

ON PURPOSE

MORE OR LESS?

by John M. Busacker

10:40 P.M. For the first time all day, Carol was sitting down. Carol doesn't sit much. She spends most days "multi-tasking" as chauffeur, cook, volunteer, gardener, tennis player, small group leader and mom.

As I glanced over the remote control at her, she had a whimsical, serene smile. "What's up?" I asked. "Nothing much" was her response. "I just feel content."

Content.

Content?! Now there's a word never spoken in the hallowed halls of business. Imagine a sales person informing her manager at the annual goal-setting meeting that she is "content." When was the last time you used the word "content" in conversation?

The very concept has taken on the negative connotation of underachievement.

What Carol was describing was the concept of "enough" for that day. She had the right blend of work, play, meaningful conversation, spiritual growth and contribution for one day. It has been a good day in a good life.

What is the good life and how do I live it? How do I finance the good life? These are questions we regularly hear. Many people today are asking themselves tough questions about balancing their life and their finances. In our experience, the key to living the good life is determining "How much is enough?"

How much is enough for you? Enough time for relationships, enough work, enough leisure for renewal, enough money to finance your dreams and goals?

If we live life by the formula-when I have enough (retirement savings, vacation, time, vested stock options, etc.), then I will be able to do what I truly want to do, and I will be happy-there will never be enough. With this life formula, the answer to the question, "How much is enough?" will always be "Just a little bit more!"

Media, advertising and culture feed us with messages that are frustrating in their contrast: "more is better" and "less is better." How are we to choose?

Is More Better?

Phil, a friend of mine, has a number in mind that, once reached, will allow him to walk away from his work. He refers to the line as his "career reset button." He fully intends to move on to work for which he has greater passion as soon as he has hit his number.

The challenge is that we live in a "more is better" world. This line moves as we approach it. Phil's "reset button" has reset three times in the past two years as his stocks split and his net worth doubles and doubles again.

Purposeful work postponed holds the potential for inner kill-the slow death of passion. Holding out for just a little more can erode the good life.

The more is better philosophy fills the white space of advertising and the shelves of bookstores. The lure of more is better is perhaps the strongest of emotional gravitational pulls. It has also led to an unprecedented borrowing binge in the United States in the last five years. Household borrowing has risen 60% to \$6.5 trillion. We are financing the dream with a mountain range of debt.

At some level, most of us know that "more" is not just a promise, it is a promissory note that will demand our health, our family, our relationships or even our soul. More is not necessarily better, it is merely more. At some point, we must all declare "enough" in order to fully enjoy the good life.

Is Less Better?

Simplicity sells! The less is better message, though still muffled in the blare of economic success, is gaining popularity.

Fifteen years ago, a partner of our company, Richard Peterson, moved to a ranch near Durango, Colorado to become self-sufficient and grow most of his own food. However, in order to sustain a simpler life style, Richard and his wife Susie unwittingly collected a variety of possessions-85 acres of land, a barn, other out buildings, fences, corrals, a variety of animals, feeders, water tanks, wells, irrigation equipment, pickup truck, tractor, snow plow, hay wagon, hay mower, hay baler, hay rake, squeeze chute, post hole driller, cultivator, roto-tiller, lawn mowers, brush hog, weed eater, and even a caretaker's house! After several years, they awoke to the fact that they had become slaves to their possessions. They had to work at other pursuits to support their "simplicity." Less had once again expanded to more; the simple had grown complex.

Less is not better if it robs us of the joy of today. I spent 14 years in the financial services industry, sitting at the table with countless people discussing

their life dreams and financial goals. One of the saddest couples I met lived the less is better life. They had foregone all enjoyment-vacations, travel, new cars or clothes-in the interest of building up a nest egg for retirement at age 60. Unfortunately, life dealt the husband a crippling stroke six months shy of their goal. With their net worth firmly in hand, they bitterly sit out the rest of their lives unable to enjoy anything for which they had saved.

How to Balance More or Less?

So which is it-more or less? How much is enough for you? The key to determining how much is enough is to examine and understand our individual relationship with money. How we deal with money is the litmus test of our true character. Money, time and work can increase choices. They can purchase freedom, add variety and create new experiences. Or they can be used merely to make more money, buy power and acquire things we didn't really want and seldom use. They can expand or contract life.

