deficient in the medication. Your deficiency far more likely relates to lifestyle choices or an improper diet resulting in a lack of vitamins and minerals. It is this nutritional deficiency that ultimately compromises the body's function and creates a symptom that gets your attention.

"It is my passion to help people find the right balance of targeted nutritional supplements and identify the best foods for them to eat to give their bodies the building blocks they need. One of our favorite products is a homeopathic remedy which helps bring balance to the emotional and physical bodies. It helps re-establish emotional balance for people dealing with symptoms from relationship issues, work stresses, physical challenges, or general anxiety. It helps take the edge off so the stresses are no longer so daunting.

"Beyond looking at the body from a purely physical aspect, when we are aligned with the spiritual aspect of who we are we respond in pro-



Mr. Barbrey

found ways. We benefit enormously from giving of ourselves without expecting anything in return—the pay-it-forward concept.

"Our inclination is to look at our health in terms of absolute wellness or illness," notes Mr. Barbrey. "But like the up and down of a teeter-totter, it is common to have gentle fluctuations in our body. Our job is to recognize when we are shifting away from a comfortable balance and get back on the right path while it is still relatively easy to negotiate.

"I encourage you to evaluate what you are doing today, figure out the parts of your life that are not as well-balanced and complete as you would like, and make a New Year's resolution to find the path to bring harmony into all parts of your life. Take a cue from nature. Nature moves through four seasons with a balanced rhythm. There is a time for rest and repair and a time for movement and new growth. Create a plan, commit yourself to your new plan, and watch your success. Recapture the energy of your youth and let it radiate like the vibrance so evident in children. I would be honored to help guide you in that process." hhh

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# Learning *To Walk in Beauty*

By Mara Bishop, MS, ThM, CSC

To feel balanced is to feel happy, powerful, and peaceful. Without balance our systems deteriorate. To be out of balance physically causes disease. When we are out of balance emotionally—“beside ourselves” with feeling—we lack the ability to respond rationally to the events of our lives. To be spiritually imbalanced implies that we’ve lost our internal compass, that guiding force that helps us navigate toward truth.

The Navajo people have a saying: *May you walk in beauty.* Although I am not Navajo, my understanding is that it means: *May you lead a harmonious life. May you have balance within yourself. May your relationships be agreeable. May you be at peace with your surroundings. As you walk through your day, and move through different environments, may you not be pulled too far to one extreme or another. May you create beauty with your words and your deeds, and may that beauty be reflected back to you. May you find peace within and without.*

The practice of shamanism can help us achieve this balance. My goal with clients is to help them find equilibrium: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Although a person may come with a physical complaint, I look at the complete picture; what is underlying the manifestation of symptoms on an energetic level? From the shamanic perspective, I then address where the imbalances lie. Often the results are surprising.

A client who was struggling with intense pain from what she thought was plantar fasciitis wrote: “The healing work that you did on my legs and feet recently was totally unexpected. I cannot believe how quickly the pain disappeared after that session. To find out that the pain was not even my own was eye opening.”

When we look at the broader picture of creating balance in our lives, frequently the details fall into place in ways we couldn’t have anticipated. In addition to the physical pain that left this client after that clearing session, she noticed a new sense of unity with the world around her.

“Since starting regular sessions with you, I feel amazingly connected to the vibrancy of life. I notice the miraculous way that I am interacting with nature and I stand in awe, feeling equally blessed that nature finds me worthy of such interaction and that I am able to recognize nature’s contribution in guiding me towards my best self.”

This give and take is a lovely example of walking in beauty. It comes when we clear the energy that isn’t ours, reunite with what fundamentally is, and make connecting to our innately wise selves part of our daily lives.

In the last edition of *Health & Healing*, I wrote about the energetic immune system, the body’s parallel to the physical immune system, which enables us to process and defend against energy in the environment that may cause imbalances. The help of a trained practitioner can be invaluable, particularly when it comes to reconnecting with aspects of oneself that can be damaged during trauma, and clearing external energy that can interfere with your body’s natural systems. This time of year can be a challenge for both of our immune systems.

During the holidays, many of us experience overload: from too much time with family and friends or a keen sense of the absence of a close community, pressure to spend money that isn’t there, host the perfect party, or buy the perfect presents. The media bombards us with images of what the holidays are supposed to be. We can run ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually ragged. As you look to the beginning of the New Year, perhaps think about ways to help create peace and equilibrium in your life; new ways to walk in beauty.

Learning how to use this ancient system of healing and problem solving for yourself can be part of that process. To learn more about working shamanically first hand, either on your own or with an ongoing group, join me in January for an introductory class on Shamanic Journeying.

May you walk in beauty. h&h



*Mara Bishop is an intuitive consultant, shamanic practitioner, teacher, author, and artist. In her Personal Evolution Counseling™ practice in Durham, she combines intuitive consultations, shamanic healing, and energetic healing. She works with clients locally, nationally, and internationally.*

*She holds master’s degrees in Energy Medicine and Theology and a bachelor’s degree in Art and Communications. She is a graduate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies Three-Year Program in Advanced Shamanism and Shamanic Healing, Sandra Ingerman’s Shamanic Teacher Training program, and advanced training with Betsy Bergstrom. Mara is the only Harner Certified Shamanic Counselor® in North Carolina.*

## INTRODUCTION TO SHAMANIC JOURNEYING CLASS

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# RAISING *healthy* children

BY KIP KUHN, MEd

Educators from Carolina Friends School in Durham explore  
the relationship between health and education

## from settling in to slacklining— balance in life is a dynamic equilibrium

It's 8:28 am on a Monday morning at Carolina Friends Middle School. The center space is a buzz with over 140 middle school students catching up on the weekend, talking, and just doing what middle-schoolers do. The clock reads 8:30 am, the lights go out, all goes silent, and each student quickly and quietly sits in a circle on the floor... not a sound. We sit for the next ten minutes together, wrapped in silence as a community. We settle in.

This incredibly powerful routine takes place at the start of every school day. It is a time I cherish. Settling in provides an opportunity for each student and staff member to be still, to center, and to bring him/herself to be fully present for the day. Although the purpose of settling in is not necessarily to provide balance, for those ten minutes it does.

