

This devotional was given during Women's Awareness Week 2007 at the General Conference Morning Worship in Silver Spring, MD. The devotional may have some portions specific to the writer. If you use the material, please edit to be sure it is understood that these are the writer's personal experiences.

**Living a Healthy Balanced Life –
Emotional Balance**
By Ellen Missah

A very pleasant good morning, family!

It's good to come together as a family to seek the Lord and receive His blessings at the beginning of the day before we start our works and activities.

Most of you, I believe, are aware that this is a "Women's Awareness Week." There are reasons behind it, I am sure, but possibly one of the reasons is, because more women living in this planet earth today – compare to men.

- According to the 2005 world's population data, women make up 60% of the world's population;
- And I read that women are the majority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership worldwide.

In addition to that, it is interesting to know that women are also the majority of employees in General Conference building. I didn't go to Human Resources to get this information, instead I went through the GC Directory, and I found out that 55% of the employees are women. Isn't it interesting to know this?

So in term of count, not to mention many more superiorities of women over men, women outnumbered the men. That is why a special attention, a special care is given to the women by our World Church. I praise the Lord for that.

WOMEN ARE TRULY SPECIAL. Why did I say women are special? Look at her brain.

A WOMAN'S BRAIN IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A MAN. In biology we study that the left side of the brain is dealing with verbal matters or problems, and the right side of the brain is dealing with non-verbal problems or matters.

The man's brain is highly specialized. He uses his left or right side of the brain - one at a time. He could not use both sides of the brain simultaneously. That is the reason why, while talking or doing something, a man couldn't do anything else.

But it is not true with a woman. A woman's brain operates wholistically. She uses both sides – left and right sides of her brain – simultaneously. That is why a woman can do several things at one time. She can focus on more than one problem at one time, and

frequently she solves problems through multiple activities at a time. Besides that, a woman has four times more brain cells (neurons) or connectors than a man has - connecting the right and left side of the brain

I could not explain more detail about this topic because of the time constrain. But the point is, **WOMEN ARE SPECIAL**. That is why the church pays so much attention to women – especially about their roles in the church leadership.

Now let me get back to the main task. I am assigned to talk about **MENTAL HEALTH** particularly about **EMOTIONAL BALANCE**. I like this topic because many times, without realizing it, we or people develop **EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE** because of their own choices, or because of the lack of ability to process emotions in a timely fashion.

Some people are able to process their emotion quickly, which means they are able to let go of their unfavorable feelings, their disappointment, anger or sorrows, and move on with their lives. But for others, the processing of thoughts is slow, so the negative impressions remain with them for a very long time, and impacts their current thoughts and emotions which eventually result in depression.

Depression or stress is a state of mental disorder which can lead to emotional dysfunction or imbalance,

Researchers estimated that depression affects more than 19 million adult Americans each year, and the rate of major depression is higher among women. I wonder if you are one of them. And you may say, “Oh, no, it’s not me. I am not depressed. I am absolutely okay!”

Oh wait a minute! Is it true that you are okay? Listen to this:

- If you are irritable, moody, or easily getting angry almost every day, you must be careful because according to the mental health practitioners or therapists, those are signs of depression.
- If you are losing interest in pleasurable activities or hobbies, or if you are talking very negatively or being excessively critical, watch out! Those are signs of depression.
- Or if you are losing interest in work or cannot concentrate,
- Or if you are eating too much or too little, sleeping too much or too little, be careful! Those are symptoms or signs of depression.

The fact is depression is a psyche condition that inhibits our happiness and productivity. If we are under stress or depression, we cannot be productive in our work, and most importantly, we are unable to enjoy a happy and healthy balanced life.

Many Eastern philosophies are built upon the concept of balance. They said, “**If life is out of balance, then no matter how much money you make, or how many**

possessions you have, you can never truly be happy.” Because balance is the key to a happy and enjoyment of life.

