

Reflecting on Our Personal Balance

© 2010 by Dee Joy Coulter, All Rights Reserved
Adapted from Chapter 3 of Original Mind: Uncovering your Natural Brilliance.
Permission granted to use for personal and educational purposes only.

Between birth and about five years of age, we develop four self-regulation switches. First we learn to balance the two sensory switches, **sensory off** for calming and **sensory on** for becoming enriched by our surroundings. Then we tackle the more challenging motor switches, first **motor on** where we learn to explore our world and finally **motor off** where we learn to regulate our impulses and develop impulse control.

With each life change, one or another switch may fall out of balance and need to be strengthened again. Here is an opportunity to check on your own current balance. Remember, these are ideal states, not qualities you should have mastered by now! These switches will continue to demand our attention throughout life.

If you find that a particular switch needs special attention, you could try one of that switch's strengthening exercises. If you have several switches you'd like to address, just work on one at a time, and choose practices that seem simple and workable so you can meet with success.

SENSORY OFF SWITCH

Calming/pacifying --this is the ability to be at peace, to spread a feeling of peace to those around you, and to treat problems as workable when they come up. Worry, fear and frustration are not common emotional states for you. When others come to you with their worries, you are able to help them calm down so they can deal with their situations more easily.

How well does this describe you lately?

Not very well *Somewhat* *Very well*
1 2 3 4 5

If this quality is weak for you right now, here are some things you can do to strengthen it:

- do relaxation practices – stretching, yoga, a minute or two of deep breathing.
- watch the flow of nature -- clouds, streams, birds, even aquarium fish.
- take 1 minute breaks: soften your eyes, relax your face, tongue, throat and shoulders.
- give yourself face rubs, gently rub your closed eyes, massage your hands.
- add half an hour of sleep per night.

SENSORY ON SWITCH

Delight/enriching – this is the ability to see the basic goodness in others, to delight in the beauty of nature, and to feel nourished by the happiness of others. You take time to enjoy fine artwork and craftsmanship, to watch talented athletes and performers and to appreciate the simpler skills of family and friends. You have a good sense of humor, and notice the joy and comedy of everyday life.

How well does this describe you lately?

Not very well *Somewhat* *Very well*
1 2 3 4 5

If this quality is weak for you right now, here are some things you can do to strengthen it:

- practice an “attitude of gratitude” noticing small bits of beauty and kindness each day.
- be well rested (an unmet need for calmness will keep you from enjoying enrichment).
- pet furry animals, smile and laugh more often.
- learn a craft or art form that pleases you .
- sing outloud at least 5 minutes a day (even privately – in the shower or in the car is OK).

MOTOR ON SWITCH

Engaging/magnetizing – this is the ability to draw people to you and to play a key role in social gatherings. It is also the desire to seek adventure and explore new places and activities. Your curiosity is strong and you are fascinated by what the world has to offer. It is easy for you to initiate actions, to enjoy the challenge of new projects, to learn new skills and to work and play wholeheartedly.

How well does this describe you lately?

<i>Not very well</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Very well</i>
1	2	3	4	5

If this quality is weak for you right now, here are some things you can do to strengthen it:

- interrupt your habits and do something a new way, try something new, go somewhere new.
- give and get more hugs; give a small gift to someone—something you know they’ll like.
- make a list of things you want to accomplish, choose one and begin it.
- volunteer your time on a project that helps others.
- organize and carry out a small event for family or friends (a party, a movie, a picnic, a hike).

MOTOR OFF SWITCH

Self regulating/destroying desire --this is the ability to endure on tasks you don’t enjoy and to control your impulses and resist temptations. You are patient, willing to work now and be rewarded later. You spend little time wishing for things you don’t have. You have good will power and follow through on projects you commit to doing. You are an even-tempered and trustworthy friend.

How well does this describe you lately?

<i>Not very well</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Very well</i>
1	2	3	4	5

If this quality is weak for you right now, here are some things you can do to strengthen it:

- save up for a major purchase instead of using a credit card to buy now and pay later.
- resist the urge to quit an endurance task, by continuing “just a few minutes longer”.
- to dissolve anger surges, relax your hands and shoulders and take 3 deep nose breaths.
- practice compromising – I want this but I’ll settle for that.
- stop stressing over lost time in traffic jams or long lines—just relax while you wait.

For further information by Dee Joy Coulter, go to www.originalmindbrilliance.com