

BALANCING ACT

MDRT members embrace being a Whole Person.

By Matt Pais

Adhering to the Whole Person concept, a core component of MDRT that emphasizes the importance of a balanced life across career, relationships, health, service and more, often is easier said than done. Many members know the personal and professional impact that comes from embracing this philosophy, whether as a new MDRT member or a veteran.

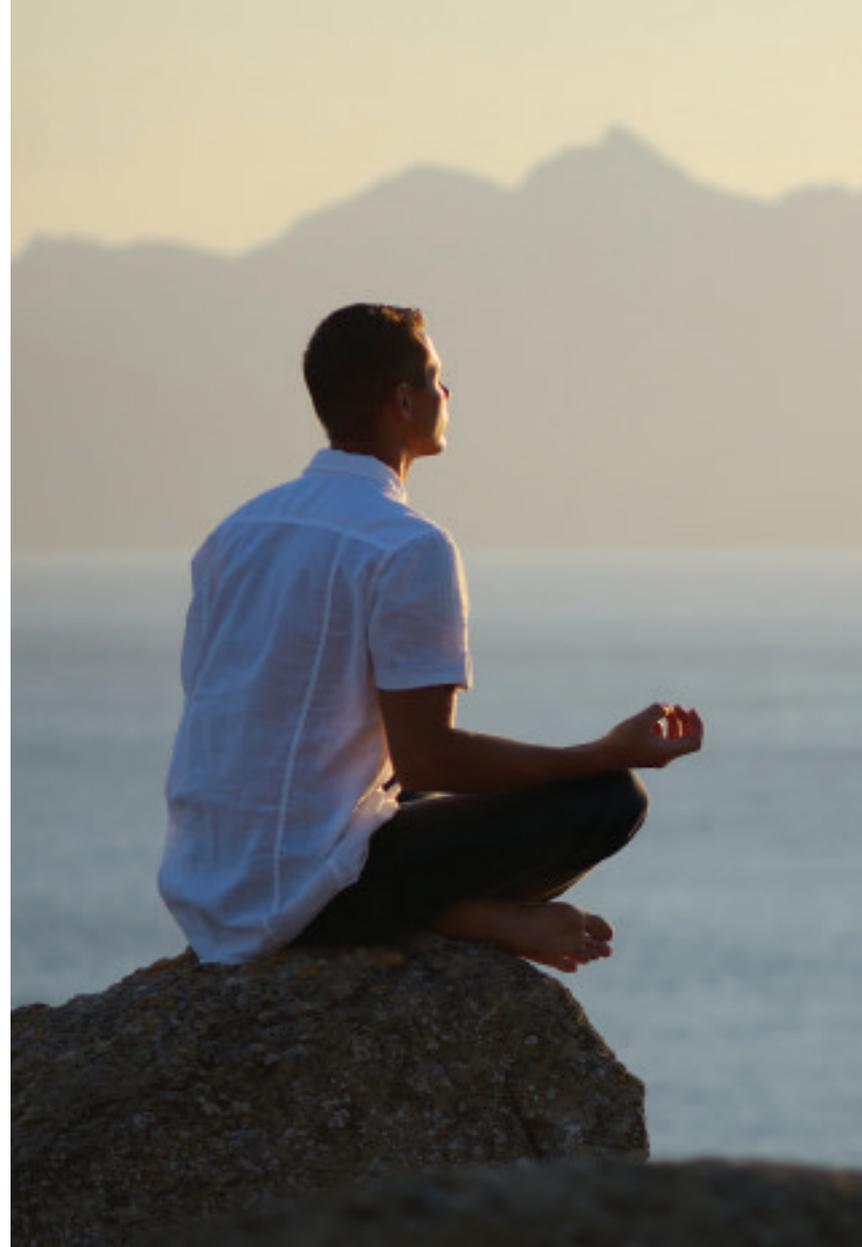
Ross Hultgren, an 18-year member from Victoria, Australia, recalls a five-to-10-year period working long, hard hours, trying to build a business and throwing himself out of balance as a result.

