

Saying Yes to Yin and Yang



Balance: *A harmonious or satisfying arrangement or proportion of parts or elements. Equality of distribution. A state of equilibrium. An influence or force tending to produce equilibrium; counterpoise.*

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Ever notice that most of life's journey involves maintaining a well orchestrated balance? Even a casual glance at nature reveals this. Yin and yang, push-pull, give-take. The laws of physics reinforce this concept with the idea that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction," as Newton states in his third law of motion.

Balance is even internalized as most of the world's great religions and philosophies teach that it as a requisite for both physical and mental well being. Our own bodies are set up this way—air in and air out, arteries to carry oxygenated blood from the heart to the organs and veins to carry it back. The effects of having imbalance in our lives are often evidenced by stress, anger, illness or depression.

By extension, most truly meaningful activities that we participate in demand a similar balance of give and take. In real estate valuation, we're familiar with the principle of balance. Property value is optimized when component parts are in balance.

Symbolically, consider our own professional organization, the International Right of Way Association. From it we receive many valuable benefits, including a magazine, archives for research, great education opportunities, networking potential, a code of ethics and standards, timely updates on upcoming events, the chance to participate at a leadership level, industry recognition, and list continues. In fact, this side of the ledger seems heavily weighted in the recipients favor. What do we give back in return?

Of course, we contribute membership dues. We might also participate on the local chapter board or through attending meetings and even helping to organize a local chapter event. However, doesn't this side of the scale require more from us? We gain much, but give back disproportionately small amounts in many cases. An organization cannot thrive when it is out of balance.

When we give back, we gain a sense of pride, loyalty, and yes, ownership. After all, your dues are only the financial part of what

“When we give back, we gain a sense of pride...”

makes it happen. Your personal input, ideas, attendance and some time will help bring about the necessary balance. Notice the sense of balance that must occur for there to be any kind of dynamic within the organization. From one another’s participation we each gain new perspectives, new insights, and new ways of doing things. This is a wake up call for those who may have existed in isolation for some time. Your organization needs you. In exchange for what you put in, you will receive invaluable information, contacts, friendships, knowledge and a sense of professional well-being. How’s that for some reverse psychology - give to gain!

In reminding us all of this important issue, I realize that some of my phrases may seem worn and tired. Still, I encourage you to see the bigger picture ahead; look at the long term. If we are to thrive and succeed and represent the highest levels of our profession, there simply MUST be a sense of reciprocal giving. Not only of money - but of time and talent.

Each of us has something to share for the benefit of a common good. Find that gift, discover a new horizon and step beyond the shores of your self-imposed island. To those who say, “I just don’t have the time,” I believe that this excuse cannot be true all the time. We all have the same 24 hours in a day, 168 hours in a week and 8,760 hours in each year. The difference lies in our priorities and how we choose to use our time. Wise are those who allocate sufficient time for balance in their personal lives, profession and affiliations.

Remember the nature and definition of balance, and the value of a two-way street. Adopt a change in your thinking, dig yourself out of the rut and jump into action. Both you and the IRWA depend on it.

We could all benefit from a break in the routine – exchanging the “same ole, same ole” for the chance to get involved and exercise some creativity. Another misconception is that whatever is given back has to be time consuming or constitute an enormous project. Not true! Here are some ideas that come to mind:

Short-Term Commitments

Help set up a classroom when your local chapter offers a course	15-20 minutes
Volunteer to meet and greet at your next chapter luncheon meeting	20-30 minutes
Create an opinion piece for your chapter newsletter	30-60 minutes
Write about a topical work experience for publishing in Right of Way magazine	2-3 hours
Offer to speak on a topic in which you have subject matter expertise	3-4 hours to draft and present
Become a course coordinator and get involved in scheduling courses	A few hours/month
Serve in a leadership position	Several hours/month