

## “Balance vs. Stress Burnout”

I had a lousy day today. I worked late last night to meet a deadline and forgot to set the alarm for this morning. I woke up late and consequently the whole family was late. I shouted at the kids because they weren't getting ready for school fast enough! Missed breakfast. Got to work to find that what was a minor problem yesterday had become a major crisis. Then the roads department dug up our electricity supply while sorting out a residential driveway. And then....

Sound familiar? Irrespective of the specifics of the situation, we all, from toddlers to retirees, experience stress daily. Unfortunately, for most of us, the pace of living in this world is picking up, not slowing down, and we have very little choice but to adapt – or burnout. But we need to do this effectively and on a sustainable level, or burnout will be the end result.

We suggest that there are three areas that you can focus on which will go a long way to relieving unnecessary stress in your life and make the world look a better place.

### 1) Time Management

If you are the average stressed individual, then when you look at this figure 1 you will realise that you probably spend most of your life in either Quadrant I or III. The likely result is burnout if you spend most of your time in Quadrant I and frustration and a sense of meaningless for Quadrant III.

The idea is to get to spend more time in Quadrant II. This doesn't mean that you will totally eliminate Quadrant I, but you will certainly cut down on the crises! So how does one get to Quadrant II?

### 2) The “P/PC” balance

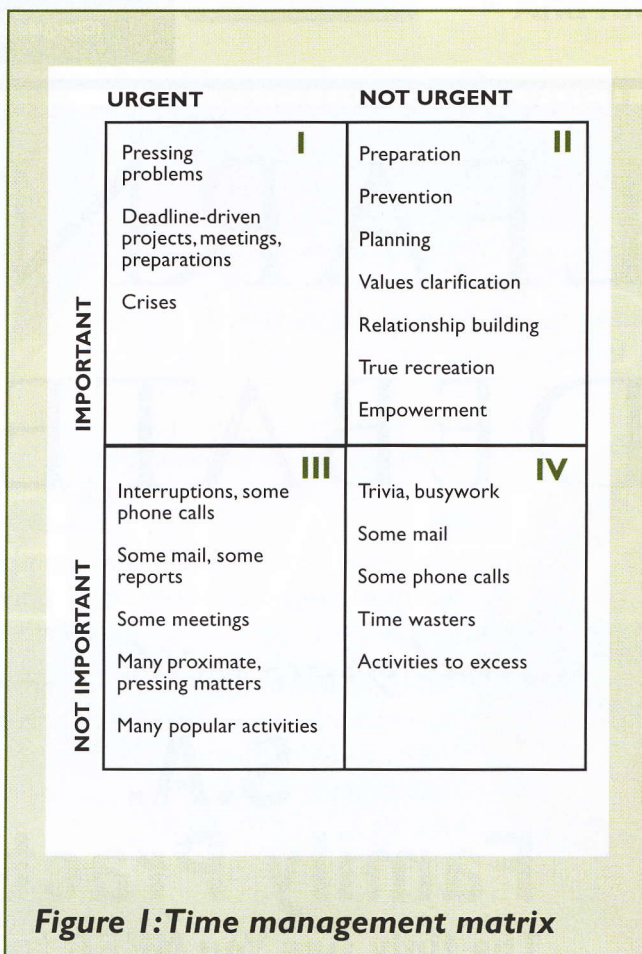
This refers to that critical balance between the “production” of the desired results and “production capability” – the ability or asset that allows the production to occur. Most people tend to see effectiveness from the production viewpoint i.e. the more one produces

### 3) The emotional bank account.

Perhaps the greatest source of stress is relationships. Whether it is at home or in the work place, relationships usually suffer because one is too busy to pay them any attention. In reality, all relationships keep an “emotional bank account” and your actions in that relationship either makes deposits to, or withdrawals from, that account. The state of the balance sheet determines whether you gain strength and encouragement from the relationship, or experience stress and demotivation.

Here are some pointers for making deposits in that emotional bank account:

- a) Try to really understand the person. Without that knowledge, you simply will not know what, for that person, constitutes a deposit.
- b) The little things in relationships are important. Courtesy, respect and kindness are major deposits in any relationship.
- c) Keep commitments, show personal integrity and clarify expectations.
- d) When you make a withdrawal from the emotional bank account, apologize sincerely!



the more effective one is. But as we all know, this is not sustainable for any length of time. To be effective and sustain that effectiveness, one needs to pay attention to the production capability aspect – whether it is financial, physical or emotional in nature. By working hard on the P/PC balance, one automatically moves towards Quadrant II – more planning and prevention, relationship-building etc. That brings us to the third point.

For many of us the battle seems to rage simply around keeping up, keeping pace with increasing demands and constant change. We seem to be going faster and faster on the treadmill. The problem is that it is very improbable that we can be going faster, indefinitely. Perhaps then, the challenge is not to be faster but to be clearer. Clearer about what really matters most in our lives and to focus our time and energy around that clarity.

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