

President's Column

Choosing to Take Care of Yourself

by Scott Levine

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The year is almost over and what have we accomplished? For many of us, January comes and we have such high hopes for what we want to accomplish. We want to find more personal time. We want to find more time for our families. We want to clean up our desks. We want to get healthy, go to the gym, eat better, lose weight. Well, the year has just about passed us by again and it is time for us to all engage in the process of reflection on 2010 and goal setting for 2011.

Goal setting works much better if we do it quarterly. However, for many of you who are reading this column, it is hard to believe that the year is almost over much less that three quarters have passed us by! They say that time management is the key to getting more done. They say that having a clean work space is the key to getting more done.

But we all ask ourselves, if everyone has 24 hours in the day, how is it that some people seem to get more done? The truth is that we are all using our 24 hours each and every day. We are choosing to use our hours the way we want to use them. Sometimes we make good choices about our hours and sometimes we simply "waste" them away. Who is to say that we "wasted" our time? Who is to say that we used our time well? The answer is the same -- it is us! The fact is that we all get to decide each day, each week and each month if we succeeded in doing what we wanted with our time.

Often we feel that we are not spreading our hours on the things that matter most. The truth is that we are doing so unconsciously. We are doing what we think matters most at that moment. It may truly matter that we attend one of our kid's soccer games, but have we really accomplished anything if our minds are so absent worrying about missing an important deadline that we are not really at the soccer game? The truth is that life is about choices. Sometimes the choices are difficult and sometimes they are simple or seem simple. Sometimes others tell us that our choices are wrong but in the end, we get to judge ourselves as to the choices that we make.

Some of the stress in our lives is directly related to the pressures that we put upon ourselves due to the "choices" that we are making. Will someone else approve? Isn't it more important that we approve of our own decisions?

It is often said that doctors have very stressful lives. The truth is lawyers have stressful lives as well. We take our clients' concerns and legal troubles very seriously and want to make sure that we do not let them down. We want to make sure that we represent our clients in a manner that supports their goals so long as they are within the bounds of the law. We work on tight deadlines and often work with lawyers on the other side who are difficult to work with.

It is important to find some time for yourself each and every day of the week! Find a time that you can do something that you enjoy or that is good for you. Maybe running outside or on the beach is a time to be alone (and a time for exercise). Find some time to grow and learn. When we stop learning, we start dying. If you have an iPod, you can do three things at one time! For the multi-tasking person, you can go for a run/walk, spend time by yourself, and listen to a book or educational program! All in one hour a day.

Find some time to spend with your spouse, significant other or other people who are important in your life. Make sure it is done weekly if possible. If not, you will wake up at the end of the year and ask, "What did we do this year together?" Go see a movie. Go to the park. Go to the beach and take a walk on the boardwalk. Do these things with your kids too. Spend time with everyone in your life -- not just your desk!

Remember to take care of yourself. Doing something for yourself – something that enriches your life – is a form of taking care of yourself. Spending time with your family and others who are important in your life is part of taking care of yourself. Taking care of your health is a very important of taking care of yourself. You will serve your clients better if you do these things because your head will be clear and you will be able to represent them with focus, energy and vigor.