

Achieving Balance in Our Lives (perhaps we can have too much balance?)

Balancing the various priorities (mostly other people's priorities) can be enough to fill our day. How easy to become confused between duties to others (grouped together as society).

Let's look at two quotations:

Duties are not performed for duties' sake, but because their neglect would make the man uncomfortable. A man performs but one duty - the duty of contenting his spirit, the duty of making himself agreeable to himself.

...Mark Twain

Society is joint action and cooperation in which each participant sees the other partner's success as a means for the attainment of his own.

...Ludwig von Mises

In our pursuit of happiness, let us indulge in excess to the point where we become "notoriously happy".

Nothing balanced about happiness and we are certainly not much good to anyone else unless we cultivate our own "notorious happiness".

Philosopher Ayn Rand got it right when she coined the phrase "rational selfishness", best demonstrated by the airline in-flight announcement that "in the event of loss of oxygen, mothers should firstly go for the face mask and then they will be in a position to help their children".

Rational selfishness is the opposite to "self destructive altruism".

This morning I thought of "balance in our lives" when I attended the funeral of my Uncle Bill (89 years old) where his son Gary, in the eulogy, described Bill's job satisfaction at being the horse racing writer for the Sunday Times for so many years.

Old Bill said "I must be the luckiest man in the world to be paid to go to the races".

If we are paid for doing what we love doing there's not much chance of us being out of balance in our careers.

However, the balance in our home lives is perhaps the greatest challenge of all, due to our ladies being programmed with an entirely different set of priorities.

We know when we are in balance in our careers, but for the family end, this needs input from someone far wiser than myself.

Actually, I met someone of such superior wisdom recently, sitting alongside me on a plane.

When I asked her what she did for a living she replied "I bring balance to the lives of people like you". After further interrogation she admitted to being a "fully participating sex therapist", providing a select group of men with warmth and passion which they were no longer receiving in their otherwise normal marriages.

Among the memorable thoughts she left with me was "you guys create your own problems with your focus on time management, slotting in an hour for so many specific tasks. Your wives can't handle it on that basis, but it suits me".

So here we see yet another growth industry emerging and perhaps one still sheltering from GST and Business Activity Statements.