



tension

Take a piece of elastic between your fingers. Hold it tight and P-U-L-L!
Too hard and the fibres, over time, will break and damage. Allow the elastic to become 'loose' - and it isn't doing its designed job.

Tensions. For many years, you've probably heard people talk about 'balance' - ensuring you get the balance right. How difficult this is. Just when one area is balanced, you realize another area is now unbalanced. Just when you're concentrating on an unbalanced area, you realize that in actual fact, that wasn't the right focus at all.

So live with the tension.

If you're a mother - you live with the tension of working full time or part time or remaining full time at home.

If you're a wife - you live with the tension of being involved in life but not ending up at the end of the day without romantic energy.

As a family - you live with the tension of spending time together but then allowing your children to become independent; communicating honestly without damaging each others' spirit; maintaining relationships inside and outside the wider family.

Perhaps you have a 'family mission statement' or you've looked at your values and worked out where unhealthy tensions are going to exist. Here's two examples ...

We want to live life to the full so Dad and Mum will work full time AND we will spend lots of time together as a family
Lots of families live in this tension zone where everyone runs from A to B and then onto C. Weekends aren't a catch up - you're still all running.

We want Mum to be stay-at-home because we want parent involvement in our kids lives AND we will put each of our children into three after school activities each week
Lots of families live in this financial tension zone and then max out their credit card and their mortgage and on and on.

So ... what about you? Does this symbol - the elastic - connect with your life? Do you realize that this tension can be and is healthy UNTIL the elastic becomes too stretched. Whereas with balance - you can balance until the cows come home - but you don't get to sit with the fact that 'sometimes balance just isn't possible'.

Think about the areas of your life where you can identify tension - place a heading where indicated then list the tensions that exist under that heading. We've put an example here for you



I'm a mother

Sufficient time to spend with my husband and kids

Time to spend with my workmates and mm families

This 'tension' is okay when I allocate priority to my husband and kids. It's okay for him to 'be there' for our family when a friend is in crisis & I'm helping them; then for me to focus on him and our children [and me!]

It's okay for me to say 'can't today' to workmates and mm families who 'need' me. But when crisis hits, it's okay for me to give them priority. It's also okay for me to ask someone else to be there for the crisis too



You might like to keep a piece of elastic with you to remind you that 'healthy tension' is okay - but when the tension of the elastic is pulled to 'breaking point', the elastic is not going to last and neither are you!

I have a friend who has to take life simply. If she doesn't, her head spirals out of control. At that point, she's not a great wife. She's not a great mother. She's not even a great friend to herself. But keep her life simple and she's a wonderful wife, a wonderful mother, and she enjoys life. Sometimes it ticks her off that she can't do as much as others - but she knows the consequences. And personally, I think she's got the tension JUST RIGHT. Her elastic tension is healthy.

So here comes the final thought - what is it in your life that causes the elastic to pull too far and too taut? What is it that makes the fibres of that elastic just a little uncomfortable? - the same sort of feeling when we've eaten too much over a holiday break and our elastic 'bites' into our skin!

And more importantly, what are you going to do about those tensions?

SNAP is not the place you want to be!

Don't worry about everyday life; and don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing - said by Jesus, documented by Matthew

