

5 Keys to Getting Your Life In Perspective

Do you ever feel like your life is out of control?

Do you get overwhelmed or in over your head?

Do you sometimes just "lose it" or ask, "What happened?"

Often, these feelings result from trying too hard, trying to control things that are beyond control or from not addressing issues that we really can take charge of! Oh, the keys lie in wisdom and serenity. Remember the serenity prayer?

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Imagine a remote control...wouldn't it be nice if we had one for life? Not just for the TV, but one in which we could simply push buttons and have things go our way? Years ago, in a movie called *Bedazzled*, Brendan Fraser played such a character who sold his soul to the devil in return for seven wishes for anything to go his way. It didn't work out so well for him. Neither would it for us!

The point is we all have our own "control" buttons. Now imagine your buttons. These would be buttons for which you DO have control. You don't have buttons for the other things. Now let's take a look at our control buttons...

I sat down one day in utter frustration and began to outline the things in life I COULD control, also the things in life that I COULD NOT control. This outline provided a clear perspective of how I could get a grip on my overwhelmed little self! My gift to you is this series on **How to Get Your Life In Perspective!** I found that by taking charge of these **5 KEY THINGS** in life, I was empowered, unencumbered, and able to embrace life with a fresh new perspective.
And I'm willing to share it with you!

First, let's take a brief (as in we won't dwell on it!) look at some of the things we CANNOT control:

- Other people
- The economy
- Family members
- Other people's business and businesses
- The weather and natural disasters...We can be prepared, but do not worry, obsess, or try to control!
- The government and leadership (We can serve, but not control!)
- What other people think
- What other people say about us
- Whether or not someone hires us (not everyone can get that job!)

Ok, now put that stuff on the shelf...

Let these things go and surrender them...

Cast your cares...and hold onto your hat...

We just explored the things we cannot (or should not try to) control. Now ask yourself the following question, "What CAN I control?" Keeping control of the things we DO have influence over is enough to remain busy! No wonder we can get overwhelmed at times, trying to extend our control. Perhaps it's that we try to control things beyond our reach. It helps to focus on what is within our reach to maintain a healthy perspective. Let us focus on solutions rather than dwelling on situations! For every complaint, create an idea to make it better, thus shifting focus to a more empowering mode. Are you seeing the light?

Now let's take a look at the "keys", one at a time...taking them through ideas, solutions, and hope. May these keys offer relief from feeling powerless, overwhelmed, desperate, lost, and/or *"What the heck happened to my goals and dreams?"* Keep in mind, there is a time and season for everything. A time for planning, a time for working, and time for a break! Another way to describe this is *"seed time and harvest."*

KEY #1 Getting Your TIME Into Perspective

Is this you?

"I don't have enough hours in the day..."

"Time flies but I don't!"

"Where did the time go?"

"I don't have time!"

Ah, but you DO have time...if you choose to MAKE time! We are all given 24 hours in a day. How we spend those hours is up to us and can make the difference between time well spent (or invested) vs. time lost. The law of sowing and reaping describes how we must consider that which we plant, tend to our seeds, and we will, in due time, reap what sow. Therefore, the first thing to consider would be WHAT we do with our time.

"Where did all of my time go?"

Ah, time is precious. We must make it count! Try making a list of the **SIX MOST IMPORTANT THINGS** you need to do each day. Make it a priority to get these six most important things done. Anything else is a bonus! Consider what it is you want to accomplish (within reason, of course) each day. Beware of time stealers such as social drama, preventable emergencies (such as auto maintenance), internet surfing, and lack of preparation. Also be cognizant of what might be **urgent** vs. most **important** to accomplish for the day. Important things bring us closer to goals. Urgent things take us away from the task at hand! Once

again, consider where you want or need to be or do by the end of the day and stay focused on your time and goals.

Take little projects or reading material along to maximize waiting time. Keep yourself accountable for time in your day...and you will begin to feel a sense of control and productivity over your time! It really helps to start each day by appreciating your time and any time during the past 24 hours that have been a blessing. **Cherish these times** 😊

There is also a time for WORK. When we work, we trade our time for dollars, yet another thing to consider when prioritizing our list of six things to do each day. Even if/when unemployed and seeking work, we can choose to spend time doing volunteer work which translates into work or learning experience on a resume. Spend adequate time effectively marketing yourself when on a job search, these days one must consider a job search as a full time job! Don't be afraid to ask for help or attend networking groups.

But what do you do when you have "MORE MONTH THAN MONEY?"

We left off on trading time for dollars. When there's more month than money, (or regardless!) here's my next suggestion...

Key #2 Getting a Healthy Perspective on FINANCES

Have you ever felt like it was hard to control your money? As if there was a hole in your wallet? I did! And when finances are out of control, we have STRESS! It's tough duty, but to relieve financial stress, it is imperative to consider and stick to a budget in regards to cash flow. While uncomfortable, we can gain control of our finances by holding ourselves accountable for balancing money in and money out. We do not have to let our finances control us, rather take control of our own finances...before some banker does it for us! Just as the case with time and our list, with the budget it helps to categorize items as urgent vs. important, taking care of the important things first. Often, if careless, unimportant things will capture our attention and dollars! Ah, once again, we must use utmost wisdom and discretion.

