

# COACH *Notes*



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Newsletter

## Finding the Balance of Competing Commitments

These days, the ultimate question may not be “What is the meaning of life?”, but simply, “Where do I find the time?”

Between work and family, friends, exercise, sports, hobbies, community commitments, most of us have seriously overbooked ourselves. We strive so hard to “have it all” – fantastic work and services we’re passionate about, and home lives we work hard to nurture.

Since we are in uncertain times, we hesitate to say “no” to work projects, and our social and networking activities can help give us a semblance of security. We don’t want to let go of anything, just in case...

But with so many competing commitments, so many passions we must feed, we often find ourselves just plain pooped.

The stress can lead to health problems, poor sleep and fatigue, which means we get even less done or – worse – take less pleasure in what we do accomplish. Ultimately, frustration mounts, relationships suffer, and we wonder what went wrong.

To break out of the out-of-balance cycle and achieve better balance between our competing commitments, consider some of the following techniques, from the spiritual to the eminently practical.

## Know Your Priorities

The universal advice for creating life balance is to get in touch with your priorities, which reflect your values.

- What are you about?
- What is really important to you?

Without a sense of these priorities as an anchor, it is impossibly difficult to battle the buffeting of daily life that fractures your time.

## UNLIMITED POTENTIAL



**HERDLINGER  
ASSOCIATES**

*“Turning potential into performance”*

### Dreamers Welcome

*At Herdinger Associates, I encourage people to dream. And the positive results have been astounding!*

*When individuals pursue their dreams, their lives percolate with purpose, passion, success, and fulfillment.*

*As a coach, I don’t try to make my clients’ dreams come true. That’s their privilege...and responsibility.*

*My role – and my joy – is to stand by their side to encourage, guide, challenge, and cheer them on.*

*Are your dreams big enough? Let me help you unleash your potential and accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.*

*...David Herdinger*

HERDLINGER ASSOCIATES has helped thousands of professionals at all levels in all types of organizations achieve extraordinary success and satisfaction.

We serve clients in North America, Europe, and Asia, ranging in size from individuals and very small businesses to corporations with annual sales in excess of \$40 billion.

Learn more about HerdingerAssociates at our website:

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## Take Care of Yourself

This is not an appeal to the “me generation,” but a simple reality. Your ability to devote time and energy to the rest of your life ultimately depends upon shoring up your inner resources.

A common trap is to feel selfish about taking time for yourself – to exercise, relax, enjoy a hobby, cook a special meal and, of course, to get enough sleep. To avoid that feeling, we place those activities lower in priority than taking care of the other obligations of our lives.

But when the low priority items don’t happen, we end up feeling somewhere on the spectrum between self-pity and martyrdom. Either way, we aren’t taking care of ourselves.

## 16 Basic Drives

One way of becoming more aware of the things that motivate us – and their competing forces – is to work with a coach. A personal coach can help acquaint you with self-assessment tools to increase your knowledge of what really drives you.

There are tools available to increase awareness of our individual personalities and drivers. A look at the Reiss Desires Profile of common desires will shed some light on our basic drives. According to Stephen Reiss, Ph.D., there are 16 basic desires. They are listed here:

Acceptance	Honor	Order	Social Contact
Curiosity	Idealism	Physical Activity	Status
Eating	Independence	Romance	Tranquility
Family	Leadership	Saving	Competitiveness

We are motivated to express our values. Knowing what motivates us is an important element to being able to commit and prioritize our energies.

How do you gain self-awareness so that appropriate goals and priorities can be set?

Try to identify 3-5 areas that motivate you strongly. Then identify any competing values that also must be satisfied. Working with your coach will make this process easier.

## Start With Your “To-Do” List

Productivity guru and author David Allen, in his book *Getting Things Done*, takes a fundamentally different view of the “priorities first” approach.

Instead of starting with priorities, he recommends you start with your “in box” – by which he means everything on your current list of things to do. *Everything*.

He says a typical person has 200-300 tasks floating around in their lives – in their head, on little slips of paper squirreled away in various places, in their organizer (or backed up in their email inbox), on post-it notes stuck to their computer screen, and so on.

This backlog of tasks uses up too much of your brain – which is poorly equipped to organize this kind of list – and creates unnecessary stress.

But Allen doesn’t suggest that you prioritize these to-dos at all: Fixing the dripping faucet goes on the list right next to planning for the kids’ college education.

The key to Allen’s system is getting all the to-dos out of your head and into some trusted system so you don’t have to worry about forgetting them.

With your head clear, your instincts take over and you will find that the right things are getting done.

Allen definitely recommends reviewing your life from various “altitudes” – from your vision for the coming year to your vision for your whole life – to get in touch with your priorities and your goals for balance in your life...but only after you have control of that in-box.

## The Power of Three

With your mind clear, you can step back and take stock of your life. Your creative juices will be flowing, and you’ll be able to find that delicious state of grace in which your commitments at work and at home enhance each other, not deplete each other.

When the “to-do” things are taken care of or in an appropriate place, you can turn your attention to what really matters most. What values are you neglecting? Which values need attending to the most?

What three things can you do this week, today, to add true meaning and value to your activities?