



THE BALANCING ACT

"You First" OR "Me First"?

Most of us have many demands placed on our time and energy. Spouses, children, spiritual or community groups are important and make living worthwhile, but can make finding time for oneself a challenge. Balancing the time you spend on others with personal time for yourself can help you become happier and more productive.

ers, friends, a nonprofit organization—virtually everything that's not you! Sharing with others takes time and energy, but the rewards are worth the effort. Your self-esteem and sense of purpose in life increase when you share a common goal or bond with others.

Look Inside

Take a moment to think about how well you take care of yourself—both physically and emotionally. Do you eat three moderate meals a day, drink alcohol only in moderation, avoid smoking? Do you exercise each week and get a check-up once a year? Answering yes to these questions means that you take care of your body.

Now think about your emotional well-being. Do you regularly set aside "quiet" time for yourself, meditating, writing, thinking or praying? Do you make time regularly to enjoy nature or other quiet, restful places? All these activities can help you recover from life's stresses.

Reach Outside

Reaching outside yourself can give your life great meaning and joy. Reaching out means sharing with others—your family, cowork-



Find the Balance

Reaching outside all the time would leave you exhausted. Living only for yourself would leave you lonely and empty. Finding the balance between the two is the key to a rich and contented life. To find your personal balance, look at how you spend your time and energy. Write down your main activities each day for a week or two. Then add up the hours spent "for me" and "for others." You might realize that you would like to give more to others or take more time for yourself. When you're creating balance for yourself, you need to decide what's most important to you.

Adapt to Changes

Finding your balance is a day-by-day matter. If you're able to change as your life circumstances change, caring for yourself and others will make your life healthy and satisfying.