I find that settling in not only provides me a space of quiet reflection and meditation to attempt to shut out the ever-present noise of my life, but also provides me the opportunity to just center my thoughts, focus on breathing, and be mindful about the ways that my life may be in or out of balance. My hope for each student in the circle is the same, yet in reality I know I cannot control what is going on in their developing minds. But I am grateful that at least each student has a quiet, safe place to start the day.

In my opinion, this quiet start to each day is necessary for kids and adults and helps contribute to a sense of balance in the ever busy, ever distracting, and ever changing world. When the American Academy of Pediatrics reports the average child spends more than seven hours each day in front of a screen, settling in each day is a small but important step in staying balanced.

Balance is one of those things in life that is different for each person, and not necessarily attainable because balance implies an 'equal' distribution. We certainly all know from experience that equal attention to life's basic components (intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual) rarely, if ever, happens. For this reason I prefer to view balance in life as a dynamic equilibrium, a continual flow, a give and take. Often my imbalance causes me to shift, to move, and to be aware of how things need to change and adjust.

### SLACKLINING: A DIFFERENT BALANCING ACT

The dynamic equilibrium of life reminds me of something I recently tried. Some good friends of mine introduced me to slacklining. A slackline is a flat length of nylon webbing that is attached between two anchor points a person can walk on. The webbing can be of varying widths and the tension of the slackline can be adjusted as desired. Even when the slackline is as taut as it can go, it still shifts, wobbles, stretches, and moves when you walk.

Slacklining is one of those things, like many, that looks easy when watching someone do it well. But, oh contraire, mon frère! It requires an insane amount of focus and core strength. If you have never done it before, the instant you put your foot on the slackline and step up, your leg shakes uncontrollably. However, with continued practice all of the tiny muscles develop and work in concert to keep you steady, allowing you to perform the simple act of walking.

Although slacklining requires a tremendous amount of balance, it is more of a dynamic equilibrium—constant movements and adjustments are needed to keep you upright and walking. On many levels, slacklining is kind of an active meditation as it requires constant focus, centering, and shutting out all other distractions.

And so I ask questions about life: How do I maintain a sense of balance amidst constant distraction and change? How do I model for kids a "balanced" life? I have discovered it is never easy as the push and pull of work, family, responsibilities, and desires move me in many directions. It is during the constant wobble of the slackline of life that I find comfort in settling in each day with the middle school students. Yes, it is a small ten-minute moment, yet it provides me silence to focus and a space to reflect on the dynamic equilibrium of life so I can keep walking.

hkh

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Kip Kuhn earned his degree in Science Education from Indiana University and holds an MEd in Educational Leadership and Supervision from Ball State University. He spent eight years teaching for the Park County School District outside Breckenridge, Colorado and three years teaching at the American Community School of Amman in Jordan. Kip comes to CFS as the new Middle School head from Wasatch Academy in Mount Pleasant, Utah, where he served as a Science Teacher and Advisor, Science Department Head, founding Middle School Director, and Assistant Head of School. Carolina Friends School (CFS) is an independent Quaker school serving students 3-18. Contact the school at: 4809 Friends School Road, Durham, NC 27705; Telephone: 919.383.6602; [www.cfsnc.org](http://www.cfsnc.org).



Darlene Holloway, ND, LMT, CT, SIT

## Balancing Mind, *Body, Spirit*

**“She was completely out of balance in all parts of her life: no bowel movements, poor eating habits, virtually no exercise, and emotional distress.”**

**D**arlene Holloway, founder of the Alternative Health Center of Cary, has learned in her decades of experience that “colon health and full body health are inextricably linked—you can’t have one without the other.”

She has taken her work as a colon hydrotherapist to the highest level, earning recognition along the way from the International Association for Colon Hydrotherapy as Colon Therapist of the Year. She now serves the organization as an at-large member of its governing board.

“Balance is a key issue in achieving health for the body,” she notes, “and over time I’ve become ever more aware of the link between the mind, the emotions, and our physical health, and the balancing act that goes on in those three arenas of life.”

She recalls the middle-age woman on hormone replacement therapy, under the guidance of her physician, who was referred to her because of chronic constipation. Under her doctor’s direction, she had been taking laxatives for several months with limited success. “Actually,” says Dr. Holloway, “she was completely out of balance in all parts of her life: no bowel movements,

poor eating habits, virtually no exercise, and emotional distress. And she was holding on, refusing to let go.

“So we began the colon hydrotherapy protocol, and our objective was to get her colon moving. In our second therapy session, she began to weep—and she loosened her grip on her personal demons. As a child, she revealed, she had been sexually abused. For years she harbored anger, resentment, and shame that she never expressed—not even to herself. But when she very haltingly began to talk about this, she did begin to let go—and her bowels started moving. I’m a great believer in the benefits of colon hydrotherapy, and I also respect and honor the non-physical dimensions of what is often happening in the human body. I referred this woman to a psychologist; we continued to work together, and today she would agree she is much healthier in all parts of her life.

“Our purpose with colon hydrotherapy,” she says, “in terms of physical goals, is to hydrate the system, remove waste, stimulate peristalsis—muscle movement—rehabilitate the nerves, muscles, glands, circulatory, and immune systems that form the components of the digestive system, and to reposition the intestines.

“I certainly would never suggest that colon hydrotherapy helps cure colon cancer or any other disease,” she says, “but it clearly offers significant preventive benefits for many health problems including cancer.

“Everything we put in our mouth touches and effects the walls of the stomach, small intestine, and colon—the large intestine. When these substances or their by-products are toxic—which increasingly is virtually impossible to avoid—they damage the intestinal wall and cells, intoxicate the nerves and glands, and can be absorbed through the walls into the blood and lymph and ultimately to the cells and tissue. And we become seriously out of balance.”

