

## TEETER TOTTER

*By Fred Hobbs*

The concept of balancing in your life has many applications. You must try to eat a balanced diet by including cauliflower and kale along with T-bone steak and key lime pie. You should strive to balance your couch potato time with a vigorous, or at least spirited, session at the gym or walks in the park and along the pathways.

Marriages and other intimate or friendly relationships should be balanced so that each “balancer” respects the “balancee” or better yet the two of you strike a proper and productive balance together. You may recall the days when you were a kid on the playground. You could swing by yourself, climb by yourself, and run by yourself, but the “teeter-totter” was not much fun without someone of the approximately same weight on the other end creating the fun of the ups and downs. You’d move up and down and sometimes try to balance in the middle. If the kid on the other end of the board slid off on the downside, you’d make a brief flight from the top to the bottom making a mild crash landing to the great satisfaction of your partner.

As adults, you tend to teeter and totter frequently, balancing family and work responsibilities and relationships, coping with health and economic issues, dealing with unexpected circumstances, some happy and some sad, some maybe even tragic. If you have children these highs and lows are more pronounced and constant. The hope is that “on balance,” the kids (and for those of us in the down slopes of life, the grandkids and great-grandkids) will turn out well.

On a personal note of reflection, I must admit that the balancing act of life was somewhat difficult for me. I loved my wife and my children, but, unlike many folks, I also loved my work. In my days as a radio and television journalist, at one point or another, I worked every hour of the day and night. Overnight disc jockey, early morning radio host, five and ten o’clock television anchorman, broadcast news reporter on call for fires, airline hijackings or storm coverage any time of the day or night. An exciting life, but one that often took me away from hearth and home at equally important points in the lives of my children and shared joys with my wife.

Balancing that time between work and home often was impossible; making up for my loss of family time was difficult. Fortunately, my wife was very understanding and frequently mentioned that she shared vicariously in my “adventures.” And, she did a marvelous job balancing her own interests with my career obligations and caring for our children and the household.

These days, my personal teeter totter of life is hovering on the lower level. In retirement, my wife and I enjoyed many enjoyable trips and events together (sometimes including our children and their families.) No one seems to have suffered much from my earlier absences. My wife has passed away, but I have many fond memories of our long marriage. Friends and activities both in and beyond Windsor Gardens occupy my time.

Just one balancing problem faces me now. I carry a walking stick, I practice at the gym, and I'm supposed to walk on pillows...all efforts designed to keep my aging body not only from teetering and tottering, but falling over and breaking something I do not wish to break!