Thoreau captures the point, "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately, or in the long run." We are faced constantly with the tradeoff of time and money, and the key comes down to our values. A value is a thing or condition that you consistently act on to get or to keep. Thus, the more consistently and energetically you commit your time or money to something, the more you apparently value it.

Closer alignment of values and decisions leads to a sense of "enough" and the contentment and freedom of living the good life.

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[Editor's Note: This article was reprinted with permission from American Express Financial Advisors website.]

Are You an Accomplished Fugitive?

By Michael Mayberry

Everywhere we turn these days, we're reminded that we are living during a remarkable and fascinating revolution. The Digital Age seems to have no bounds in its potential to impact our lives. We're wired for everything without the wires. Instant connection without the connection. The opportunities are endless. Sounds great! Sign me up! I've personally found many of technology's new advances to be of great benefit in both my personal and professional lives. In fact, I'll admit I'm spoiled by the ability to communicate, transact, purchase and gain knowledge with a stroke of my fingertips.

Yet within all this opportunity new challenges emerge. Seemingly unlimited connectivity and transactions conducted in a nanosecond usher in a new set of obstacles and considerations. In both the workplace and homeplace increased expectations and productivity seem to be ever-raising the bar of excellence and performance. The speed of living and working has accelerated to heights never before imagined.

I speak as a recovering casualty of this pace. At one point in my life, the speed and fatigue of just trying to keep up blurred my days. Before I realized it, my life and career felt like a bullet train traveling at breakneck speed. My vision for the future was suspended in midair as I used up all my time and energy just surviving the present. Each day I confronted so many urgent demands, I soon had less time and enthusiasm for the real priorities of my life. My inner voice began to ask, "Is this lifestyle really worth it?" I often found myself lamenting, as many of the busy professionals I work with do, "I have to get a life!" I was reminded of the story of the busy executive who, after another long week of extended travel and time away from home and family, returns to find his wife standing on the front porch. Her bags are packed and she's wearing a look that says she's leaving, this time for good. As he rushes to the front door to plead with her what went wrong, he urgently asks, "Is there another man?" In frustration she screams back, "There has to be!"

The undercurrent of human energy today seems to focus on an attempt to blend quality of life with quantity of life. The comment, "There has to be!"

represents the plight of many of us who are attempting to discover a lifestyle that provides for success with fulfillment—a lifestyle that reflects our real priorities. Too often the human being gets lost in the human doing. Who we are and what we really care about are waylaid in the acceleration of life. More than ever, people are seeking lifestyle choices that allow them to spend more of their time and energy on the issues of their lives that matter most.

At first thought you may dismiss this thinking as a "Pollyanna approach" or unrealistic. Or perhaps things seem just fine as you accelerate around the personal and professional success track. I can relate to this line of thinking because they were my sentiments only a few years ago. Then, John Gardner's quote woke me up!.

Gardner wrote, "Human beings have always employed an enormous amount of clever devices for running away from themselves. . . We can keep ourselves so busy, fill our lives with so many diversions, stuff our heads with so much knowledge, involve ourselves with so many people and cover so much ground that we never have time to probe the fearful and wonderful world within. . . by middle life, most of us are accomplished fugitives from ourselves."

Ouch! I had become an accomplished fugitive. Not by a chosen plan, rather by an unchosen lifestyle. Often, I was only aware of my life on the surface level. I was primarily concerned with how things appeared on the outside and mostly ignored what was going on inside me. I rarely took time to take stock of who I was as a human being and how my current work impacted the issues most important in my life. I was fairly accomplished in measuring my life on the doing and having level. However, often I failed to take a deeper look at who I would become if I continued the same patterns of living and working.

I began to gain greater understanding of what Gardner was speaking of when he mentioned "the fearful but wonderful world within." My fear resulted from seeing a past that I didn't particularly like or, in some cases, was not particularly proud of. Perhaps that's the feeling referred to in the well-known quote, "The truth will set you free, but first it may make you miserable." The benefit of slowing down to take a deeper look at ourselves is the discovery of a wonderful world of opportunity awaiting those who address the bigger questions.

For me, this wonderful world within began to surface

in phases. It started with a new awareness, a broader, expanded point of view. With this enhanced perspective came a newfound clarity, one of those "Oh I see now!" moments. While I believe clarity is rarely crystal clear, a clearer understanding created the initiative I needed to make a change in my life. These epiphanies, served as the foundation for meaningful choices and action, allowing me to create and build the structure in my life that aligned my success with my personal fulfillment. I discovered and continued to discover that unless my foundation for success is based on what's most important in life, the building blocks providing fulfillment will crumble and fall.

