

Ice Skating



Goodreads

by Janet McCarthy

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I have a secret to share with you. I hate ice skating.

It all starts with those scary, ill-fitting boots that have razor thin, hideous blades attached to the bottom. Putting them on is no big deal, but I don't get how on earth I'm expected to walk in these torture devices to the ice that I am then supposed to gracefully glide on as if I'm straight out of a Norman Rockwell portrait.

But I summon up the necessary courage and begin my way to the ice. And as I am wobbling along, my ankles are giving way and bending in ways that I'm positive God never intended them to bend. I get on the ice ready to begin my graceful gliding and whoosh! Out go my feet from under me causing my body to meet with the ice in a thud that I'm positive can be heard around the world.

So now as I am one with the ice, I begin the assessment process of any possible bodily damage, fully aware that all the other skaters have had to begin skating in a diversion pattern so as to not cause a pile up. And I see cheerful young children zooming around looking at me as if to say, "C'mon! Get up! This is easy!" After assessing that getting up will absolutely not be happening, I crawl to the side where I can get off the ice. I wobble my way back to the bench whence this tragedy began and take the blades of death off my grateful feet.

My well-meaning friends come to my side and begin begging me to try again vowing that they will help me. Knowing that I have absolutely no intention of embarking on this trek again I say, "Oh no! You go ahead. I would just hold you up. I think the skates are perhaps the wrong size." Or maybe I get a little closer to the truth and say something like, "I must not be cut out for ice skating. God didn't bless me with strong ankles."

As I sit in the snack area stewing, every once in a while I look up to see the rest of the group gliding around and I stick both thumbs in the air with a way-too-wide grin as if to say, "Isn't this just SO great?"

It's all about the ability to balance

Why is it that I hate ice skating so much?

All the statements I made to my friends: my ankles are weak, the skates are the wrong size, etc., quite frankly are just excuses. My real issue is balance. Ice skating is all about the ability to balance on those razor thin blades and the truth is I simply cannot do it!

Funny thing is, the ability to balance translates to more than just ice skating. Balance is important in every day life, isn't it? But the ability to balance is something that many of us struggle with.

How can we make strides toward balance in our lives? Proverbs 14:15 says, "The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps." I know no matter how much I try, I will never be able to balance on ice skates. And sometimes I even feel like no matter how hard I try I will never achieve balance in life either. And sometimes I feel as though I crawl around waiting to find a bench I can sit on until a miracle comes along that evens everything out.

But the reality is that balance in life is achievable because we have the source of our success abiding in us.

Balance is often thwarted because we can convince ourselves that it just isn't possible. So perhaps the first thing we need to do is give some thought to our steps, or take an honest look at our lives. We can ask ourselves, "Where am I in balance? Where am I out of balance?" Do a spiritual, mental, emotional, social, physical self-examination. But be warned that we all have blind spots. The Bible says there is safety and wisdom in a multitude of counselors. So if you're in doubt regarding balance, ask your spouse or a close friend how you're doing -- emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally. Get a second opinion.

If imbalance is found, then we know our next course of action is to regain it. The main component when it comes to balance is the strength of our core or where we're centered. This is true with ice skating and in life.

Jesus alone possesses the strength needed to keep our lives in balance

We will always be out of balance in life until we get one thing that we can center on. We can center our lives on making money, sports and entertainment, or even on a special person. But as great as those aspects of life are, they really aren't strong enough to keep us in balance.

On a rotating wheel, all the power flows through at the center, or the hub, and then is evenly distributed out through the spokes that then allows the wheel to turn. Just like a wheel, our lives must have something strong to center on. When we put Christ in the center of our lives, the power flows through Him and then goes out to all other areas and gives us balance. Jesus alone possesses the strength needed to keep our lives in balance.

Putting Jesus at the center of our lives can sometimes be as simple as adjusting our day to spend more time with Him in prayer and more time reading His Word. Matthew 6:33 says to seek the kingdom of God above all else. Then all things will be "added" or brought into focus, or into balance. It's amazing how just an extra 5 minutes of quiet alone time with God can change our balance.

So, when you feel like you're wobbling around life like my ankles do in ice skates, bending in ways that you know you weren't meant to bend, check your balance. Don't give in to thinking that you can't possibly experience it.

Check and see if Jesus is firmly in place at the center of your life.

