



STRONGER

A series of hope by Lynn Jones

chapter 6

The Three-Legged Stool

Several years ago, probably more out of necessity than anything else, I started practicing Yoga.* There was something very sobering about realizing I could hurt myself while sleeping! I have never been one to go to a recreation center or a class so I purchased a program which included a virtual trainer and a balance board that in some amazing way connected to our television.

For several weeks I worked diligently on the balance board practicing various Yoga poses with my virtual trainer (who by the way had the body of a prepubescent male). In a manner that still far surpasses my technical knowledge, the board actually tracked my movements and fed information to the trainer housed on the television screen. She in turn would graciously provide feedback from time to time informing me that I was unstable.

On one particular morning Jerry entered the room while I was attempting the tree pose. He looked at the trainer, looked at me, looked back at the trainer, looked back at me and stated very matter-of-factly, "She doesn't have her tongue stuck out." He was barred from the room when I was exercising!

In truth we actually live our lives on a balance board—trying to find the equilibrium in every area of our lives. It's true, isn't it? For everything we choose, whether it is time, energy, material resources, whatever, we give something else up. Life is really nothing more than a series of choices and trade-offs.

For each one of us, our life is like a three-legged stool. We have a mental leg, a physical leg, and a spiritual leg. An emotional cord runs through and connects them all. If any of the legs are shorter or longer than

the others, our "stool" or life is instable or unbalanced in some way. Therefore, they all must be maintained equally. While this is always the case, this balancing task may be more challenging now because of the shifts in our environment.

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About a year ago, most of us had some structure to our day. We had our routines, usually knew what had to be accomplished in the next 24-hour period and allocated the time accordingly. We functioned with some feeling of stability and predictability. When the original quarantine was imposed, all that was interrupted and many of us found ourselves sleeping, eating, interacting with family members, working, and attending to daily tasks on a different schedule. The events we are now experiencing are challenging, however they provide wonderful opportunities in several areas. Times of crisis or uncertainty always bring to the surface traits in ourselves that we need to work on if we will just pay attention.

We have already established that our responses to people, life events and even our mind are the only things we really have any control over. Perhaps this is

the perfect time for us to make our peace with that concept if we have not already. This one attitude shift can establish or reestablish a sense of balance and control. That will in turn alleviate some feelings of anxiety and depression—as we reset in the middle of long-term uncertainty.

However, there are some things we can control: Here are three practical things you can do to provide more balance to your day.

Create some type of structure in the day. When the normal schedule is interrupted, there is the tendency to eat and sleep at different times from day to day. While this is great on a vacation, on a daily basis and long term—not so much.

Avoid too much exposure to the news. Remember that your focus becomes your reality. It is difficult to watch, read or listen to any news media for very long without your mind becoming jaded in one direction or another. Perhaps decide to briefly review the headlines in the morning—even on your mobile device—and then perhaps listen to a 30-minute broadcast at the end of the day.

Stay informed with reliable sources. Social media provides a platform for all types of information—some credible and some not. Often facts are skewed, rumors are rampant, and attitudes become toxic.

Do something that provides a feeling of accomplishment—makes you feel worthwhile and that you are contributing the human situation.

Maintain a positive attitude and remember you have survived difficulties before.

Anything becomes easier with a reason, purpose, or a goal. Our goal is not just to survive this period in our lives but to be better, stronger, more godly people on the other side.

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Resources

*If you are brave enough, some simple yoga exercises can do wonders for mind and body. Here's a video designed for beginners. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7AYKMP6rOE>

We will explore aspects of each of the three legs of a balanced healthy life, but here's an article that gives an overview of all three legs for those who wish to look ahead. Natalie Burg, "The Three Key Elements of Health Living, Physical, Mental and Spiritual Health" August 17, 2020, <https://lifeline.thehartford.com/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-living-key-elements/>

Biblical Passages: Hebrews 13:3; James 2:26; Romans 12:1, Philippians 4:8-9

Food for Thought: Consider things that you can control. Your list may or may not include the ideas listed above. Regardless, make an effort to spend your mental energy in those areas.