

Hurried, Worried, and Buried

Finding Balance in Your Busy World

I met Frank on a crowded business flight. As he lowered his breathless, oversized body into the narrow seat, wiping perspiration from his brow, he activated his smart phone with one hand while whisking his laptop out of its case with the other.

Not yielding a second to take in his surroundings, get comfortable, or relax, he hammered away on his laptop while making a rapid series of phone calls until the flight attendant forced a reprieve.

Frank was a successful marketing executive. But his health was in shambles: he was overweight, had high blood pressure, and suffered from insomnia. He had no close friends. His wife had left him. His life alternated from “bouncing-off-the-walls” busy to inert and apathetic. He lived alone, eating mounds of ice cream, snack foods, and soda pop as he decompressed in front of the television in an attempt to stave off soaring stress levels and nagging loneliness.

Frank’s story illustrates the saying: “We hurry; we worry; and we bury.” So many of us are hooked on busy, but are barren when it comes to life’s most important priorities. We get a lot done, but because there is no balance, it’s doing us in—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Overstimulation can lead to apathy and boredom. “When stimulation comes at us from every side, we reach a point where we cannot respond with much depth to anything. Bombarded with so much that is exciting and demands our attention, we tend to...shut down our attention to everything.”¹

The following three principles lay the foundation for achieving balance while striving for personal, family, and professional success. They are essential *and* achievable whether you are a busy traveling professional, harried housewife, or stressed student.

1. Take time for your physical health. Nix the mindset that you are too busy to take care of your health. The following are essential tools for managing multiple priorities and busy schedules; they are not optional for busy people.

Nutrition: Caffeine, sugar, and alcohol are stimulants that rob the nervous system of real energy. They lead to cravings, insomnia and more fatigue. High-fiber fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and legumes provide nutrients and antioxidants that build brain and immune health, energize the nervous system, and lower stress. Restaurants, airports, and grocery stores now provide more healthful, quick options such as whole grain breads and pastas, delicious mixed green salads and fruit plates, beans, fresh vegetables, trail mixes, and herbal teas. Keep a water bottle with you to remind you to drink water frequently; irritability and fatigue can mean you need water.

Exercise: Exercise reduces anxiety and fatigue and increases energy, both physical and mental. It improves mental focus, problem-solving, and mood. A ten-minute walk can boost your mood for an hour. When traveling, use your time waiting at the airport for walking. After that long meeting or weary day of travel you can unwind and renew your strength with a good walk or work out in the hotel exercise facility! At work, take the stairs. Use break time to take a spin around the block and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. Drink water and eat fresh fruit instead of chugging soda and downing candy bars.

Rest: Chronic lack of sleep swamps your system with stress hormones; impairs blood sugar; inhibits learning; increases the risk for disease and depression; and saps mental and physical energy. Quality deep sleep is linked to longer life, improved energy, mood, mental function, and performance. It also lowers the risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and many stress-related disorders. Caffeine, high fat and sugar foods, alcohol, late-night eating, holding grudges, and lack of exercise all contribute to poor sleep quality. Slowing your evening pace signals your body and brain that it is time to tone down, rest, and revitalize for a new day.

2. Take time for your mental and spiritual health. Zoning out in front of the TV or Internet for hours saps energy and increases fatigue and tension. Mentally refreshing diversions, though, are like mini-vacations for the brain. These include relaxing hobbies, recreation, social time, learning new tasks, and volunteering. In addition, spiritual health is at the center of a balanced lifestyle. It is important to take time to submit our priorities to God; He wants us to trust Him to guide us safely through life's busy challenges. Strengthen your spiritual life by connecting with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and reading inspirational book.

3. Pare down or you'll wear down. When we are crazy busy and about to snap, the inevitable result is inefficiency, irritability, ill-health, and imbalance. "There are many good things to do; but sometimes doing "good things" can crowd out what is "best." Focus on your most important priorities.

The Living Word

Jesus encouraged his work-worn disciples, “**Come apart...to a quiet spot, and rest a while.**” For there were many coming and going and they could not get time even to eat.²

At creation, God knew that we would need special time for rest, friendship, and time with Him, so He set aside a special day for that purpose.³ “**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD...In it you shall do no work...**” **Exodus 20: 8-10**

God cares about your schedule—He wants you to rest physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He invites you to enter into His rest.

We all have multiple roles and responsibilities, including work, spousal, parenting, personal, church, and community. Each role can be fulfilling and energizing when kept in balance. Will you take that step today that will build more balance, strength, confidence, and perseverance into your life tomorrow? A balanced life is shaped one day at a time—but not by chance—but by choice!

Visit us at LifestyleMatters.com or call 1-866-624-5433 for your resources to build a better brain, body, and lifestyle.

¹ Winter R. Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment. InterVarsity Press, Downer’s Grove, IL. 2002, p. 37.

² Mark 6:31.

³ Genesis 2:2-3.