My newfound perspective on the pace of life has had its caveats. Slowing down to gain the clarity necessary was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do-much was required of me to make it happen. First was the call for courage. Awareness is important. Clarity is necessary. Courage is critical. Without courage we will find it hard to act on what we really want. Without courage we may become fugitives from a lifestyle that expresses our true talents, values and passions. Perhaps the greatest risk we face is the risk of inaction-failing to act when an inner creative tension urges you to craft a lifestyle that fits who you really are and can become. Unfortunately, many of us wait for the perfect how before we begin to act on a clear why.

Second, there is a call for practice and process. My good friend and mentor, Dick Leider, reminds us in that, "Life is an error-making and error-correcting process." Creating and acting on a life/workstyle that provides you success with fulfillment is an ongoing process of error-making and error-correcting. In some ways it is like a moving target. Just when we begin to have fulfilling answers to our success questions it seems the next set of questions becomes harder and requires more time and energy. As the foundation for success shifts, so must those building block of fulfillment. A fulfilling life must be seen as a lifelong process of questioning, learning and taking action.

So, the next time you find the pace of life leaving you breathless or unfulfilled, remind yourself to slow down and join the anti-fugitive revolution. You deserve to be present at your own life! The intentional quality of the life choices you make will create an aliveness and energy that will positively impact you, your loved ones, and the communities where you live and work.

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Are You in the Zone? By Nancy Cherwitz

Much has been said about leaders in corporate America. They have been studied, compared, analyzed and idolized. Such diverse fields as psychology, business and science have offered theories about what makes good leaders. Organizational development specialists try to make better ones. Wherever you look, there are reams of papers written on leadership styles, philosophies, successes and failures. What does it all boil down to?

Coming from the field of worksite wellness-the "no, we're not nurses or cheerleaders or the diet and exercise police" people-I have a unique perspective on leadership. Our brand of worksite wellness says simply this: we will do whatever we can to help you be a more effective human being, in turn making you more effective at work, helping the company earn a profit so we can all come back tomorrow.

In my job I have the good fortune to travel in many worlds. I can sit at the feet of some of the best business and academic minds in the country, then take a really terrific yoga class, and sometime in the middle of the day rehearse with the company chorus for the aesthetic "pause that refreshes." As part of my work, I reflect on the people I meet and the activities I pursue to help me fulfill my goal: discovering what makes different types of people thrive and perform at optimal levels and then devising programs that make the knowledge accessible and practical for as many employees as possible.

So in a sense, I'm in the leadership development business too. I want individuals to find the state of being that allows them to be their best-call it resilience, or flow, or expanded consciousness, or (gasp!) spirituality. Leadership isn't just about those people with their photo on the organizational charts. It's about each individual employee being his or her own personal leader.

Anyone can develop leadership attributes, regardless of job title or aspirations. In fact, we owe it to

ourselves to find our essential, true selves, to take control of those things within our realm of influence. We should constantly seek-or create-abundance, not just financially, but socially, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and see with gratitude the little extra perks that life provides on a daily basis. Here are my thoughts on accessing the leadership qualities within.

1. Dream first. I'm not sure that everything is possible, but unless you conceive of something, it is most certainly impossible.
2. Laugh often. Besides the physiological and anti-wrinkle benefits of laughter, your ability to laugh goes a long way in letting others see your humanity.
3. Learn to let go. There's so much focus on "time management," when in reality, we don't know very much about time at all. I'm beginning to think that, in a much larger sense, we shouldn't presume we can manage time; all we can do is be in it. It pays to take a step back every now then and consider time and work and life from a non-management perspective.
4. Be comfortable with silence. This goes along with #3. Once you've stopped managing, planning, scheduling and orchestrating, things can get pretty quiet. Pay attention.
5. Learn to ask for what you want. This carries several prerequisites such as being open, expressing yourself honestly, risking being told "no" and actually knowing what you want! In my observation, this is when miracles occur.
6. Take care of yourself. This doesn't necessarily mean getting regular checkups or cholesterol screenings or eating your way through the food pyramid every day, or flossing-but it could. I think that if you decide that health is a good thing, and you work your way through the rest of this list, that you'll find that you're taking care of yourself by default.