Many people seek out colon hydrotherapy for relief of a variety of ills, from headaches to arthritis, lupus to chronic fatigue. And, points out Ms. Holloway, “there is a strong emotional-spiritual component to this work, as well. For many, such as the patient I mentioned, a colonic is an opportunity to ‘let go,’ and they have a sense of release that is both physical and emotional. It’s often restorative—an opportunity to achieve a higher level of balance.” **hkh**

**For more information about colon hydrotherapy and other therapies offered at the Center, contact:**

**ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CENTER  
OF CARY**

**919 Kildaire Farm Road  
Cary, NC 27511**

**Telephone: (919) 380-0023  
www.ahealthcenter.net  
www.coloncleansenc.com**

Patients in pain can rejoice. In his new practice (*see box*), Raleigh Dentist Dr. James R. Harold continues to bring years of training and treatment of TMJD, vertigo, and sleep apnea to scores of patients who need specialized care.

"It's only in recent years that we have been able to effectively make the connection with the often debilitating pain that exists in these different related conditions," the doctor notes.

In his consultation room, he clicks and enlarges an image on his computer monitor of a blonde, attractive woman, blue eyes, probably in her early thirties. There's the hint of a smile, with her mouth slightly open.

"Notice anything in particular about her mouth and jaw?" he asks. "See how her jaw is tilted to the right. And she's actually using her tongue as an orthotic. I asked her if she noticed anything unusual about this photo, and she said no. But a picture really is worth a thousand words—and there's a lot to see here. Look at the circles under her eyes. She's not sleeping well. Her teeth don't come together in the back of her mouth. She is badly out of balance—and she has many symptoms—a lot of pain—that make that point."

This patient, it turns out, has TMJD—temporomandibular joint dysfunction. In the past decade, Dr. Harold has steadily gained a regional and national reputation as a wizard in successfully treating the condition which, quite honestly, is the bane of many practitioners.

Millions of people go through life unaware that faulty functioning of their jaws may be a major cause of many of their aches and pains, especially of the face, jaw, neck, shoulders, and back, explains Dr. Harold. Janet Stone, a patient who lives in Cary, was one of them. She sought relief in many quarters before turning to Dr. Harold—which was, in fact, a good decision.

Few of Dr. Harold's patients know that he has completed more than 1,000 hours of special training in the treatment of TMJD and is a national lecturer on the topic to other dentists.

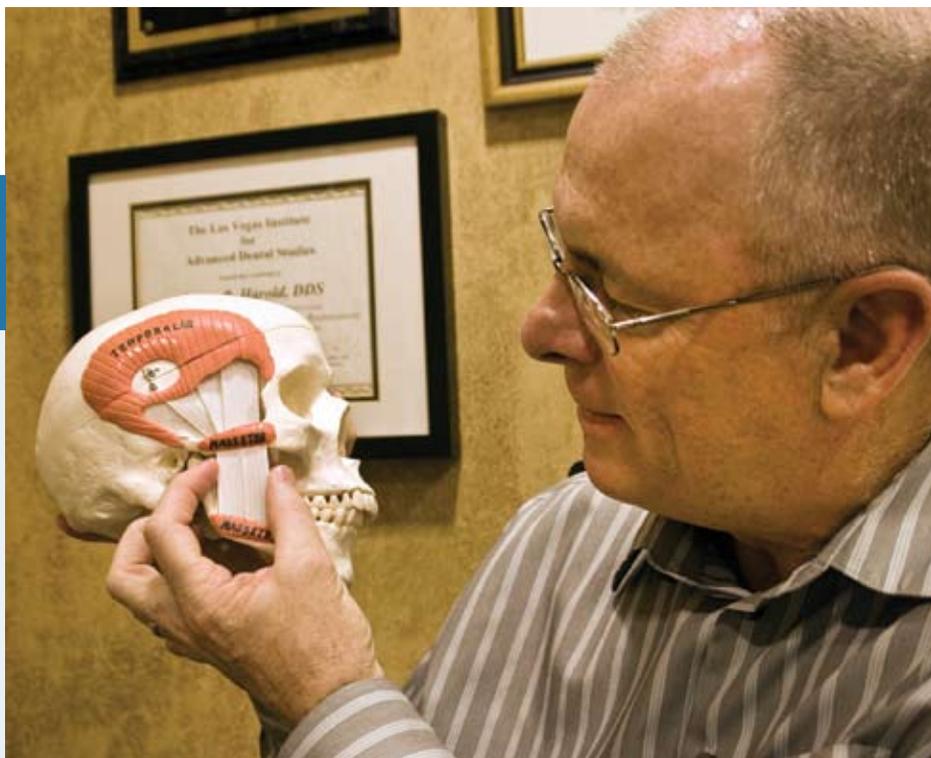
"I've come to understand, through direct experience, that patients with many different types of problems are, after proper assessment, terrific candidates for neuromuscular treatment. We get excellent results in treating headaches, facial pain, worn, chipping, or cracked teeth, clicking or chipping of dental restorations, neck and shoulder pain, jaw pain, ear congestion, ringing in the ears, clicking or popping in the joints, clenching or bruxing, limited opening of the mouth, loose teeth, and even tingling in the fingers. Janet Stone was a clencher who had many of these symptoms."

Often, he finds, "the basic problem is simply a lack of harmony and balance between the joint, the muscles, and nerves, and it is thus ideally suited for neuromuscular treatment."

## DR. HAROLD ESTABLISHES NEW PRACTICE

Reflecting the increasing demand for his specialized services, Dr. Harold has established a new practice—**TMJ and Facial Pain in the Carolinas**—in a new location (*see contact box, next page*). "Dr. Mike DesRosiers, a respected and well-established dentist in the area for many years, is now providing state-of-the-art dental care to patients of North Carolina Center for Aesthetic Dentistry—my former practice"—Dr. Harold notes, "and we are sharing office space at 700 Exposition Place.

"For more than a decade, my interest and expertise in neuromuscular dentistry, treating such conditions as TMJD, vertigo, and sleep apnea, has occupied more of my time and commitment. I'm grateful to now have the opportunity to focus entirely on helping patients who suffer with these difficult issues."



Balancing muscles in the jaw is a key part of effectively treating TMJD.

# Critical Balance Issues: TMJ, Vertigo, Sleep Apnea

"Millions of people go through life unaware that faulty functioning of their jaws may be a major cause of many of their aches and pains, especially of the face, jaw, neck, shoulders, and back."

### A BELIEVER

Janet Stone is a patient who is now a believer. "I've gotten excellent results working with a chiropractor for relief of back pain, but he told me he simply couldn't help with the pain from my neck radiating down into my right shoulder," she notes.

