1. Last weekend was the Oscars.
    a. I will admit to you that I actually hate award shows, I find them by definition elitist and so incredibly self-indulgent
    b. BUT in my home I am outnumbered, my wife who used to work in the entertainment industry when we lived in LA, and long before 3 kids, a minivan, soccer/hockey/gymnastics and a mortgage – as I often define my life now.
        i. Sharon enjoys them and thus so do the kids.
        ii. So we watch
    c. Its not that I am against movies, I love movies, I just don't need to indulge in modern idolatry over a Golden Oscar.
    d. BUT movies are powerful, they say that a picture something is worth a thousand words, and by that I think we can all agree that what we see is etched into our consciousness sometimes more indelibly than what we read or hear.
2. All of this is by way of introduction to reference for me one of the most iconic movie scene of my adolescence, and movie based lesson that I find daily application in my life and in this week's parasha
    a. It is from the Karate Kid, the original not the remakes or sequels. Ralph Macchio and "Pat" Morita as Mr. Miyagi
    b. In the famous scene when Ralph's character Daniel complains that the chores Mr Miyagi demands of him are too hard and thus he does them merely half way.
    c. Mr Miyagi instructs him, insightfully and with aged wisdom.
        i. "Do Karate yes OK, Do Karate no OK, do karate so-so, squished just like a grape"
        ii. By this of course he means you can go all or you can go nothing, but to do something half-intended is an affront to the discipline and your integrity.
3. In this week's Torah portion we are taught the same lesson, though not in as colorful or obvious way.
    a. God commands the Israelites not to do any work toward building the Sanctuary on Shabbat.
    b. "Now Moses assembled the entire community of the Children of Israel and said to them, "These are the words that YHWH has commanded, to do them: For six days is work to be made, but on the seventh day there is to be holiness for you, Sabbath, Sabbath-Ceasing for YHWH; whoever makes work on it is to be put-to-death! You are not to let fire burn throughout all your settlements on the Sabbath day."
    c. God outlines 39 labors that the Israelites MUST abstain from because of the sabbath. Why does God need to command the Israelites NOT to work? You would think of all things human beings would do voluntarily it would be to NOT work, rather to rest and relax. WHY must we be commanded to NOT work.
        i. 1. baking
        ii. 2. extinguishing a fire
        iii. 3. grinding
        iv. 4. kindling a fire

v. 5. kneading
vi. 6. plowing
vii. 7. reaping
viii. 8. sheaf-making
ix. 9. sifting
x. 10. sowing
xi. 11. threshing
xii. 12. Winnowing
1. The list goes on

d. Later in the parasha we learn that the Israelites are instructed to gather gifts for God. They gather so many that again they are commanded to stop, to give no more.
i. Again the question – why must they be commanded to stop giving, you would think human nature would be to give only what is necessary to be selfish to keep for yourself and your own pleasure or comfort?

4. So what is our Torah trying to teach us?
a. The lesson is similar to that of Mr Myaigi – but it goes deeper and in fact it ultimately contradicts him
b. The lesson of the Karate Kid is you can do something or not do something, but you cannot do something without a whole heart and hope to succeed at it.
i. That is true of the parasha as well. The Israelites clearly bring their whole heart to their task of building and or gift giving.
ii. BUT our rabbis offer another layer – you can become TOO committed, to focused on your task, be it building, gift giving, karate or really any of the myriad of things that we take pleasure in or find meaning in.
1. Work
2. Fitness
3. Food
4. School
iii. In Judaism there is such thing as too much of a good thing.
iv. And so the sabbath is given to us as a metering light, a pause so that we do not become too consumed by our passions or obligations.
v. In Judaism it is all about balance

5. One of the key prohibitions – and you heard it in the first of the 39 prohibited labors is against kindling fire.
a. A teaching on the verse in our parahsa that speaks of the prohibition against fire adds, that one must not make fire of themselves, we are prohibited from burning and yearning on the sabbath, our souls must be at rest as well.

6. Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah the Prince said: Great is study of the Torah when combined with a worldly occupation, for toil in them both puts sin out of mind. All study of the Torah which is not supplemented by work is destined to prove futile and causes sin. Let all who occupy themselves with communal affairs do so for Heaven's sake, for then the merit of their fathers sustains them and their righteousness endures

forever. And as for you, G-d will then say: I count you worthy of great reward as if you had done it all yourselves.

7. Two traditional models for the ideal Jew: The Chasid & The Chacham
8. THE CHASID
    a. The first paradigm is the figure of the chasid, which translates as devout or pious. Some go so far to understand a chasid as a saint or tzadeek. The chasid is extreme in his piety - studies Torah 24/6.

9. We might think our tradition would say that the ideal Jew is one who studies all day and night but the Mishnah says no, study must be coupled with a worldly occupation.

10. THE CHACHAM
    a. Maimonidies saw this as wisdom and. This figure is the Chacham or 'wise man'. Whereas the Chasid strives for perfection, the Chacham aspires for balance. Maimonidies wrote, "In truth, it is the middle way that should be praised"
11. So with all due respect to the wisdom of My Miyagi – our torah teaches us that true art is in finding balance in our life.

<u>Shemonah Perakim 4:3</u>

Good acts are those midway between two extremes that are bad,
namely, excess and absence.
Prudence, for example, is midway between
    excessive desire and its absence…
Generosity is midway between
    miserliness and extravagance.
Courage is midway between
    recklessness and cowardice.
Self-confidence is midway between
    arrogance and debasement.
Dignity is midway between
    being overbearing and being obsequious…
Humility is midway between
    pride and shame.
        a.