Now here's a rule that has made my life so much easier! It simplifies the finances...

The 80-10-10 Rule:

80% of incoming dollars go to you

10% set aside for savings

10% to your church, a ministry of some sort that encourages you, or a favorite charity...in other words...give back to society. It's really an investment.

When **you bless**, you will **be blessed!** I want to be blessed:)

It is wise to teach this to children as well!

When money is tight, ask yourself, *"Do I really NEED to buy that, or do I just WANT to?"* Invest in things that will IMPROVE your life, hold off on extra items that don't really make a difference. Want to know another way you can make a difference? You can contribute to the economy by patronizing small local businesses. Keep in mind, in regards to the economy and product choices, we VOTE with our dollars. You can contribute to good will and/or the environment by supporting businesses in which you agree with or believe in their principles, such as "green" recycling, buying products made in the USA, free trade, supporting businesses that contribute a percentage of purchases to local schools, charities, etc. That always makes me feel better about parting with my hard-earned income! I've come to embrace anything non-destructive that makes me feel good these days!

"But I don't have a job or any income right now!" If no job, consider starting something simple and market yourself! Get busy, even if you volunteer, it will become a reference and offer valuable work experience. You may even feel better about "spending" your TIME wisely! Consider your job search as a full time job, scheduling time for it every day to include networking, resume writing, and establishing your profile on Linked In and career websites. You might even consider learning a new skill and starting over. I did it!

For more helpful information and a financial recovery plan, check out this website: www.daveramsey.com

One thing we cannot afford to neglect is OUR HEALTH. It is imperative to invest time and money in your personal health...because health affects your body, your mind, and your future. I seldom scrimp when it comes to my food, for it's about providing quality fuel for my body to run efficiently and optimally!

Next, let's take a look at some simple, practical ways to take charge of our health. Believe it or not, the doctor told me my health was in jeopardy! I'll share with you how I took control and got it back...

Key #3 Getting Your Health Into Perspective!

I took control and got my health back! How did I do it? It started when I LISTENED to what my doctor said, "Your serum cortisol level is through the roof! Expect to burn out and self destruct if something doesn't change." Well that's an attention getter! So if I self-destruct, what's left? Where do you go from there?

You change something! The first thing I did was to examine my sources of stress and time. Operating my business helped people, I loved it, and it fed my family the most nutritious food in the city, yet my "Lone Ranger" approach was leading me to disintegrate and taking time from my family. So I brought in some help.

The next step involved making time to eat properly, exercise regularly, sleep adequately, finish writing my cookbook and devotional, then relocating to Southern California to spend more time with the family. But then came the unexpected... I couldn't find a job! Yikes, I didn't sign up for that epic source of stress and depression! I felt useless, unworthy, and began to lose hope. Have you ever felt that way?

Many events in life happen that we don't sign up for, however, the good news is that such episodes take us where we are today, into the future on a new path. Was it meant to be? Where would I go from here? While I couldn't find a job, I decided, like years ago with the farm stand, I could CREATE a job that centered on my passion for health. This time it would be about optimal BRAIN HEALTH!

Then I found this program the Daniel Plan www.danielplan.com and volunteered by starting an online group. It was everything I had been teaching for years, all in one place with weekly lessons and helpful resources! And it's FREE! It was so simple...eat food in its most natural form, organic, exercise regularly, sleep enough, lose bad habits, and balance yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually. I've been saying this for years...now I just hook people up here (you can start any time), volunteer, and save all that time! Treat your body like the custom high performance machine it is because you only get one! I knew what to do, but did not always take the time to do it... Is this you?

I had to make up my mind...and neurofeedback training helped me to focus my time and energy. Think about it. Everything starts in your brain. The key to health had to start in my mind! This training relieved an underlying anxiety that compelled me to work all the time, kept me up at night, and left my mind spinning out of control like a high speed blender! I learned to take control of my own thought life in order focus with clarity and make it through a day with peace of mind. I made it a priority and guess what? I feel better, look better, I'm stronger and more productive! I'll probably live longer and better! Latest report is the doctor told me I couldn't have a heart attack if I tried!

Time is precious. You never know how long you have on this earth. This time last year I got hit by a truck! I didn't sign up for that either! Don't take ANYTHING for granted. Appreciate every bone and muscle in your body. Appreciate your mind and your abilities...take care of yourself and you will be better able to take care of others...

Now we are getting to the next key...we can CARE for others, but not CONTROL them! *"If it is to be...it's up to me!"* I was driving myself crazy trying to influence others, including my family members. When does that go too far? When it crosses over the line into control...

We are obliged to do 100% of our part, while allowing others do their part.

I have so much energy that it's a full time job to control myself, let alone my children, friends, or husband! Simply gaining control of yourself is empowering. What an improvement over feeling helpless, don't you think? We just covered taking charge of our health. The next step is to get emotions and feelings in check...because as you may know, "**Attitude determines altitude!**"

Key #4 Getting Control Of Yourself!

