

BALANCING TOMORROW, TODAY™

by Dr. Stacie



The promise of Spring is in the air. The buds of new beginnings are everywhere we look. The anticipation of nature's glorious explosion of life after winter's dormancy is mounting. For me, this time of year is not just about new leaves on the trees or flowering plants. Spring is when I really look for possibilities in each of us that are just waiting to bloom. Where as New Year's is our time to look at what *to do* differently, Spring is our time to look at how we *could be* different. Therefore, my focus today is on how we can balance tomorrow's *character*, today – at home.

Not too long ago a friend and I were talking about the value of character—who we are and who we can become. Although this was only a brief conversation, it got me thinking. Since then, the concept of character has come to my attention again and again. It has prompted me to look at the following questions: Why is character important? How is our character shaped? Can we actually balance tomorrow's character, today?

Springtime is a beautiful reminder of the essence of character. As the sea of gray branches turn into waves of green leaves, it is obvious how nature's character has changed. Hard, gnarled, barren branches become soft and flowing, full of life and color. Why is the character of nature important? Because we experience our environment *through* its character! What nature is and what it can become is a part of how we experience each day. What we do, what we wear, and what we eat is integrally tied to the character of nature (weather, crops, etc.). Even how we feel can be related to our environment (rainy day doldrums, "spring fever," "winter blues," etc.) Just as we experience nature through its character, we also experience people through their character as well.

How bright can our day become when someone treats us kindly? How far can we go when we hear someone encouraging us? How much can we learn when we see someone else making right choices? These rhetorical questions help illustrate why our character is important to others. For ourselves, our character is the behavior of our conscience. Are we acting on our best and most selfless impulses? Is our integrity intact and our conscience clear?

Our character is not only the essence of who we are but also of who we can become. Just as the magnificence of spring is created one tiny leaf or petal at a time; so, too, our character is shaped one thought, action, and belief at a time. Our character is a growing, blossoming thing. As it evolves, we are prepared to reach new heights as we each serve our unique purpose in the world.

Our character is shaped by our choices. Just as our food choices shape our bodies; our behavior choices shape our character. As I look at the promise of spring beginning to bloom, I am inspired to think positively, act out my best intentions, and believe in the value we bring to each other. Although we are all flawed in some way, it is how we shape our character that is one of our true indicators of success in life.

Are you ready to make better choices today, to have a happier, more successful tomorrow? Here is how you can start balancing tomorrow's character, today – at home:

- First, look outside at the buds on the trees and the flowers already in bloom. Think about your own hidden potential.
- Now ask yourself, "In a world where everything is possible, what type of person could I become?" (Write that down!)
- Next, take an inventory of anything and everything you did this week that your ideal self would have also done.
- How did you do?
- Okay, here is the easy part. Pick one thing you can do today that will begin to shape your character by demonstrating your best intentions. (*Some examples are to look everyone you meet in the eye and smile at them; to give a sincere compliment or word of encouragement to everyone you come across; to stop and ask if there is anything you can do to help to the grouchiest person you know: ...you get the idea... really look to see what would make a difference in someone else's life and do it. You'll both feel good today and tomorrow!*)

Balancing your character, like anything else, is a process. We aren't perfect and we are always going to be works in progress. When we realize who we want to be, we can begin to make choices as if we were that type of person. Just by taking our first action, as the person we'd like to be, we begin to shape our character and become that person!

Remember, balance is a process...not a destination.

E-mail me your topic ideas for future columns and I'll take a crack at it! Thanks to those who have already sent your requests in. As always, all correspondence will be kept confidential.

Dr. Stacie Morgan is the author of **Balancing Tomorrow, Today – AT HOME**. (New Strategy Press). For more information visit her website at www.balancedmanagement.com or e-mail her at stacie@balancedmanagement.com.