

CAREER HEALTH

Developing Your Personal Best

By Anne Walsh

The idea of your PB is the idea of meeting and exceeding your own best performance and standards. Athletes tend to judge their own performances by how close to their PB it is. And, it can be a huge source of disappointment to fall below this in a major championship. Your PB can be used as a tool to navigate your own performances and expectations. What is your PB? It's an acknowledgment that in any given situation, we gave our best possible response based on the knowledge and capabilities we had in that moment. In our normal day-to-day life, some of the criteria we can use for assessing our own PB is to ask ourselves some of the following questions: Am I thinking clearly here? What can I learn from the feelings I have in this situation? Are these feelings an accurate representation of reality? What is the best short-term outcome? What is the best long-term outcome? How can I solve this problem in the short-term? What steps can I take to ensure it doesn't happen again? What can I do/say that will honor my values and the other person's values? Have I done my best? There's a peace and honor that comes with doing your PB in any given situation, which means that even if you know you could have achieved a better outcome overall, you know that in this given moment you were at your best; and, it identifies a boundary that you need to expand.

Here are some tips/techniques on achieving your PB:

1. Separate facts from feelings. If you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed and under pressure, you will not be performing at your PB, irrespective of the situation. I have seen people get stressed out by housework they have to do in their own time. Use a friend/buddy/coach to help you distinguish between your feelings and the facts of a situation.
2. Ask yourself, "What is your PB in any given situation?" Sometimes the best we can do in a situation is to do nothing, say nothing.
3. Recognize limitations and growth. In any difficult situation, there are both limitations and opportunities for growth. If we have difficulty in a job, it may not be possible to leave it immediately, but it may be possible to learn a new skill or a better way of dealing with a situation. Make

a realistic assessment of both and then act accordingly.

4. Acknowledge when you exceed your PB. Maybe you got a job that would have been inconceivable to you three years ago. Maybe you have saved enough money for your holiday instead of putting it on your credit card. Acknowledge and honor those PBs along the road.

5. Use your own standards, not someone else's. Make them realistic. A huge amount of problems in today's world are caused by people relinquishing their own judgments on what is important to some external ever-moving target. People say their children are important but end up leaving them for long hours at a stretch while they go to work to earn the money they need to keep up with the Joneses. They then wonder why they feel unhappy and dissatisfied. Ask yourself what you really want and when you have decided on that - be willing to go through the initial discomfort to achieve that.

6. Focus on the Now. Eckhardt Tolle describes how there is no stress or pressure if we stay focused on the now - on the task in front of us. And, if you observe your own behavior, you will see that you do your best work when focusing on the task/person in front of you instead of getting lost in the ramifications of what-if. Of course, these have to be factored in, but you will find that by focusing on the now, these will be taken care of in due course. Great athletes describe how they run their own race, not someone else's.

7. Recognize when your buttons are being pressed. We all have them: situations, people, events that bring out the very worst in us. My own personal set of buttons is traffic. I hate being stuck in traffic, and I know it brings out the worse in me. So often I have to try and calm myself down by telling myself that there is no conspiracy trying to stop me from getting home!

8. Your PB is constantly changing. Accept that the terms of your PB will change according to your circumstances. If you have a young family, it's unrealistic to expect that you will be able to pursue the same level of social and work activities without your family life suffering. So, choices have to be made.

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7 Bedtime Habits That Are Ruining Your Sleep

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Counting Sheep

When you just can't fall asleep, it's useless to stay in bed. If you've been trying to fall asleep for more than 30 minutes, the National Sleep Foundation suggests doing something mundane, like balancing a checkbook, reading or watching TV. An activity that demands marginal brainpower will lull your mind. Before you know it, you'll be crawling back into bed genuinely tired.

Exercising Late at Night

Daytime workouts will keep you invigorated for hours. That's why you don't want to exercise within three hours of hitting the sack. Intense physical activity raises your body temperature and pumps your energy level—both interrupt a calm transition into sleep.

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Tom Boleantu, CEO
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Together we will create a future you can count on.

When your values are clear, your decisions are easy. — Roy Disney

A global perspective through Canadian/Intl. ONE-STOP service.

My clients have enjoyed work and travel overseas as I have.

A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and deadline. — McKay

Ongoing check-ups overseas and on return to make sure you stay on course to not lose your money and to reduce taxes.

Decide to wear the lifestyle you desire, overseas culturally or into retirement. I do assist beyond investments.

We have met the enemy... and he is us! — Pogo



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"My will shall shape my future. Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man's doing but my own. I am the force; I can clear any obstacle before me, or I can be lost in a maze. My choice, my responsibility, win or lose, only I hold the key to my destiny."