"Fortunately, I had heard about Dr. Harold's work and I came in and completed a very thorough TMJD evaluation, which included a number of neuromuscular scans. The point was to find the optimal position of the jaw where the muscles are relaxed and at rest—a three-dimensional position in space—where there is balance and harmony between muscles, joints, and the closing pattern of the jaw. It's all intended to work together in a perfectly balanced and harmonious way.

"When all of that testing was done, Dr. Harold built a small, acrylic, customized orthotic. Its job was to keep my jaw in the ideal position that was identified in all of his testing. I wear it around the clock, 24 hours a day, except to eat. It was amazing how quickly I found relief for all of my pain problems."

### VERTIGO

Linda Burns, 65, lives in New Hampshire. In 1980 she was in an auto accident that changed her life for years to come. "In the accident," she recalls, "I hit my head, my jaw popped out, and I twisted my neck, and soon thereafter I began to have intense vertigo attacks. I was dizzy all the time, and the attacks were frequent and amazingly intense. It got so I had to rely on my husband for everything. I spent my life out of balance.

"Looking for relief, I saw numerous chiropractors, at least five osteopaths, and tried acupuncture, physical therapy, an orthodontist, and a neurologist—and a dentist who made me a mouth splint. Medications helped very slightly.

"I had an old friend who lives in Raleigh. I started to go down there about nine years ago, to help him with his affairs. On one visit, I picked up a copy of *Health & Healing* and read about Dr. Harold. He sounded like someone who might be able to help me. I kept that article in my purse for three years, and just reading it made me feel better.



Dr. Harold shows a patient the acrylic orthotic designed to keep the muscles in her face in a stable, balanced position.

that when I lay down my oxygen level dropped. So I was put on oxygen at night, which helped immensely with my level of fatigue. I don't have sleep apnea; it's just that my oxygen saturation level drops when I lay down."

### SLEEP APNEA

Sleep apnea is a related condition of great interest to Dr. Harold. There is, he says, an important link between your teeth, your jaw, and the quality of your sleep.

"Increasingly, we've found that putting people into a TMJD appliance—which brings their jaw down and forward—actually increases their ability to sleep because of the forward nature of the appliance. In some cases, the appliance alone makes the difference between restless and disturbed sleep.

"But in other cases, the appliance by itself is not enough. A significant number of the patients we see need a pull-forward appliance or a CPAP unit, applying constant air pressure to keep the airway open.

"At this point, we screen all of our TMJD

are emblematic of a TMJD patient, including headaches, shoulder pain, ear pain, facial pain, and popping and clicking. He's had sinus surgery, that was not successful in relieving congestion, has numbness in his left eye and reports that he doesn't sleep well, and he snores.

"He had been recommended for a sleep study, but failed to comply. So I repeated the request: a sleep study would be the first step in the evaluation of TMJD. Five years ago I would have thought of him only as a TMJD patient; but no longer. The sleep apnea issue trumps all other concerns.

"Now Frank claims we've saved his life—and that may be true. He is wearing a sleep appliance that is keeping his airway open while he sleeps, and he's a different person. This has been a profound quality of life issue for him. His sleep study showed a serious problem. He was roused from sleep 114 times in an hour. His apnea hypoxia index was 114—and anything over 30 is considered severe."

Prospective TMJD patients with unusual symptoms fueled Dr. Harold's interest in identifying sleep apnea whenever it exists. "At times," he says, "there were aspects of a case that simply didn't make sense to me, in the context of TMJD symptoms. At times people would wake up with severe neck pain, for example, and severe temporal headaches. My question: what were they doing in terms of their bite that would cause such problems? Was it related to the bite appliance they were wearing?"

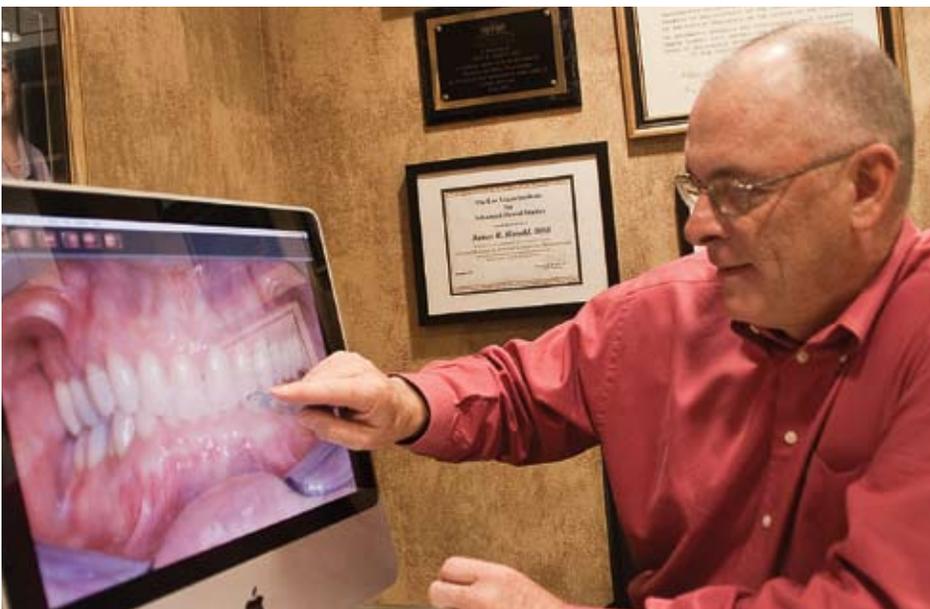
"What we now understand is that some people who have undiagnosed sleep apnea position their lower jaw forward while they are sleeping, in an effort to open their airway up. It's a position that often leads to cervical neck problems. And the temporal headaches are often not related to muscular discomfort, but specifically to the apneic event. If a patient isn't getting a sufficient amount of oxygen in their blood, their levels of CO2 rise and that causes really severe headaches.

"And now, routinely," he notes, "we look at all the possible red flags with our TMJD patients, including scalloping of the tongue, often related to pushing the lower jaw and the tongue forward in order to open the airway, which results in an irregular border of the tongue—which can also be caused by having a small lower jaw, which also restricts airflow.

