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GUARD YOUR ENTHUSIASM

If you lose it, everything else will go down with it.

Today, so many are involved in work, ministry, family or general people care that they are bleeding enthusiasm and pulling out, citing burnout, the need for a 'sabbatical' or just to have a break from exposure to people is imperative. More sleep or a good holiday will cure tiredness, but not the weariness that is of the soul. Soul wounds will continue to 'haemorrhage' emotional energy until the wound is identified and healed. "A wounded spirit, who can bear?" although a quote from the Bible, it is a very relevant question in this stressful day and age.

1. **Remember to recreate on a weekly basis.** To recharge – and re-centre, and keep fit. For some this means actually learning how to 'lighten-up' on obligation and duty to just have fun, or go for a long walk. Children are often an invitation to us to rediscover fun, and our need for it on a daily basis. (You may need to reinvent recreation for your children, if your parents lost it through being workaholics, church or drug addicts etc.) If you ignore your need for weekly rest, you won't get away with it for too long. Beware the ability to get too focused. Beware.....
2. **Do reality-checks on your expectations** – they must serve you, not drive you or cause you to fail yourself. Sometimes, 'good enough' is indeed good enough. Why does 'beating up' on yourself appeal? Why does failure feel as if it will be fatal? Perfection is no longer the way to avoid feeling worthless, nor is idealism the way to maintain your souls innocence. Better to discover the healing that can be yours, with the right insights and truth, than continue to punish yourself or others, for not living up to your expectations. Accept it, people change slowly, and if they don't change at all, you need to get more training – you obviously don't have what's needed, in terms of contracting, psychological insight, motivational skills etc.....
3. **Don't lose sight of your long-term goal or the big picture.** Delegate the mundane if possible, but remember it is but a means to an end, and don't lose sight of the end. What is motivating you? Are you angry with yourself for stuffing up? Does your mind beat up on you or help you and encourage you? And rather than strive to do what you're neither good at nor interested in, focus instead on building your own giftedness, and learn how to trust others with the rest (Dirty Delegation).
4. **Tidy the work-bench.** Don't keep working in a shambles, it's too exhausting. 'Before you get anything else, get organised', with all bills, tools, documents and files labelled; all appointments and deadlines up on a wall calendar, and all messages written in a common telephone diary. This relieves your mind of much stress, and helps prevent family/staff confusion, anger and frustration.....

5. **Grab the reins of your life by getting the steps to your goals crystal clear.** The longer you postpone, the more powerless and depressed you'll become. Do whatever you have to do to resolve those nagging 'ought to's'. If there are disappointments and failures still haunting, face up to them (then they are no longer true failures), and then let them go, or go on haemorrhaging energy.

6. **Make friends with your unbearable feeling. (UBF)** When you fear no feeling, you'll fear neither man nor failure. E.g. disappointing others, or 'letting them down'. Reclaim your sovereignty and get your power back rather than keep trying to please your 'Mr Big or Mrs Intimidation, or anyone else. Stop taking others responses to you so personally – it's only fostering a proud heart. If the cap fits, do something about it, if it doesn't fit, then hand it back. Face up to your fears and resolve them. (What's the worst than can happen?) Failure isn't fatal; neither is disappointing others expectation, or being rejected. Get clear about when it is your responsibility and when it's not – the limits to your responsibilities....i.e. learning to know when to say "sorry, that's neither my priority nor my problem"

7. **Get beyond obligatory thinking.** When your body is going in one direction, and your heart in another, you are in trouble. Declare war on all the 'shoulds' and ought to's' that undermine your single-mindedness and cause enthusiasm to leak. Don't sell your soul to compromise or for the superannuation. Counter proposition and negotiate in order to *serve on your own terms*. Declare war on living in continued double mindedness. Either choose to do it wholeheartedly, or stop doing it altogether, until you have had a good think about it and negotiated properly. Count your obligations is no way to maintain enthusiasm. 'Pretend agreements' whereby two attempt to 'walk together' before they have properly balanced expectations for each other.....

8. **Clear up your bad conscience.** Whatever is nagging on you, humble yourself and go clear it up, whether you can justify it or not. The only thing it will really cost you is your pride, so swallow it, and discover it's non-fattening. If you are at war with your boss or spouse, remember that restitution must come before restoration, but it's not up to you to make everybody happy.

9. **Finally, be much, much gentler with yourself.** Remember that your yoke should be easy and light. How light is yours?

Commitment can't exceed enthusiasm

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