-Elaine Maxwell

VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ Newsletter

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money.

These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.

We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

7 Bedtime Habits That Are Ruining Your Sleep

By Danielle Schloffel

If you're having trouble falling asleep, you're in good company. An estimated 65% of the population said they encounter sleep problems a few nights each week, according to a recent study by the National Sleep Foundation. Sleeping too little is linked with an increased risk for obesity and depression. But before you reach for a sleep aid from the nearest pharmacy, it's worth reexamining your nighttime routine. Some of your favorite evening rituals could be responsible for that tossing and turning.

Going from Night Owl to Early Bird

Who says bedtime is just for kids? Take extra care to maintain your sleep schedule, especially on the weekends. The body responds to routine. If your bedtime is sporadic— 11 p.m. some nights, 1 a.m. others— your mind won't be properly prepared to snooze on the weekdays.

Bringing Books to Bed

Reading before bed is a habit for many. Problem is, your body has likely adapted to that routine—it won't go to sleep until you've logged a couple chapters. Retreat to a comfy couch or window nook instead for your literary fix. The bed should

be off limits for reading.

Facebooking into the Wee Hours

The brightness of your computer screen stimulates the brain. Plus, it's difficult for your mind to stop fretting about your digital to-do list, even once you've logged off. Avoid late-night surfing and shut down your computer. Give yourself time to wind down without any electronics.

Skimping on a Good Bed

A good mattress will cost you anywhere from \$500 to over \$3,000. Consider it money well spent. A decent mattress—do your homework!—will give you a more restful sleep. The same is true for quality bedding and pillows. Opt for a soft pillow if you're a back or stomach sleeper. Buy a firmer pillow if you sleep on your side.

Setting a Bright Alarm Clock

The looming glare of your alarm clock can be distracting when trying to sleep. The goal is to have as dark a room as possible. Block the bright numbers with a book or consider buying a small travel clock. Your cell phone alarm may also do the trick.

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Are You Really Available?

By Relationship Institute

One of the questions which often comes up in our relationship work involves how available people are for a healthy relationship. As someone at a recent workshop cried out, "No one today has time for a relationship!" Singles often have a difficult time plugging into a new dating partner's busy lifestyle, and may see their dates as being essentially unavailable for creating a deep, intimate relationship. Couples in a committed relationship may complain that their partner is consumed and distracted by everything but their relationship: they may be around physically, but never seem to want to connect in any meaningful way. Indeed, in our crazy, driven, time-starved world, it often seems as if our adult relationships take the lowest priority.

There are various levels of availability for intimate connection. While physical availability is the most obvious one, being physically present is no guarantee of intimacy, as many married people will tell you. Being in the same house or room or even bed with someone else can still feel very lonely if the two people are not in sync and do not connect. Nonetheless, consistent physical availability is a necessary prerequisite for deeper levels of intimacy to occur.

After physical presence, the next level of availability is sporadic emotional availability. On this level, both partners are capable of being emotionally present with their own feelings, as well as with the feelings of their partner. The capacity to communicate to your partner what you are feeling is also present at this level. While the capacity for being emotionally available is present, the willingness to choose to do so on a consistent basis is limited. At this level, each person engages in some forms of withholding some parts of themselves which results in inconsistent availability. This withholding can manifest in any number of ways, such as inconsistent time schedules; shutting down or withdrawing emotionally; avoiding difficult topics; or numbing feelings through

food, drugs or work.

The deepest level of availability is what we call conscious emotional availability, where the capacity to be fully present and mindful of your own emotional process, as well as your partner's, is present most of the time. In this level, the capacity for being emotionally available is present, and there is a strong willingness to use that capacity. Authentic feelings are acknowledged and communicated on a consistent basis, whether they are positive or negative. Joy and bliss can comfortably co-exist with sadness and despair, for there is a commitment to sharing the truth of one's

"Let yourself be open and life will be easier. A spoon of salt in a glass of water makes the water undrinkable. A spoon of salt in a lake is almost unnoticed."

-Buddha

experiences with one's partner.

Why are so many of us unavailable for this deepest level of human connection? Isn't the need for bonding a fundamental human desire? Why do we create these complex, over-extended busy lives, which Shakespeare aptly described as being "...full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," while our heart's deepest desires go unmet? This answer is clear: we are unavailable when we are afraid. We want true love but are terrified of how it may hurt us, how it may recreate some painful experience, how we may be abandoned or smothered or lose our familiar identity. So we make sure that there is no room in our lives for genuine love to blossom. We stay in control, and keep the unpredictability and vulnerability of genuine intimacy at a safe distance.

