

Trading Burnout for Balance

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Have you ever felt like you wanted to change something about your career? Do you get so busy with “busyness” that you never seem to do it?

Like you, my professional schedule is always demanding, even hectic for the most part. Then comes the weekend and catching up on the business of daily living...the chores, the errands, the kid’s ball games, and what not.

The sad thing is when we don’t take time to stop, get away from our normal surroundings, and break our routines, we gradually grind down. Often we do this without particular self-awareness. Others around us, however, have complete awareness of our depleted state! Our moods change, our tolerances change, and even our tone changes (just ask your spouse).

So we busy up and justify not facing our fears, because of the ‘demands’ we just have to “contend” with.

I’ve spent the last few days with six other people attending a ‘master mind’ retreat led by Randy Gage. Amazingly, as it never seems to fail, it was the perfect thing for me to do in my life and at just the right time. What I learned as a corporate psychologist and what I learned once again as a human being, I thought I would share with you.

This is a very unique group of people who seek personal and professional development. Most of them are authors and accomplished (even acclaimed) experts in their field who speak professionally. It’s an

interesting group, none of whom I knew prior to coming and each of us with a different professional background.

I attended this retreat for one major purpose. I wanted to get the feedback from this group of professional speakers about whether or not they thought I could do it! Actually, I'm just now clear about that being my single issue. Oh, I came with materials and ideas. But, if I'm honest, I wanted to get confirmation or disconfirmation from a group of accomplished speaking experts about whether or not I **"had it."**

You see, for the past 26 years I've been a busy Clinical and Corporate Psychologist. Within the past two years I've written a really terrific book, which I'm now in the process of publishing, and I've decided to do whole a lot more professional speaking.

Here's the problem...I'm out of my comfort level. I'm going to do something that's not a part of my routine and basically, I'm scared.

Once again I'm reminded about what I've always known; we've got to do the personal maintenance to get positioned for personal and corporate prosperity! For me, the maintenance was to risk getting feedback about something that is really important to me, but also something that I'm uneasy with.

There was also a fellow at this retreat who was really neat. John opened my eyes once again to something that I know, but something that once again I had lost sight of. In some way, each of us struggles with fear!

Truth is, while we tell ourselves it's the fear of failure, in reality, it's the fear of success – which always involves change. Over and over again I listened to bright successful people talk about how they had unknowingly erected roadblocks to their own continued prosperity!

Here's what typically happens. We work hard. We try to do good to get ahead. We push ourselves and also our loved ones to get ahead. Sadly, what this usually means is we neglect ourselves. And, with continued self-neglect and personal depletion, comes diminished performance. We lose our edge. We kind of numb out to the routine. We just don't seem to be creative. We once again are the human doing and not the human being.

I clearly believe that some of why we do this to ourselves is because we are afraid to slow down, get in touch with what is really important to us (family and work), and actually believe that we can have it all. I'm convinced that most of us have "lack programming" and that this unconscious program operates to help us NOT face our HEALTHY fears!

As I sit here on the beach thinking about this retreat, I am once again reminded of how absolutely essential it is to rejuvenate, to build personal reserves—emotional, physical, spiritual, and financial.

But, I'm also certain of how crucial it is to risk getting feedback about our ideas, notions, and passions. But, this feedback has to come from people you can respect and trust.

As the sun starts to set, I realize that I miss my wife of 33 years and my dog Lucky. I look forward to seeing them and my adult kids. I'm once again committed to keeping my life balanced. You know what else? I know every one of my clients will benefit from my rejuvenated state. When I take care of me, everyone wins.

But, I'm clear on one thing...I have to invest in me and continue to face my healthy fears to keep that balance.

You're probably saying, "he's crazy, I don't have the time", or maybe, "I've got too much to do." Well, I don't believe you (remember, I tell myself that same stuff sometimes). I encourage you to break your routine.

If you can't get away now, go to work an hour early and then LEAVE an hour early. Or meet your partner for lunch and actually talk about how each of you are doing, not what each of you are doing. Or, and this radical, instead of running yourself ragged this weekend...just STOP! Go take a massage and be with yourself. Or, tell your mate to go take a massage and YOU really BE with the kids.

But most of all, let yourself connect with other bright creative people who will be really honest with you. I don't mean casual chit-chat here. See what you learn about yourself by hanging with other professionals from difference careers.

You see, first we have to have the courage to admit what it is that we really, really want to do. Then, we have to risk sharing it. I shared it with my wife, and actually it was she who told me that all I needed was confirmation from people I respected in the arena I wanted to grow into.

Try it. Life can't be done alone.

For more than 25 years, Dr. George Dempsey has been helping executives build strong teams, lead their people, and build a positive culture in their organization. His experiences as a successful entrepreneur, clinical, and corporate psychologist provide unique insights into the dynamics of all relationships, career and personal. He can be reached at (281) 332-3558 or www.drdepsey.com.