"Further, when people struggle to sleep or they struggle in their sleep to get adequate oxygen, it induces the 'flight or fight' impulse that releases cortisol in the body. That, in turn, affects their whole glucose and glycogen system.

"Some of these patients now have Type II diabetes or significant weight gain, even though they are active, because their glucose metabolism is out of whack. Our task is to help patients engage in a comprehensive screening process that clearly indicates the nature of the problem. When we isolate the fact that a patient truly is suffering with TMJD, and only TMJD, we certainly are prepared to offer them a good deal of relief."

Dr. Harold was led to neuromuscular dentistry through personal experience. "TMJD and related conditions are not uncommon—far from it. Years ago, I coped with ear pain and vertigo, so I set out to discover the cause of the problem. Otherwise, I probably would never have gone down this path." ❧



It's amazing what a smile will reveal if you know what to look for—and Dr. Harold is an acknowledged expert in discerning problems that contribute to pain.

"Then my condition went from really bad to much worse. I had swelling in my temples and my eyes became extremely sensitive. Bright lights or traffic became quite debilitating. So with my husband I flew to Raleigh and finally made an appointment to see Dr. Harold.

"That by itself was an amazing experience. Just talking to him for the very first time brought a great sense of relief. He understood what I was experiencing, and was able to explain exactly what was going on and why my temples were swollen. He showed me a model of the muscles that are around the ear, and how one of them goes down into the ear—and when that tightens up, it triggers a vertigo attack."

The next step, after extensive testing, was creation of an acrylic orthotic to place and hold the patient's jaw in a stable, balanced position. "I noticed a difference right away," she reports. "My mouth and jaw felt stable. Within a few weeks I started to sleep through the night, much more soundly. The first thing Dr. Harold did, by the way, was send me for a sleep test, which showed

patients and ask these patients to consider having a professional sleep study when it seems well-advised. Severe sleep apnea is a life-threatening health problem that deserves immediate attention, and it is related to a great many other serious health problems such as heart disease, Type II diabetes, and acid reflux.

"Some people with sleep apnea are roused from sleep dozens of times during the night, sometimes gasping for air. The essence of the problem is that when folks with sleep apnea lie down to sleep, their lower jaw falls back and collapses the airway, sharply curbing the flow of oxygen to the lungs."

### A RECENT PATIENT

Frank, an assumed name for a recent patient who came to Dr. Harold for a TMJD assessment, is a dramatic example of a patient in need of good quality sleep—and relief from sleep apnea.

Frank, who is 60, is 5'7" and weighs a hefty 275 pounds—and excess weight is often a trigger for sleep apnea, Dr. Harold notes. "He had a range of issues that

For more information about neuromuscular dentistry, contact:

**JAMES R. HAROLD, DDS**  
TMJ and FACIAL PAIN in the Carolinas

700 Exposition Place, Suite 151

Raleigh, NC 27615

Telephone: (919) 848-3636

[www.extraordinarysmiles.com](http://www.extraordinarysmiles.com)

# Enjoy *the Sounds of Life*

By Stephanie Sjoblad, AuD

If you are like most people, as the year draws to a close you may be mulling over some New Year's resolutions. As an audiologist, I'm always hopeful that people will resolve to take better care of their hearing, not just in January, but throughout the year.

Why does this matter? Studies over the years have documented repeatedly the benefits of treating hearing loss. In 1999, the National Council on Aging revealed that quality of life was improved for people with hearing loss who used hearing aids. Fast forward to 2013—researchers at Johns Hopkins University suggest there is a link between hearing loss and cognitive decline. The evidence is clear that hearing loss is not something one should disregard, yet many people do. Perhaps one perceives the hearing loss is not “bothersome” enough or there are concerns regarding the stigma of wearing hearing aids. Some may find the cost of hearing care prohibitive or they do not know anyone that loves their hearing aids. *Perhaps they have just not seen the correct provider. At the UNC Hearing & Communication Center, for the tenth straight year, less than one percent of our patients have returned their hearing aids at the end of the evaluation period.*

If you have resolved to do something about your hearing in the New Year, here are some tips to help you be an educated consumer and get the best possible hearing care:

Get the proper diagnosis. Watch out for the glitzy advertisements promising a “free hearing screening.” A **hearing screening** is a Pass/Fail test. This test can be a step toward knowing if one needs a more comprehensive evaluation, but it does not give any information about the degree and type of hearing loss. Instead, ask your physician to recommend an audiologist they trust. A licensed audiologist is the most qualified professional to evaluate your hearing.

A **comprehensive hearing evaluation** will include a detailed case history, a visual inspection of the ears, air conduction and bone conduction testing, speech testing and immittance testing. The results will be



shared including all recommendations for the most effective treatment plan, including any follow up medical treatment that may be warranted.

Look for a comprehensive treatment plan. After one has hearing test results, one should consider a Functional Communication Assessment. At the UNC Hearing & Communication Center, we complete additional objective and subjective tests to get a better picture of one's hearing abilities before selecting hearing aids. We assess the ability to understand speech in background noise and measure individual loudness tolerance levels. We complete a thorough lifestyle assessment and work with the patient to establish communications goals. Only then can we make a recommendation of the best treatment plan to help one meet their goals.

There is no magic hearing aid. Hearing loss is not corrected by hearing aids in the same way that glasses can restore vision. Hearing happens at the level of the brain. If there is damage anywhere along the pathway to the brain, amplification will not single-handedly restore one's hearing. The knowledge and skills of a qualified audiologist are paramount to good outcomes in hearing rehabilitation.

A customized fitting is crucial. Each patient has a unique ear canal resonance that must be taken into consideration when fitting and programming hearing aids. Real Ear Probe Microphone measures should be conducted to ensure that speech is audible and that loud sounds are not uncomfortably loud.

Transparency in pricing: The UNC Hearing & Communication Center is leading the way in the USA in offering an unbundled and itemized pricing structure. This means providing transparency in fees to the patient. There is a fee for the device(s) and a fee for the services to properly fit the device(s). One also has the option of purchasing a service plan as opposed to being required to pay upfront for additional years of services.