“When you look back as a more experienced person, you understand that if you’re building a career and a profession, take the long-term view rather than the short-term view,” he said. “Working 16 hours a day or 14 hours a day is a very short-term view, I believe. Because you’re either going to burn out or you’re going to get divorced or you’re going to be unhealthy.”

This is something **Leroy Anthony Dallas**, a 14-year member from Kingston, Jamaica, learned about 10 years ago, when his daughter was 8 years old. Early in the morning, he came in from exercising and she told him, “Bye Daddy, see you tomorrow.” Dallas realized he wasn’t there when she got home from school or when she went to bed. So he started working from home in the afternoon when possible, scheduling meetings in the area and adjusting his day as needed.

“I recognized that since I was working less hours, I had to work more efficiently,” he said. “I had to work smarter.”

Similarly, **Helen A. Jenkins, Dip PFS**, a 27-year member



from Cardiff, Wales, strives to avoid being what she calls a “busy fool.” She also has seen overlap between embracing the Whole Person approach and advanced professional success. Once a month, she gets together with Welsh Women Walking, which has generated not just a social group but a source of clients as well. “Being out in the sunshine, being able to talk, as our motto said, it takes weight off your mind and your body,” Jenkins said. “It’s a wonderful way of confirming that work-life balance.”

According to **Heather M. Courneya, CLU, CH.F.C.**, a 17-year member from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, increased balance also adjusts the complexion of the day. Where before there seemed to never be enough time, now her priorities — including making time for meditation and the gym — bring a better flow to the day, and with it more success.

“Because of my personal practices, I feel present and I’m not stressed about things — if a person follows the Whole Person concept, they will be healthier all around, and the business part just follows through,” she said. “People want to be around me because of the way I am and because it

THE 7 COMPONENTS OF THE WHOLE PERSON CONCEPT

1. Relationships
2. Health
3. Education
4. Career
5. Service
6. Financial
7. Spiritual

Courneya puts the need for balance another way: “It’s a whole circle, like a ball. If the circle isn’t balanced, it’s not going to roll correctly,” she said. “If you’ve got more business than health in your life, you’re not going to roll in a straight line.”

That applies even in times of adversity, Courneya adds. In 2008, the collapse of the housing market had a significant impact on her business and income. But she said the Whole Person concept serves as a reminder that life is about more than money. It’s how she was able to maintain perspective when a 19-year-old driver, who only had been behind the wheel three times, crashed into her car that was in her driveway, pushing it forward and through the garage door.

“If you look after people the way you want to be looked after, it’s more about the human factor than the money that’s out the window because of the damage caused,” she said. “Nobody was hurt. Life and people who are hurt — you can’t replace that and fix that. But you can replace a car or a garage door. It’s kind of like a life philosophy.

“If you let things get to you, life can really get you down. It’s perspective. You just need a good perspective. And being involved in the Whole Person concept helps you have a good perspective on life.” **KT**

Put yourself to the test! Take the Balance Quiz, located under the Whole Person tab in the Members Only section of mdrt.org.

makes them feel good when they’re in my presence. They feel heard.”

Of course, it may seem difficult to make time for non-work-related activities that provide such balance, especially as a new MDRT member. That’s why it’s important to make a pie chart demonstrating how time is being spent each day, said 20-year member **Elaine Bonello, ACII, APFS**, of Ta’ Xbiex, Malta.

“If most of your life is all in one color, then I think you need to be looking a little further,” said Bonello, noting that her 5-year-old son is her biggest priority.

Hultgren agrees with the need for structure, ensuring that a day is productive but not too long or open to chance, making room for pursuits like exercise. He also advocates for taking the easily disregarded lunch break away from the office. “I really believe everybody needs that break to get out, clear your mind, get some fresh air and come back ready to refocus and be productive again for the afternoon,” he said. “I think people mistakenly believe if they just keep pushing on during the day, they’re being productive.”