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An ADD Case Study: When the Pace Picks Up, Learn to Slow Down

By ADD Management Coach Jennifer Koretsky

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The fall season signals a shift in most people's minds. The summer is coming to a close, and it's back to school, work, and the other things that we haven't put as much effort into since Memorial Day. Many ADDers welcome this shift, as boredom sets in around August and we long for something bigger to keep us occupied. But while the opportunity to dive into new projects and situations is exciting, it can also become quickly overwhelming.

One way to avoid becoming overwhelmed by all the extra activities that September brings is by remembering to schedule in personal "down time." This means taking a chunk of time for yourself each and every day to relax, unwind, and plan.

"Anna" is a client of mine who has given me permission to share her story. I've been coaching Anna for a while, and we just resumed our work together after a month off. Anna owns a business selling her own artwork. She also has a husband, two kids, a dog, a cat, and a parrot. Her business, like many, is slow in the summer months, which works out well for her because she can spend extra time with her kids. Just two weeks ago, though, she started to see more orders coming in from her website for custom-made designs, and she panicked.

"All of a sudden, I realized that I had just one week to take my kids school clothes shopping AND school supply shopping, get Butter [the dog] to the vet because he can't seem to stop scratching his ear, meet with the new web designer and get him the materials he's going to need, and find the time to make and ship two products which I wasn't expecting orders for. This is in addition to all the OTHER stuff I have to do, like grocery shop, cook, clean up, and spend time with my family.

So what did I do? I freaked out. Instead of getting to work, I sat on the couch and watched talk shows."

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Although the details and tasks will be different for everyone, this is a familiar tale for ADDers. Life seems to be rolling along fine and then, out of nowhere, the to-do list seems too big to handle. Overwhelm sets in, and it's easy to shut down under the weight of the pressure.

Anna and I discussed this challenge, and the fact that she's dealt with it before. In fact, every year at this time, she finds herself even more overwhelmed than usual. When I reminded her of this, she responded with amazement. "You know, you're right! And when this happened last year, what helped was taking time out for myself."

It did help. I remember talking with Anna and encouraging her to slow down and take care of herself. She protested, like many ADDers do, "How can I possibly slow down when I have so much to do?"

But the truth of the matter is that slowing down helps an ADDer get centered, de-stress, and gain control. So Anna and I worked out some ways that she could slow down, and make life about more than her to-do list, even though there was a lot to be done. We decided she would:

Go to the gym in the morning, because she likes to work out and she finds it helps keep her stress levels down

Find a babysitter and go on a "date" with her husband one night a week, because she likes to spend quality time with her husband

Take 15 minutes every evening before bed to plan out the tasks that she can reasonably accomplish the next day, because she likes to feel in control of her time

"It really helped," Anna said as she remembered her life at this time last year. "I was having fun so I wasn't so stressed all the time, and so all the things I had to do seemed more manageable. And once I established a planning routine, I didn't feel frustrated or surprised by new things when they came up."

Anna decided that she needed to implement this "slow-down" time once again. It's only been a day, but she went back to the gym, scheduled lunch and a movie with her husband for Sunday, the kids have their school supplies, and Butter's itchy ear has been treated!

When I asked permission to share her story, Anna offered this tip: "Tell your readers that planning is the thing that really makes all the difference! Sometimes I need to slow down in order to speed up."

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including The New York Times Magazine and The London Times. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting

Home Business Success Steps

By BB Lee

A HARE one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise, who replied, laughing: "Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race." The Hare, believing her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race the two started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue. Slow but steady wins the race. ("Aesop"s Fable")

Are you aiming for a fast finish like the Hare in Aesop's Fable?

Are you also letting someone else set your business goals for you?

Are you measuring your success by anothers standards?

Think about it for a second...

When starting out set your own pace instead of trying to surpass your perceived competition.

Remember your real competition is yourself.

You are the one pushing yourself to achieve new goals.

You are the one who knows your limits.

You are the one who will motivate yourself even further to home business success.

And ultimately you are the one you will have to satisfy.

Keep your eye on your personal goal and stop trying to keep pace with others in your field.

Always strive to do your very best. And take pride in all your accomplishments, be they large or small.

And remember a slow and steady pace will eventually win the race to home business success.

BB Lee is editor/publisher of SmallBizBits Home Business Newsletter.
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