

6 Steps to Staying Sane This Time of Year

By Janet M. Neal

Work/Life Balance can be a challenge at any time of the year, but add in end of the year business needs and a need to step up the family obligations and you're met with a near impossible situation. Outside of cloning yourself, what can you do? Here are some tips to keep you focused, doing what you want to do and not sidetracked by the siren song of, well, everything else.

1) Know Your #1

In the movie *City Slickers*, Billy Crystal's character, Mitch, is feeling lost with his life and is advised by Curly (Jack Palance) to figure out his "#1" and put his attention there. It is truly sage advice. What is most important to you in your life? Figure out what that is, make that your priority, and let the other things fall in line.

2) Pick 3

You probably have a "to do" list a mile long. The reality is, you will NEVER get to all of them in a day. Pick your top 3 items and focus on them exclusively. If you have time for more, great! If not, at least you are moving in the right direction!

3) Build Fences

I'm all for community and helping others, but there is a reason for the idiom "Good fences make good neighbors". It's all about boundaries. Unless you can be clear about what is yours and what is not, you'll be taking care of things that you don't need to nor should be fixing! Learn the power of the word "no"!

4) Take 5

Don't forget to take time for yourself. Even a 5 minute stretching walk during a stressful day can stop the flow of the stress hormones. Your body needs this in order to keep working optimally!

5) Breathe

Enough said. Deep belly breaths can restore you to sanity and lower your blood pressure as well. Take a few throughout the day.

6) Go for the green and count your sheep

If your diet this time of year consists of coffee and cookies, you may not be alone, but you are far from in the shape to handle any prolonged stress. As your mother would say, eat your vegetables and go to sleep! It is amazing what you can accomplish on 8 hours of rest!

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