How did I get control over my emotions and feelings? It wasn't just one thing I needed to learn... It's tough duty to get life in perspective! As we begin to gain control over time, finances, and health it becomes evident this requires a measure of **self-control!**

While on one hand we know what to do, on the other is the discipline to take action and establish new habits! Once again, we cannot or should not try to control other people, but we CAN become empowered by exercising control over our own selves, our feelings, and emotions. Have you ever felt overwhelmed, hopeless, desperate, or frustrated? That was me!

Here's how I got it together and keep it together on a daily basis... I got a grip on MYSELF! After reading this quote in my favorite book: *1 Thes. 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances.* Throughout the trouble, I thought, "Where is the joy in this? No way am I feeling thankful!" Uh oh. If attitude was to determine my altitude, I was going down! The answer? Look up! Each morning I sat down with a blank journal and forced myself to write any and every little thing that was positive and to be thankful for. It could be any seemingly insignificant thing that brightened my day or brought a smile. I MADE IT SIGNIFICANT. Over time, my focus began to change from negative to positive as I searched for everything good in my life for which to be grateful. Filling my journal and heart with gratefulness began to crowd out any longing, emptiness, loss, or painful feelings. I found control over my emotions and feelings by looking in a new direction! You see, thoughts and feelings lead to emotions. These factors determine the direction of our actions. When you want to get somewhere, you look for and follow directions, right? Look...Follow...Go!

After months of feeling so "stuck", suddenly I was moving FORWARD, amen! I gained control because I was finding and following new emotions and feelings, whew! What a relief! You can do it, too! What started as emotional control blossomed into DISCIPLINE with my attitude, habits, time and other areas of my life. Doing 100% of my part and leaving the rest to everyone else in covering THEIR part was positively LIBERATING! Get it? I found freedom.

I also took a look at self-control on the outside... as in how I presented myself outwardly in appearance and communication. This becomes real important on a job search! The manner in which we present ourselves personally,

in speech, writing, and even internet dialog affects our appearance to the public as well as our own self-esteem. Ah, progress!

Although making forward progress, the rollercoaster of good days and bad days still took me for a ride until I began to consider two things:

INPUT AND INFLUENCE...

Key#5: Getting Our Input and Influences Into Perspective!

Recall the old adage, "Garbage in, garbage out" or "GIGO." Likewise, program good things, and good will come. Whatever goes IN to us, physically, mentally, and spiritually, has an EFFECT on us one way or another. For years, as The Organic Produce Gal I looked at food and asked folks, "Do you want to BLESS or STRESS your body?" It's not just food, but everything that goes in through the eyes (watching), ears (listening), mouth and even the nose has an influence on us. All of our senses take in and absorb. What we take in will either bless (fortify and strengthen)...or stress, forcing us to compensate for something negative. Very little input is neutral, especially if it involves time and energy, which are valuable resources! So, do you want to be blessed or stressed?

What will you put in, take in, or allow yourself to absorb, albeit purposefully or even passively? What you put or allow in affects you! This is just a challenge to think about it. I did...and it really helped me to get life into perspective! Oh there will still be tough days...but that is when we need to go back and look at what is pouring in to our lives...AND what is coming out! Input and influence, hmmm...

Whether we see it, or like it, or not, what we do and say has an influence on others (even though it may not seem like it when it comes to parenting!). It all comes back to the control thing... We can control what comes in and we can control what we put out. We cannot control other people but we CAN do our own part to be a positive influence. That is empowering;) The late Jim Rohn said it so eloquently, "**You can be a FOUNTAIN or a DRAIN**"

I love this message from my favorite book, *Phil. 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.* This looks like a PROMISE! Think about good stuff, apply it, and peace will come. Sign me up!!!

Real quick, here are just a few things we can do to put it into practice, to be a positive INFLUENCE on society:

- **Share** your gifts and talents with others by volunteering, teaching, or coaching.
- **Choose** to share your mistakes and lessons learned. I heard a lot of this at AA meetings and it encouraged me tremendously!
- **Vote** and support your favorite political candidates.
- **Conserve** and **recycle** to protect/influence the environment.
- Here's one I say to my kids, "**Stay out of trouble!**" Like, don't get into it and don't go looking for it!

Just do 100% of your part, having the peace of mind knowing you did what you could! That, too, is empowering opposed to, "What if?" Yes, sometimes, maybe often, things don't work out, but rest assured, you CAN exercise control of your part and **that is really all any of us can or is expected to do.**
I bet you can think of things to add to this list, I'd love to hear from you!

Wrapping it all up, to get life in perspective, we can control the following:

1. Time
2. Finances
3. Health
4. Ourselves
5. Input/influence

Is it possible something got left off this list of **5 Keys To Getting Your Life In Perspective?**

Well keeping these 5 plates in the air is quite enough to juggle! Maintaining their balance is a full time effort, yet the rewards are great. Really, if you have anything to add, I'd love to hear from you. If you would like to keep in touch, tune in to my blog <http://edgeneurofitness.blogspot.com/>
Feel free to subscribe or check in any time for periodic updates and NeuroFitness News!

May you be blessed and encouraged on your endeavor to experience life in the fullest!

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