



Living Life Complete

In past issues, we have referred to the value of eliminating “loose ends” to enhance our ability to author life powerfully. We have even offered a “no loose ends project” to assist you in clearing out the unfinished, undone and incomplete “things” that take up space and energy. (See our web site for a copy of this completion project.) Most of us are all too aware that the *littlest* things — the unanswered call, the unwritten letter, the stack of papers piled in your office — can grab attention, prey on our mind, get in the way of our productivity and effectiveness. If we pause to list those little things and make a plan for handling them, we create space and release energy, allowing us to have everything else happen faster and more effortlessly. We invite you to complete a “no loose ends” project periodically — and recommend that you consider using this project annually.

But what happens AFTER the big push to handle all the loose

ends? Is there a way to prevent them from piling up again? This is a hugely valuable inquiry, in part because we are often unaware of how often each day we could save ourselves time and energy by handling incompletions immediately.

Have you ever promised someone you would do something and then hung up the phone with the dread realization that the

promise you made will not work for you at all — or will work only at great cost to you? Have you ever worked against a deadline so challenging that much of your energy was expended worrying about whether you would make it on time? Are there areas of your office or home that you avoid looking at or thinking about? Have you ever had an unsatisfactory personal interaction that left you fretting, moping or fuming for hours?

“Being complete” does not mean that there is nothing left

to do, nor is it an invitation to complacency. It does not mean that everything is exactly the way we would have it be. Being complete means being at peace with the facts.

Develop practices that support you in being complete each day.

In this issue, we examine some key principles and practices for “living life complete” — making it a habit, day by day, to live in harmony, with a sense of peace and purposefulness, with no loose ends.

Principle: Things get harder, not easier, to do the longer they hang around.

Practice: Handle things as they arise.

A significant amount of space and freedom is available if we handle issues the moment they arise or, alternatively, if we immediately invent a plan to

ensure that they will be handled at a later date. You might, for example:

- Deal with the mail the day it arrives, or schedule yourself to handle specific responses at a later date, then put the corresponding paperwork away until the day when you will deal with it.
- Design a policy of unpacking your suitcase the same day you return from a trip (or unpacking boxes or papers the same day you bring them into the office or home).
- Reschedule commitments the moment you realize that you will not be able to keep them.

The point is to develop practices that support you in being complete with each day.

Principle: The more aware we are of incompletions, the greater our access to eliminating them regularly and with ease.

Practice: Exercise “preventive maintenance!”

Pay attention to what is “incomplete.” “Listen” for what niggles, or makes you wince with avoidance. As you notice these, do the following:

- Write these issues down. Make a list of “good ideas I’ll tackle some day” or “undelivered communications.”

Choose what you will address and schedule it. Be at peace with what you choose not to address.

- Remove from your environment what you are not using and don’t need. And move to more remote locations what you DO need and are not using regularly.
- Think through what you promise before you promise it, and confirm in your own mind that it works for you. Choose a deadline farther out than “the first possible moment I could complete this if nothing at all went wrong.” (Let people be pleasantly surprised if you deliver early!) If you make an inappropriate promise, renegotiate right away.

- With every interaction (telephone call, meeting, letter), identify whether there is a next step. If so, write it down and schedule it. (Example: Call Fred next Tuesday, if I haven’t heard from him.)

- Write down every action you know you will take some other day, and schedule it (even if you know you’ll move the date!) Be sure that your scheduled actions always have FUTURE dates beside them.

Break large tasks into bite-sized, do-able pieces and schedule yourself to do only one or two of them at once. Every time you take territory on a large action or project, you

give yourself the energy and inspiration to move forward!

- Make it a practice to keep in touch effortlessly. Send one “connection” e-mail a day. Or carry post cards to write in odd moments while waiting for a meeting to start.

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Principle: Live life from accomplishment.

Practice: Establish a policy of “no suffering” and focus on seeking, devising and implementing solutions to issues as they arise.

- Monitor your self-talk and consciously deliver messages (to yourself and others) that mirror the reality you intend to create.

- Measure your accomplishment rather than what you have NOT done. Celebrate it and notice how much territory you have taken. Allow yourself to dwell in a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction.

- Liberally practice forgiving yourself for what is undone. If it is still wanted and needed, reschedule it.

- When problems recur, look for common threads and invent

new practices to address them as they arise.

Conclusion

Identifying what it takes to be complete is a highly personal endeavor. It may be a process, a practice or a simple declaration of intention to BE complete. Whatever is involved for you, it is a worthwhile undertaking: Living life complete grants you renewed power, so that you bring velocity and focus to producing the results you are after — in EVERY area of life.

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