Last but not least, Better Hearing Workshops will benefit most. Designed for both the person with hearing loss and their communication partners, these audiologic rehabilitation classes help teach communication management strategies to fill in the gaps that hearing aids will miss. Visit [www.med.unc.edu/ahs/sphs/hcc](http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/sphs/hcc) to learn more. Make this the year to resolve to enjoy the sounds of life. **h&h**

*Dr. Sjoblad (pronounced SHOW-BLAD) is Clinic Director of the UNC Hearing and Communication Center, at 6015 Farrington Road, Suite 103, Chapel Hill. She grew up as one of three siblings with congenital hearing loss and has worn hearing aids since the age of six. She received a cochlear implant (CI) in 2009, and now enjoys bimodal hearing, with her CI on one ear and hearing aid on the other. A UNC faculty member for nearly 15 years, she is board certified with the American Board of Audiology and is a Fellow in the American Academy of Audiology. She earned her doctorate in audiology from the University of Florida in 2000.*

**For more information, contact:  
UNC HEARING AND COMMUNICATION  
CENTER  
6015 Farrington Road, Suite 103  
Chapel Hill, NC 27517  
Telephone: (919) 493-7980  
[www.med.unc.edu/ahs/sphs/hcc](http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/sphs/hcc)**



**Health&Healing editors, present and future, from left, Sonia Rappaport, MD, Mark McClure, MD, and Joanne Pizzino, MD**

## transitions . . .

It is with truly mixed emotions that we say farewell to our long-time (nearly two decades) friend and medical editor, Dr. Mark McClure, and also our friend and his beloved wife, Cheri Elliott, as he retires from active practice.

Certainly Mark and Cheri will be missed for their counsel and friendship. At the same time, we share their excitement about the next chapter of their lives that holds so much promise (see *article, page 24*).

Nearly a decade ago, in these pages, we commented on Mark McClure's contributions to this publishing/educational activity:

"Our journey has been inspired by Dr. Mark McClure, the publication's medical editor for many years. We witnessed his move from a successful, traditional urology practice to a solo practice as a surgeon who embraced complementary medicine in service to his patients. We watched with awe and wonder as he became (we feel sure) the world's first urologist named a Founding Diplomate of the American Board of Holistic Medicine. His journey of health and exploration has greatly influenced the call to service of this publication."

Our sense of loss is tempered to a great extent by the acceptance by Dr. Joanne Pizzino and Dr. Sonia Rappaport to serve as co-medical editors of this publication, beginning with the February 2014 edition. Their work and their thinking will be on display in every issue.

Dr. Joanne Pizzino is a graduate of Ohio State Medical School, and completed residency training with the Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Texas. She is board-certified in Preventive/Occupational Medicine and Family Medicine, is a Fellow of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and is accredited in Medical Acupuncture through UCLA. Since 1983, she has been involved with virtually every aspect of occupational and environmental health, including extensive background in medical toxicology, ergonomics, indoor air quality, workers' compensation, disability management, and medical surveillance. She served as Medical Director for the City of Charlotte, and for corporations such as Lenova, Aventis, and Clariant.

Dr. Pizzino approaches health care from a holistic paradigm that integrates mind, body, and spirit in healing. In addition to over 20 years of clinical experience in treating occupational health concerns and other ambulatory problems, she now practices Integrative Medicine utilizing a variety of complementary and alternative therapies, including Medical Acupuncture, Reiki, Interactive Guided Imagery, Functional Matrix Medicine, condition-specific nutrition, and botanical medicine. A special interest is enhancing the effectiveness of allopathic therapies with mind-body and spiritual techniques. Her practice, Whole

Health Solutions, is at 1350 South East Maynard Rd. # 201, in Cary. Call her at 919-651-0820 or visit her on the web at [WholeHealthSolutions.com](http://WholeHealthSolutions.com).

Dr. Sonia Rappaport is board certified in Integrative and Holistic Medicine as well as Family Medicine. She served on the Board of the American Holistic Medical Association and has lectured nationally on holistic and narrative medicine. A published author of poetry, she enjoys reading and writing. Her greatest gifts, she says, are her four children.

As the founder of Haven Medical, Dr. Rappaport has been practicing integrative medicine since 2007, but her work in holistic medicine began in 1988, while still a student at the University of Virginia's School of Medicine. A second-year medical student, she founded a student organization entitled Alternatives: Perspectives in Medicine, which welcomed complementary and alternative practitioners from the Charlottesville area to speak about their modalities to medical students. After residency in Pittsburgh, PA, she relocated to the warmer climate of Newton, NC, where she worked part-time at Newton Family Practice and was the medical consultant for Catawba County Department of Public Health.

After the birth of her third child, she took a temporary leave of absence to care for his special needs. When her fourth child was born with the same genetic disorder, Familial Dysautonomia (FD), she chose to devote her time to her children and to understanding this rare disorder. She initiated an NIH conference on FD and was one of its speakers in 2002. She has published several articles on the disorder.

Her research into possible mechanisms for FD and its symptoms led her to study more fully how dysfunction affects the body and she began to incorporate nutrition and herbal supplements, Reiki, and other modalities into the treatment of her children. She is, in fact, a Reiki master, with special training in trigger point therapy and injection, hyperbaric medicine, homeopathy, and nutrition. In late 2007, she relocated to Chapel Hill, where she established Haven Medical Center. Visit her on the web at [HavenMedical.com](http://HavenMedical.com), or call 919-969-1414. 📞

# Postural Restoration®: Creating Balance in an Asymmetrical Body



Sangini Rane teaching a client how to balance their body with a Postural Restoration exercise.

By Sangini, Rane, PT, PRC

Yes, the human body is asymmetrical, although you may not realize it just looking at it from the outside. After all, you have two ears, two arms and two legs.

In spite of this outward apparent symmetry, there is an inherent internal organ asymmetry from having a large liver on the right side and a smaller heart on the left. In addition, our respiratory system is also designed asymmetrically, with the right diaphragm being more dominant and pulling the lower spine to the right. Bottom-line, what happens is that our lower body gets oriented to the right and to offset this pull, our upper half gets rotated towards the left. That's why more often than not, we see left shoulders slightly higher than the right and the upper ribs on the right rotated (twisted) downwards, with the ribs on the left rotated upwards. The result? A lot of torque or a tug of war going on in the body, creating a potential imbalance of forces that can wreak havoc and cause movement dysfunction and pain as a result.