A reporter from Worldwide Network made a survey on **WHAT PEOPLE FEEL AS THE PURPOSE OF THEIR LIVES**. And it’s so interesting that the survey says, 87% of the respondents declared that, **THE PURPOSE OF THEIR LIVES IS BEING HAPPY**.

This is what all people want **most out of life**. People wish for happiness, people aim for happiness, people want happiness. No one wants to live a miserable life, I believe, including you and me.

Now let me ask you:

- Are you happy if someone whom you love so much is suffering from illness?
- Are you happy if someone hurt your feelings?
- Are you happy if you lost someone who is so dear to you?
- Are you happy if you cannot pay your bills?

The most possible answer is, you are not happy. But let me tell you that **a happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but a person with a certain set of attitude**.

What does it mean? It means, **Happiness is not about what happens to us**, but it is **the ability to allow everything and every circumstance - GOOD OR BAD - to happen in our lives.** That is happiness.

I remember Pastor Jose Rojas said that happiness is wide. Happiness comes and goes. Yes it is true, but we can make the happiness stand long within us by making a decision and choices.

If we want to keep our happiness standing long, get rid of worries, get rid of sorrows and disappointment, get rid of stress and depression. Find and choose happiness. Happiness is not far from us, it is in our own self. Remember, no one can make you happy except your own self, and no one can make you unhappy, except your own self.

So to keep the happiness standing long in our lives, we have to make a choice. I picked up 5 choices of attitude:

CHOICE #

1. **RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING WHAT WE HAVE.**
We will not find happiness by trying hard to get something we don’t have. So appreciate the things you have and give thanks and praise to the Lord. This attitude will bring happiness to our lives. **PSALMS 106:1** says, *“Praised ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.”*

CHOICE#

2. **BEING CONTENT WITH WHAT WE GET.** Remember, success is getting and achieving what we want, but happiness is being content with what we get. According to the all important advertising industry, the American way is ALWAYS NEEDING MORE. But to enjoy happiness, be content with what we get. **1 TIMOTHY 6:6** says, “*But Godliness with contentment is great gain.*”

CHOICE#

3. **ENJOY WHAT WE HAVE.** It is not how much we have that makes happiness, but how much we enjoy it that brings happiness. Even though we have a lot but if we cannot or do not want to enjoy it, we will not experience happiness. On the contrary, even though we have only a little amount, but if we enjoy it, we will find happiness.

CHOICE#

4. **LIKING WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.** Happiness doesn't come from doing what we like to do, but from liking what we have to do. Liking our job, liking our work, will bring happiness.

Some of my friends asked me, “Ellen, how do you like your work? Are you happy working at the GC Presidential? And I said, “It's not working at the GC Presidential that brings happiness to me, but, liking the work that I have to do at the GC Presidential, that brings happiness in my heart.”

CHOICE#

5. **NEVER COMPLAIN.** People who never achieve happiness are people who complain whenever they are awake. And whenever they are asleep, they are thinking what to complain about tomorrow. If we are always complaining, we never achieve happiness.

Those are CHOICES of ATTITUDES that we may choose in order to keep the happiness standing long in our lives.

Now my last question, “Is it possible to be happy all the time despite of the unfavorable circumstances?” Remember,

- Being happy all the time doesn't mean that bad things don't happen to us, but
- Being happy all the time means, we are able to handle the unfavorable things that happen to us, and not let them make us helpless and hopeless.

- Being happy all the time means, we are not allowing a situation or a person to make us unhappy.
- Being happy all the time means, we are making happiness as a decision, and choosing it all the time.

Therefore, it is definitely possible to be happy all the time. It is possible to keep our emotion balanced all the time.

In closing, find happiness in Jesus Christ. This is the utmost choice of happiness we can achieve because Jesus is the source of our true happiness. Take Him along wherever we go, and then we will enjoy happiness all the way, all the day, all the time.

Let's choose happiness today!