

A Celebration of Balance

A circus arts and poetry lesson with Jenny Hill



Materials You'll Need

Paper

Pencil or pen

A plastic grocery bag



What We'll Be Doing Today

For this lesson, you'll be learning the circus skill of balance. We'll be using some household objects, our bodies, and the circus rule of try, fail, try again.

Question for Reflection:

What did the objects I had success balancing have in common?

Balance

an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady.

Horizontal

Horizontal lines are “sleeping lines.” They are parallel to the horizon.



Vertical

Vertical lines are “standing up lines.” They are at a right angle to the horizon.



Reflection Question:

What did you notice about trying to balance the pencil horizontally and vertically? What changed?

Center of Gravity

An imaginary point in a body of matter where the total weight of the body may be thought to be concentrated

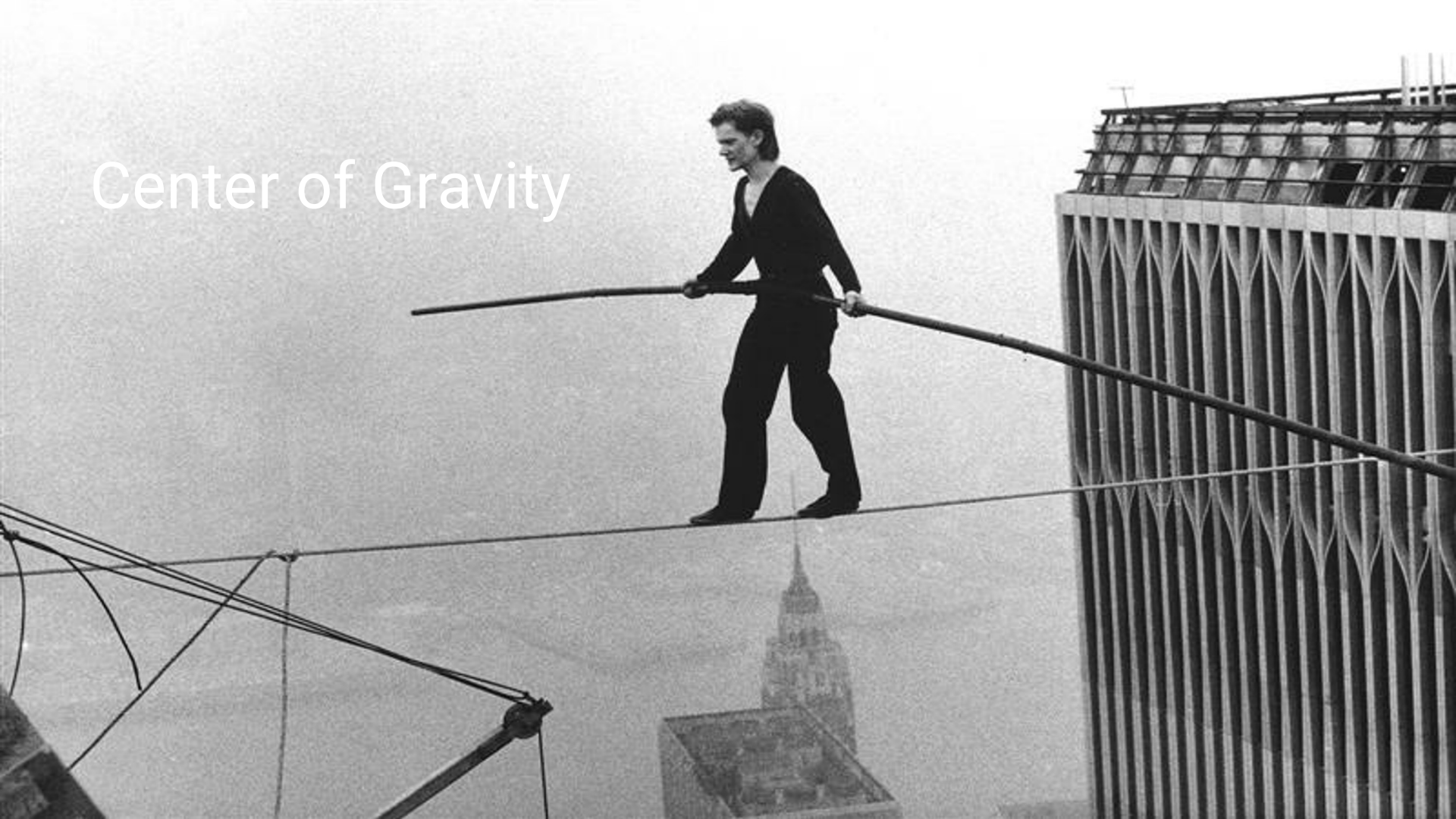
Archimedes

In the 3rd Century BC, Archimedes invented one of the most fundamental concepts of physics – the center of gravity. He also discovered the laws of levers and pulleys, which allow us to move heavy objects using small forces.

Center of Gravity



Center of Gravity



Reflection Question:

What did changing your position do to your sense of balance? What verbs (action words) can you think of that fit your tightrope walk?

Verb List

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Spin | Stagger | Wring | Weave | Swing |
| Float | Strut | Twist | Cheer | Infuse |
| Contract | Swagger | Sparkle | Flutter | Circle |
| Amble | Tiptoe | Glitter | Fan | Swim |
| Dart | Traipse | Fling | Tumble | Celebrate |
| Limp | Roll | Ballet | Laugh | Synchronize |
| Lope | Sway | Whirl | Blaze | Choreograph |
| Saunter | Bounce | Reel | Flash | |
| Scamper | Dabble | Leap | Dodge | |
| Scurry | Flick | Skip | Twitch | |

Balancing a Grocery Bag



The Lightest Cloudform

Lightest cloudform,
you are as white
as snow capped mountains
and as fragile
as a winter night.

You are
laughter and delight.

Simile

A comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as.”

Lightest cloudform, you are as fragile as a winter night.

Metaphor

A comparison of two things without using “like” or “as.” It suggests what something is like by comparing it with something else similar.

Lightest cloudform, you are laughter and delight.



Build Your Poem

Name your object based on a quality it has, or what it reminds you of, or just something playful and fun. Use your imagination.

What quality does this object have that you like right now?

Start your poem with “you,” as if you are talking directly to the object.

Use the notes you took while practicing balancing the bag to build your lines.

In the last lines of your poem, ask the object to bring you the quality in it you admire.

“Bring me lightness in all that I do.”