Now one question you may have is: if we all (normal humans that is) have this asymmetry, why doesn't everyone not have pain? Well, as long as we can keep this asymmetry in check by not letting it get out of hand, things are fine. Problems arise when the asymmetry or torque gets out of control and forces go in one direction all the time, creating an even bigger imbalance. The result? Muscle and joint strain, inflammation, pain, and impaired movement patterns that can affect not only day-to-day activities, but athletic performance as well.

Our daily activities and lifestyle actually enhance this asymmetry. How? We are always reaching with our right hand (in a right-handed world) and thus rotating our torso to the left all

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**“... our lower body gets oriented to the right and to offset this pull, our upper half gets rotated towards the left.”**

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the time; standing on the right leg most of the time; sitting on the right hip more than the left, chewing on one side more than the other and so on. We play a lot of sports that demand use of one side more than the other. And yet, when we exercise we do the exercises symmetrically on each side; ten repetitions on one side and the exact ten repetitions on the other side.

Why? Because we think that we will get lopsided if we don't—when the exact opposite is true: we get more lopsided because we exercise this way. What we don't realize is the fact that with the natural asymmetry of the body, muscle length and position on one side of the body is not the same as on the other side. This means that certain muscles on one side of the body are positioned such that they cannot work as well as on the other side because they are long and weak. For example, with the pelvis on the left rotated and tilted to the right in the normal “asymmetrical pattern,” the left hamstring gets long and weak. It tends to feel “tight,” however, because it is on stretch, as its attachment site on the top has moved up. So if we now stretch this muscle thinking that it is tight, it only gets longer and weaker as a result.

## ADDRESSING ASYMMETRY

Postural Restoration® trained therapists like us (Sangini Rane, PT, and Carol Ames, PTA) think outside the box and work and train muscles differently than most traditional therapists because we recognize that the right and left sides of the body are different. The muscle over-activity on the right side of the body can be addressed with exercise techniques that use breathing techniques and proper positioning of the diaphragm to minimize compensation strategies used to negotiate this right dominant pattern. Programs and strategies are offered to inhibit unwanted patterns and properly position all the muscles on both sides of the body. Once balanced muscle activity is restored, specific training and integration of activities help balance respiratory dynamics, stabilize optimal pelvic and ribcage position, and retrain appropriate patterns. There is no cookie-cutter exercise program doing the same set of exercise on the left as on the right; nor doing traditional stretching exercises that will only increase the asymmetry and throw the body more out of balance.

This innovative approach is what makes us different and our treatments more effective. I had a patient last week who said:

*“I want you to know that this is the first time that I have had so much improvement in a short time, it's amazing that an exercise I am doing with my hip [pelvis] is making my right neck pain and tension go away immediately. I've had PT before and it would get me more sore and the pain kept coming back. This is so different and effective and makes more sense.”* h&h

*Sangini Rane, PT, PRC, has been a physical therapist for 29 years and has been utilizing the science of Postural Restoration® since 2002 with profound results. Because of her dedication to achieve exceptional and successful outcomes where other traditional methods have failed, she earned the designation of Postural Restoration Certified in 2008. Contact her or Carol Ames, PTA, at Apex PT Postural Restoration Center, 1071 Pemberton Hill Road, Suite 101, Apex, NC 27502 or 35 Thompson Street, Suite 102, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Telephone: (919) 889-3126; apexptprc@gmail.com; www.apexptposturalrestorationcenter.com.*

# The Tao of Balance: Being in Flow

By Jean Hamilton, MD

I've reflected on what led me away from traditional drug-centered, institutional psychiatry to a more balanced approach to mind-body medicine. The foremost influence in my early life was my grandmother, Elizabeth "Mama" (Daily), who worked as a beautician. Mama's beauty shop featured the iconic vinyl chairs and large hair dryers of the 1950s, but was actually much more. It was a sanctuary, dedicated to self-nurturance and community. Hair-washing became a rite of purification, warm waters flowed as she massaged your scalp; cutting and styling, an opportunity to share stories, photographs, and loving-kindness. The drone of hair dryers created a soporific, almost meditative state. In the end, one felt renewed from the inside out.

Mama was more than a beautician; she was a healer who combined gentle massage with lay counseling. From her I learned that healing flows from one's way of being. Put simply, she "walked in beauty."

My grandmother was influenced by her great uncle, John Wesley Daily, a physician who, in 1899, published *The Home Practice of Medicine*. Dr. Daily asserted that mind and body always have reciprocal effects. He found that the body has a natural "economy" of energy and each of us has a normal (energy) baseline. Prolonged, chronic stress results in energy depletion, as does the use of stimulants. The latter only briefly raises the bodily energy above the baseline, but ultimately leads to sub-normal energy, causing a vicious, addictive cycle. In such circumstances, "an effort to restore the patient to health and vigor *without removing the exciting cause of diseased conditions* [stress] is like giving pills and powders in order to get rid of a thorn in the flesh (emphasis added).



From family tradition, I learned that medications can be a cover-up that perpetuates imbalances in energy and resources, not a cure-all. Instead, mind-body interventions (changes in spiritual values/goals, diet and exercise, and reduction of stress and re-traumatization) can help restore balanced energy flow.

As an early adolescent, I stumbled upon *The Importance of Living*, by Lin Yutang (1935/1965), my introduction to Taoist thought. Here the purpose of life is "enjoyment of living," that is, living in the here and now—not as a means to attain other ends. (I reveled in sections on "The Scamp as Ideal," "On playful curiosity," and "The return to common sense.") This insight was the reason that I did graduate work with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Flow (The Psychology of Optimal Experience)* and co-founder of "Positive Psychology."

Flow (like being in "the zone" or one with "the Way") occurs when we are totally absorbed in what we are doing, just for the sake of doing it. In flow, we perform well (above our ordinary baseline) and with ease. In fact, as I later discovered, we perform with *less physiological effort or energy expenditure*, thus conserving Dr. Daily's economy of energy. Flow depends on an ever-changing balance of skills and challenges; it can be cultivated. My early work in psychiatry promoted flow via psychotherapy.

