

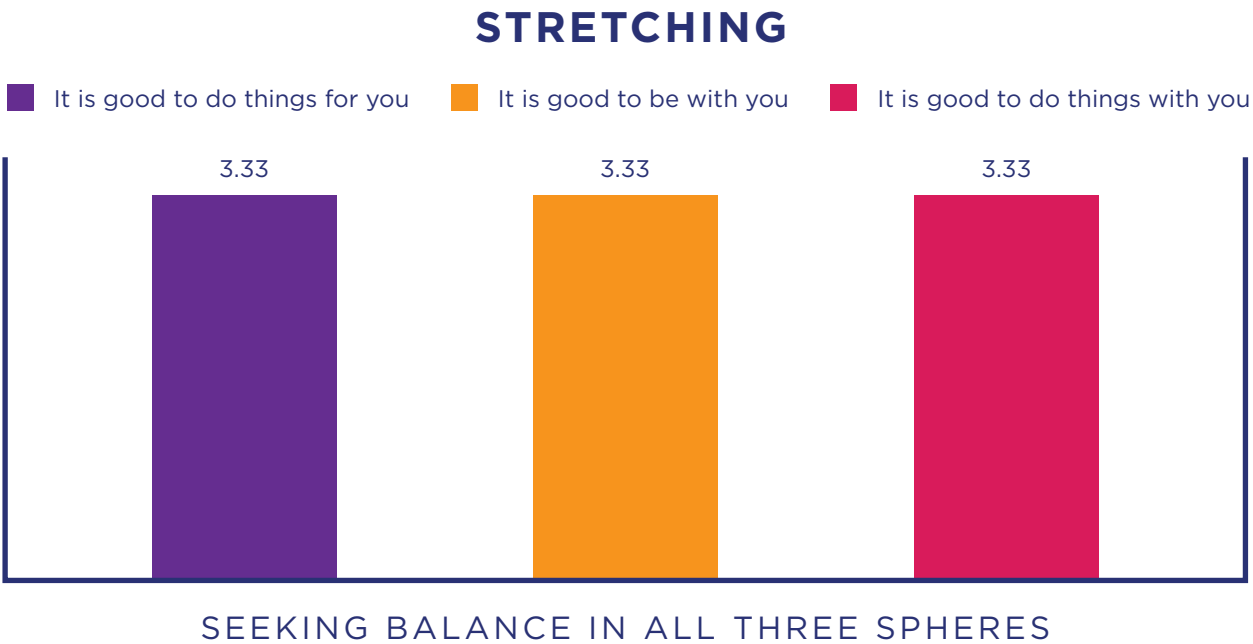


Three Spheres Of Stretching

The process of stretching an individual into learning coping mechanisms, new skills or engagement is a very delicate task.

We need to ensure that we ask ourselves: What are we trying to stretch them towards? Why does this matter? How, when and who will stretch the person?

When we have decided that we are going to assist the person by stretching them, we need to remember that the process will ebb and flow; it is a give and take process. We need to keep in mind the 3 spheres of stretching (illustrated below).



When considering the 3 spheres, we need to recognize that we usually need to start at the “simply being together” phase and slowly work our way into the next spheres; we also need to recognize that likelihood that we will move back and forth through the 3 spheres as we are helping someone to stretch, learn and grow.

What Did John Say?

“This stretching process involved reminding the person that he or she is safe and loved while asking a slight degree more: waiting a moment, taking turns, sharing, and other virtues involving the building of relationships with others. This process is very delicate, so we need to keep reminding the person of how safe and loved he or she is. It is a time in which the person can learn that it is good to be with a small circle of others, then it is good to do things with this group, and eventually it is good to do things with a wider circle of friends, and finally it is good to do things for others”.

Q1

When do you hear, think, or say these three phases about the people you support?

What might the person be communicating in these moments?

Q2

Q3

How can we increase gentleness in our responses?

Connecting to Our Purpose

Our central purpose in the lives of others is to nurture, teach, and sustain the experiences of connectedness, companionship, and community. With that in mind, the process of stretching a person toward new coping mechanisms, skills, or forms of engagement must always be approached with great care. Stretching is not simply about encouraging growth for growth's sake; it is about supporting meaningful growth that helps a person experience deeper connection, greater confidence, and fuller participation in community.

When we decide to support someone through stretching, we must remember that this process will naturally ebb and flow. It is not linear. It is a delicate give-and-take that requires attentiveness, patience, and responsiveness.