For many, leadership is all about power, speed, money, brilliance and success. I'm not going to tell you that these are evil, but when I think about power, speed, money, brilliance and success, I immediately conjure up a picture of a person I will never be. When plagued by doubt and the need for answers, I

turn to a time-honored wellspring of wisdom: college basketball.

College basketball contains the essence of personal leadership and effectiveness, along with many other lessons for life. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that I deeply appreciate the fiery eyes, the unabashed testosterone and the ripped muscles that go along with the sport, but also present is a key for success at being human. If you've ever watched an NCAA basketball tournament, you've seen it. I have been fortunate to see some of these games with my friend Rod, who is the best basketball scholar I know. He also happens to be able to sum things up with the clarity only a true educator possesses. The Gandhi of color commentary.

In one semifinal game, I noticed a player who started from the three-point line slightly to the right of the key, zipped past three defenders like they were Mount Rushmore, and laid the ball into the hoop with a move that was both effortless and suspended in time and space. If you did a frame-by-frame analysis of his trip to the hoop, you would end up with mountains of data. . .how he twisted, dribbled, dashed, deflected, extended, leapt, aimed and scored. Not to mention how his teammates set him up so that he happened to be able to catch the pass, keep the defenders at bay, and be precisely where he was at that moment. "But the key to the bucket?" I asked Rod. The key, he said, is to see the entire play when you catch the ball, and then take the first step.

Michael Jordan says that when he's in the "zone," he can see the whole court at once, know where everybody is, and feel like things are in slow motion. What we see, of course, is power, speed, money, brilliance and success. He simply sees the play and takes the first step. Which brings me back to leadership. However you define it, whether you want to be the leader of a multimillion dollar corporation or just in charge of your own cubicle, reading up on leaders and taking development classes wouldn't hurt. But my advice is get a good comfortable pair of shoes, bring your own ball, and just show up to the game. If you practice enough, the rest is easy.

Nancy Cherwitz has worked for Motorola and has over twelve years experience in the wellness and fitness fields, having provided wellness programming, fitness instruction, personal training and motivational and education presentations for several businesses in the Austin area. Nancy's favorite activities include cooking (and eating!), cycling and spending time with friends.

Inventure Coach

This issue's coach is Richard Leider.

Dear On Purpose:

What questions should I ask myself to discover my gift to give the world in addition to what I enjoy doing or get energy from doing? I would like a series of questions to ponder that will help me find the answer.

Sincerely,

Mid-life Discoverer

Dear Discoverer:

During the speeches I give, I often ask the participants this question: "Who would agree with me that we learn the most from our most difficult experiences, the triggering events in our lives?" Inevitably, nearly every hand in the room goes up. Given this, I often wonder why we spend so much of our lives reliving the pain of our most difficult experiences rather than seeing them for what they are—our best coaches.

We would not have the wisdom we do have were it not for the triggers we have weathered and the big blunders we have made. Once and for all, it would be good to realize that triggers teach and that blunders are the real signposts on the road to success. We simply cannot discover our gifts without pain. Begin to see your triggers as coaches. Resolve to transform your blunders to teachable moments. Vow to turn your wounds into wisdom.

Like most people, I have had my own share of pain as I have traveled the spiral of life. But I now try to remind myself that our character is shaped during our roughest moments. It is during our most trying triggers that we discover who we really are, our gifts. If you are experiencing triggers of your own, I respectfully offer the following advice: Do not look for answers; look for questions. What was the most important question you were asking yourself 10 years ago? What is the most important question you are asking yourself today? Embodied in questions are answers. But we must live in our own questions, not those of others.

Read the words of Rainier Maria Rilke aloud several times:

"...have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not look for the answers. They cannot be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer. . ."

Live in your biggest question. Write your own legacy statement. Together, they will help you avoid feeling regrets about what could have been when you reach the end of your life.

Bob Buford wrote that the first half of life is dedicated to building one's *success* while the second half is devoted to building one's *significance*. How true. So many of us spend the first half of our lives striving for achievement, money and recognition. Once we have this legitimacy we often wake up in the morning yearning for something more. We then turn to the deeper questions, like yours, "What gift do I want to give?"

Life purpose comes from giving the world something that is larger and more enduring than you. Reflect on what you want to create in your life and, more essentially, what gift you want to leave the world when you are no longer here. What is the contribution you know in your heart you are destined to give? As Woodrow Wilson said: "You are not here to merely make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

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