Taken together, these three currents run deep in my life, although of course I've lost my balance at times (and still do). But returning to and going "with" these streams, I am now finding a more balanced approach to practicing medicine outside the corporate model.

There is more to healing than surviving stress by using pills. By adding other treatments—such as energy-based EFT, nutritional supplements, imagery and relaxation, brain-wave entrainment, meditation, flow counseling—some can reduce or safely discontinue medications. Others seek more than a return to their ordinary ("pre-illness") baseline and can benefit from finding and cultivating flow. hhh

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# *Finding the Balance You Already Have*

By *Karrie Slavin, MSW, MPH, LCSW*

**M**any of us crave balance in our lives and constantly strive to achieve it, but it can feel as if—no matter what we do—balance still eludes us. The process of creating balance can sound difficult—you may imagine various aspects of your life on a see-saw, with you frantically trying to keep it horizontal as it goes up and down, or you may imagine yourself juggling various balls and trying to keep them all in the air at the same time. But the experience of having balance can sound wonderful—you may imagine having a focused mind, a body that serves you well, a meaningful and fulfilling life, a moment by moment experience of enjoying what you are doing, or one of the infinite number of other pleasant possibilities.

Given all this, the two questions that I give to you to consider are:

***What would it be like for you to stop striving for balance?***

And further,

***What would it be like for you to notice the aspects of your life in which you already have balance?***

If it would be pleasant for you to notice the aspects of your life in which you already have balance, then here are some helpful questions for you to ask yourself to facilitate this realization.

You may want to simply think about them, or you may find that writing your answers down can help you to reflect on them more deeply.

First, it will be important to define what balance means to you.

1. If you were totally in balance, what would you notice about yourself that would tell you that you were in balance? Would you notice anything about your mind? Would you



notice anything about your body? Would you notice anything about how you are living your life? What else would you notice?

Next, it will be helpful to consider your current experience of balance.

2. On a scale of 0-10, with 10 totally in balance, and 0 totally out of balance, where would you rate yourself?

3. What do you notice about yourself and your life that lets you know that you are at the number you chose, instead of something lower? (Even if you are at a 0, what keeps you from being at a negative number?)

You may now be beginning to notice the balance that you already have. At this point, it will be useful for you to consider maintaining this balance.

4. What will you need to do to keep this balance that you currently have?

It may also be useful for you to consider growing this balance, if this is something that you desire.

5. Suppose that you were to enjoy this balance that you already have, while also realizing that you would like to cultivate more of it. What might you be able to do a little bit more of, or a little bit differently, to move up one number on your scale?

6. If you were to do that, what difference would that make for you?

The wonderful thing about discovering the balance that you already have is that it allows you to see that what you have been craving lies within yourself. Noticing the balance that you experience also gives you the useful opportunity to enjoy it. In addition, finding the balance that you already have can help you to see new possibilities for growing your own balance further. **h&h**

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# *in* service

BY KIM SHAW

**InService is a column supporting the work of non-profit health organizations in the Triangle. To learn more, call (919) 967-6802.**

## health benefits of volunteering

Imagine having a secret so great that you feel you can include significant health problems and health care concerns.

The Volunteer Center is a charitable nonprofit organization that was founded in 1972, as a resource to help nonprofits and volunteers address unmet community needs. We strengthen the community by mobilizing volunteers and supporting nonprofits. We enhance community leadership as well as develop and engage corporate partnerships. Through our collaboration with the Department of Social Services we support those most vulnerable.

The Center works with over 5,000 volunteers and more than 700 nonprofits throughout the Triangle. While most organizations focus on a specific area, the Center works with all types of groups and needs. We work with agencies across a wide spectrum spanning youth, seniors, education, arts, poverty, animals, health, sports, high-tech, faith and the environment. Our programs strengthen non-profits and volunteer impact—both of which are crucial to the quality of life in our community and often provide the only access to essential services for those in need.

Imagine our communities without our volunteers and the nonprofits they serve. Together they have built homes for the homeless, prepared meals for the hungry, students (of all ages) have been taught, seniors have been served, the sick have been given medicine, music has been heard, babies have been welcomed, children have found mentors and pets have found shelter. Volunteers work in our youth clubs and our senior centers. They are in our hospitals, our libraries, our schools, museums, soup kitchens and on our playing fields; from town halls to sports halls, from maternity units to retirement homes. They are holding hands, preparing meals, reading books, providing refuge from abuse. They are saving our animals, our historic buildings and our planet.

Our community would be a far, far different place without the efforts of these volunteers and the nonprofits they serve. Chances are many of us have benefited from this service without even realizing it.

### THE HEALING POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

Obviously, those being helped are certainly beneficiaries of volunteers and the assistance they provide. However, recent studies on the relationship between health and volunteering demonstrate that the benefits of volunteering are not limited to the recipients of these services. These studies show the multiple and long-lasting benefits derived from serving. Moreover, they confirm that those who give support through volunteering experience greater health benefits than those who receive support through these activities.

Some of these findings also indicate that volunteers who devote a “considerable” amount of time to volunteer activities (about 100 hours per year) are most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes.

And, apparently volunteering also makes us smarter... really. Studies have shown that young people who volunteer score 8.1% higher in reading, 6.5% higher in math and 7.6% higher in science and are 22% more likely to go to college. Healthier, happier and smarter . . . what more could you ask?

Volunteers also wield a lot of economic power. In North Carolina, there were 1.92 million volunteers in 2011 that contributed 228.6 million hours of service. This equates to \$5 billion of service contributed. That is a lot of power most of which is at local nonprofit agencies. Without a doubt, it is only through the power of volunteers that many of our nonprofits can continue to meet the growing needs of those most at risk in our community.

So, in this season of giving, the old adage remains true... ‘Tis much better to give than to receive.

Volunteer! **hkl**

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Kim Shaw has been Executive Director of the Volunteer Center of Durham since April, 2010. She has worked with Triangle non-profits for the past 25 years. A UNC graduate, she has two children, Mikalah, a student at NC State, and Tripp, who attended Louisburg College. More information: (919) 613-5109 or [www.TheVolunteerCenter.org](http://www.TheVolunteerCenter.org).