

The Modern Goddess' Guide to Work Satisfaction

“Filled with action, power plays, love affairs, success, and the agony of defeat, the goddess myths do much more than simply entertain,” according to Sharon Turnbull, PhD, in “The Goddess Path.” “Goddess myths shed light upon human nature and the struggle to be whole in body, mind, and soul.”

In the spirit of this column, “Building a Better You,” I’ve selected four goddesses that can help guide you in achieving that symmetry between body, mind, and soul.

Durga

Durga is the Hindu goddess representing self-knowledge and strength. To feel “whole” in body, mind, and soul, knowing yourself is key. This sounds deceptively simple. Our lives become so crazy that knowing what works for us sometimes becomes murky.

I am a connoisseur of coffee. I love a strong latte, and I brew my own espresso. Come find me if you ever get to Dallas, and I’ll make you one. As picky as I am about my coffee, one day I ventured beyond my own espresso machine and ordered a latte at a neighborhood bookstore. Upon finishing the order, the barrista said, “Would you like to have extra foam on your latte? I am having a GREAT foam day!” I responded, “No, I don’t want any extra foam, but I’m intrigued. What do you mean by you’re having a ‘great foam day?’” She happily said, “Well, the milk is the perfect temperature. The store is not too hot or too cold today. The machine is purring. The combination of all of this is that I’m making the best foam.”

After I thanked the barrista, I posed a question to my coffee-mate friend, “What are the components of a Great Foam Day for you? Obviously, we’re not barristas, so let’s think beyond the literal. How can we use her statement as a metaphor for our lives?” As we enjoyed our coffee drinks (not as good as mine!), we contemplated what constituted a Great Foam Day on any given “normal” day — not a vacation day, a weekend day, or a holiday.

I pose this question, “What constitutes a Great Foam Day for you?” Your answers might include ...

- Getting exercise
- Connecting with others in a meaningful way
- Achieving balance between work and personal time

Other answers might be ...

- A day without traffic
- A day when all patients keep their appointments
- A day when everyone buys everything I am selling

Look at the list and ask what’s on it that you can control. The first set of responses seems more likely to be regulated by you. The second set will happen only if the universe is working in your direction. That means your success rate is less guaranteed.

The “Great Foam Day” exercise is not a trick question. There are no wrong answers. Yet, you will be more like Durga when you know what you want and spend your energy on what you can control rather than in the arena affected externally.

Uzume

Uzume is the goddess of mirth and dance. She’s a heroine in Japanese myths.

Karen Cortell Reisman, MS

Ms. Reisman teaches organizations how to increase productivity by communicating effectively. She has been a visiting faculty presenter at The Pankey Institute, a speaker at dental meetings, and president of Speak for Yourself® for 14 years. To get Karen’s Top Ten list on how to blow it as a communicator, fax to (972) 385-7652. Contact Ms. Reisman at www.SpeakForYourself.com.



Uzume is responsible for laughter and revelry. She models for us finding healing and wisdom in humor.

Your second attribute toward becoming a modern goddess is to find the humor in the situation. I'm reminded of the beautiful foreign film, "Life Is Beautiful." Roberto Benigni, an adult class clown, constructs an elaborate fiction to comfort and protect his young son in an Italian concentration camp during the Holocaust. Benigni shows how he uses his gift of optimism and humor as his weapon against evil. This movie is about rescuing whatever is good and hopeful from the wreckage of dreams.

Although you typically do not face this magnitude of adversity, you are confronted with many daily hassles and obstacles. Your computer crashes; your hygienist is sick and you can't get a temporary; your patient calls in saying, "You're not on my dental insurance list ..."; you're running late because the crown doesn't fit. You can face these challenges in two ways: you can get upset, or you can find the humor or positive angle. In fact, sometimes the ONLY aspect you can change in an unpleasant situation is your mental approach.

Athena

The Greek goddess Athena was the goddess of wisdom and gravitas. *Gravitas* is a Latin word meaning stature, demeanor, and dignity; a valuable component in the mix of attributes as leaders in dentistry.

To become a modern goddess, here are some ways to cultivate your gravitas index. First, think about whom you most admire and why. Successful people who have gravitas find mentors and models to emulate. Who are yours? Second, go back in memory and relive successful experiences. What memories can you recall that have brought you great pleasure? Describe these to yourself. Research shows that the very act of recalling such moments gives you strength and reminds you of your stature and demeanor.

Brigit

Brigit, the great mother goddess of Ireland, represents power, creativity, and inspiration. I dub her the goddess of communication. You don't think a speaker like me would not include communicating as a vital component of being a modern goddess, do you?!

One final avenue to finding balance between mind, body, and soul is the ability to communicate to others and yourself in authentic ways.

Tom Peters says in his new book, "Re-imagine!," "The best leaders are the best storytellers. The worst leaders are the worst storytellers. They stick to the facts. Hint: This holds as much for the on-the-make 25-year-old as for the leader of a nation." To become a modern goddess, know who you are and how to tell your own story.

In summary

By using Durga, Uzume, Athena, and Brigit as your guides, you can shed light upon the struggle to be whole in body, mind, and soul. As successful leaders in dentistry, embrace your heightened sense of self-knowledge, your desire to find the humor, your appreciation of your own gravitas, and your ability to communicate all of the above. Use this article as your modern goddess' guide to achieving satisfaction.

© 2005 **Karen Cortell Reisman, MS**