

Harnessing the White Rabbit syndrome

By allowing yourself the time and space to think and feel and discern what really matters, you will give yourself the gift of a fabulously meaningful life.

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1292 words | 6 pages

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE might be exciting, but are you living quickly at the expense of living deeply?

Learn to say no to busyness and yes to what really matters.

"I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date. No time".....was the retort of the white rabbit to Alice when she was asking for his help in Lewis Carroll's beloved children's book Alice in Wonderland.

In the early 90's I was living in Toronto, working at the job of a lifetime, as the Project Director for the World's Fair Bid and involved closely with the Toronto Olympic Bid.

There I was living in the fast lane - traveling to Paris, and wheeling and dealing in the international business and diplomatic world. I was single, had a 6 figure income, drove a hot red sports car, and had many invitations to all the chic and happening events in Toronto. But the reality was a far cry from the perceived success.

My days were long, my schedule packed and my body and spirit were suffering. I never felt that I had the time to do what I wanted, much less create what really mattered in my life. I was simply overwhelmed with

busyness and stress. One day, I had lunch with a friend who asked me a simple question that changed my life forever.

She asked me if I was happy.

This question, made me stop and catch my breath for a brief moment. In that moment, I realized even my so-called 'free' time was scheduled at such a fast pace that it left me breathless, and then I knew I wanted to make some serious changes to my life. I was at an important crossroad in my life.

I know for me and so many others, that being so busy made me feel productive and involved in life, but in reality can present an insidious and potentially critical threat to both our long-term health and our quality of life.

Fortunately for me, at almost the same time, my employer announced a new executive sabbatical program - a fancy term for a one-year unpaid leave. I was the first one out!

In 1994, I was introduced to network marketing and began the challenging process of learning, for the first time in my life, what it means to become the CEO of my own life or master of my own destiny. It has been enlightening to understand the role that busyness played in my life. Now that I coach so many others, I realize many of us default to busyness for different reasons.

WHY WE DEFAULT TO BUSYNESS

According to Edward M. Hallowell, MD, author of the new book *Crazybusy: Overstretched, Overbooked and About to Snap!* (Ballantine, 2006), our perpetual state of being overwhelmed has become a norm of sorts. We're convinced that being busy is fun, he writes. *Being busy is a status symbol. We're busy because we feel we must be. We're busy because everyone else is busy.*" Sound familiar?

Then there is the biological drive to busyness. *When we're busy, we feel a rush from our bodies flooding with adrenalin.*

In fact, says Cheryl Richardson in *Take Time for Your Life: A 7 Step Program for Creating the Life You Want*. (Broadway 1999), adrenalin can

be addictive and it is the “drug of choice” for many men and women who seem to enjoy the rush it provides.

Keeping busy might give us short-term temporary payoffs such as feeling revved up, productive, needed, and worthwhile, but if we're not doing what's truly most meaningful in our lives many experts say, such harried activity can cost us dearly.

In an effort to fit more and more tasks into our already cramped lives, says Hallowell, it's easy to create a “can't see the forest for the trees” situation where we lose sight of our own big-picture priorities.

“Being too busy prevents people from setting their own temperature, controlling their own lives,” says Hallowell. “It does other harm as well, like increasing toxic stress, releases a cascade of cortisol (the stress hormone), making people sick, causing accidents, turning polite people rude, and reducing the general level of happiness in the population. But the greatest damage it does is that it keeps a person from what's most important to them in their lives.”

Through the years of coaching many people, I see that people will cling to busyness for many subconscious reasons and it varies from person to person.

In network marketing I see the most common reason is people are afraid of trying-and failing-at their biggest dreams, so they busy themselves with present day trifles.

The HIDDEN COST

The trouble is aside of sapping our lives of meaning and deeper satisfaction, keeping ourselves overly busy also gives rise to anxiety and stress, paving the way for an overtaxed adrenal system, depression, weight gain or infertility, among other imbalances. It also leaves us ill-equipped to make thoughtful decisions that could make our lives better.

DO LESS, BE MORE

So how do you jump off the busy track and start to live more fully?

As a life coach, I will ask someone, "What do you want? Think in terms of what your heart truly longs for."

It astonishes me how many people are unable to answer that basic question. So I will suggest they spend some time quietly doing a self-assessment. Ask themselves, "when were they the happiest?" "What were they doing?" "What areas of their life are causing the most stress?" "What is their purpose?" "What gives them the most meaning in their daily lives?" "If I only had a year to live, what would I change?"

Once this self-assessment is completed, it is much easier to start prioritizing more of your time and then focus in the areas of your most highly valued choices.

We all know the universal principle of what we give our attention, will expand. A lesson to remember!

I believe that nothing beats the joy of living your life according to your values and on purpose.

Yes it can be tough to learn to trust yourself and your instincts when life has so many competing demands.

Yes it can be challenging to put boundaries into your relationships and gently say NO more than yes!

Today I understand that by allowing yourself the time and space to think and feel and discern what really matters, you will give yourself the gift of a fabulously meaningful life.

***And that is definitely something
worth jumping off the busy track
for!***



Elizabeth Harrington, after initially working her way up through the corporate executive ranks with Xerox, on to a senior government post in Toronto, Canada, then spending the past decade exploring the rollercoaster ride as an entrepreneur with Unicity International, is uniquely prepared to understand the demands of each career role as well as the best practices required for extreme success.

Elizabeth was married in Maui, Hawaii 2 1/2 years ago to Tom Spindler. Together they are living a balanced happy life in a suburb of Minneapolis MN, where frequent visitors are bunnies, deer, and possum!

She and Tom escape to Maui as often as they can to enjoy their Pacific paradise!

Following her passion of being the best leader and mentor she can be, Elizabeth and Tom are currently becoming certified as Master Coaches and becoming part of the Purpose Project at the University of Minnesota (This project is going to be all about vital aging over the next 2 decades)