Many people think they are available when they really are not. We have seen this demonstrated countless times in intensive work with singles and couples. When presented with all the tools, knowledge, support and guidance

possible to create more intimacy in their lives, the fears take over and they sabotage, distance, avoid or deny.

How available are you? This is really the only question about availability you need to ask! If you are attracting unavailable partners, there is something unavailable in you. How available are you to yourself on a deep level? Our relationship with others is but a reflection of our relationship with our inner self. Reflect on what you may be running away from within yourself with your endless external activities.

How can you make yourself more available to present or future partners? Be gentle and compassionate with yourself and begin by becoming fully available to all aspects of who you are. Discover what your fears and barriers to intimacy are, and take steps to remove them. If you find yourself running away or afraid of certain aspects of intimacy, get some help from someone who has been down that path themselves. Strip away the barriers to availability and notice what comes up for you, mindfully, consciously, and lovingly. For when you are fully available for conscious emotional connection with yourself, you will attract the same energy into your life from others. Creating and maintaining a healthy relationship is quite similar to creating and maintaining a beautiful garden. If the gardener is unavailable to tend the garden, the consequences are quickly revealed. Similarly, relationships need time and open communication to weed the inevitable hurts and resentments that occur. Consistent time to bond on a physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual level is necessary to water the roots of your love. Like a plant, your love is a living, breathing, organic process that will get stagnant or eventually wither away and even die if both of you are not consistently available to keep it healthy.

Authentic, genuine love is safe. Not loving is far riskier to human life and health than opening yourself to love.

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INNER HEALTH

Busyness or Business...It's a Matter of Balance

By Barbara Wulf

You are commuting on freeways that are getting more congested and now; icy. Your cell phone continues to ring and interrupts your day and maybe, your night. You work through lunch as a time saver. You were gone for two days and have numerous emails waiting for you. You have a dinner meeting, but it means you will miss your daughter's basketball game. Can you relate?

These auxiliary stresses that we might encounter can add chaos to our daily routine and deplete our energy, our patience, our attitude, our disposition and our zest to be productive at work. The negative variables that we experience compete and upset the work/life balance we strive to have.

Balance, that sense that everything is going well in our life, gets lopsided or tipsy. As a kid, I loved to play a game called Tip-It. The object of the game was to keep a little plastic man balancing on top of a thin pole as plastics disks were added to disturb his equilibrium. It was nerve wracking and provided fun lessons in physics, a steady hand and risk. The game reminds me of our lives where our work/life balance tips back and forth, and sometimes topples - the result? Stress shows up as irritability, fatigue, sleeplessness, anxiety, depression, overeating... you name it, something gives.

How can we cope with the busyness or chaos that upsets the scale of work/life balance? Try this:

1. Notice - Begin your day with a log of what gets in the way as you prepare for work, the commute to work, complete your work day or return home. The log

does not have to be detailed, just jot down the distractions, interferences, upsets or mishaps that you encountered. Is the busyness a frequent, occasional or rare event for you? Do you experience more busyness in the morning, afternoon or evening?

2. Sort - Look at your list and categorize the busyness that causes imbalance. Using a scale of 1 to 3, see how much weight was added to your scale of work/life balance and note the frequency of the occurrence.

- I can handle this, no big deal.

"Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some."

-Robert Fulghum

- I can feel a sinking feeling, my body is tensing up and I am upset.

- It is hard to breathe; my palms are sweaty; I feel numb/dizzy; that feeling of helplessness or rage is sweeping over me.

3. Patterns - How did you score? Do you have more 1's, 2's or 3's? How often do the events occur in your day? What time of day do you experience the busyness? What do the patterns tell you?

4. Process - What can you do to eliminate or turn around an event or the busyness that does not serve you or your company? What are you willing to do about it? Play with some options.

5. Action Plan - What's next for you?

More busyness or more business? What can you adjust or eliminate to allow you to control your day and live with intention and choice?

Here are a few tips for you to consider beginning your day with the intention of striving for balance:

- Make a plan to physically and emotionally stay centered and focused to maintain balance for the day.
- Get grounded each morning. Maybe it's going to the gym, a run or just stretching.
- Have a cup of coffee or tea, play with the dog or glance at the newspaper just for fun.
- Try early morning meditation, reading or journaling.
- Listen to a CD for relaxation or a book on your way to work. Many enjoy their favorite radio station for a good laugh or to feel informed.

· Breathe...inhale, hold for the count of 10 and exhale through your mouth. Repeat 3 times. Inhale calming, fresh air and focus on the intention to succeed. Release the stress with the deep exhale and expel the nervousness and clutter that traps the mind, body and soul.

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