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YOUR 168 HOURS

By Rhoberta Shaler

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In every week you have 168 hours to use as you wish. Do you really know how you spend them? A general idea of what you do with your time is not nearly as instructional as a clear understanding. Here is an exercise to help you clarify.

Take a letter-size piece of paper and draw a large circle on it. To the right of the circle, write these words in a vertical list: family, career, grooming, sleep, exercise, driving, community, household, recreation, time alone...add any that are important to you. Now, beside each item, put the number of hours in an average week that you spend on it. When you are done, change those numbers into a percentage of your 168 hours/week. Now, to really make an impact, make a pie graph in the circle of the ways you spend your time.

If, by any chance, you simply read the above paragraph without doing the exercise, and are now reading this, STOP! Nothing changes until you do. If you do not know how you spend your time, you will not receive the full benefit of the ideas in this article. It is not enough to be saying to yourself, "I know that I need more time for _____." If that is so this exercise will help you find it. Please, won't you go back and make the chart now? (This may be one of the ways you short-change yourself in your daily life. You may not give yourself time to do the good and beneficial things that you know would improve your life. Is that a pattern for you?)

Once you have your pie divided, ask yourself if the graph well represents the importance of each item to you at this time in

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your life. You may have to have quite a conversation with yourself to determine this. Remember, there are not any right answers...just right answers for you!

If you find that your graph fits your priorities, you will be experiencing contentment. If not, you may want to make some adjustments.

ALWAYS REMEMBER-----WHAT YOU PAY ATTENTION TO EXPANDS!

Rhoberta Shaler, PhD, speaks, coaches & conducts seminars for entrepreneurs & professionals who want the motivation, strategies and inspiration to achieve, to lead and to live richly. Hear her weekly on <http://www.WSRadio.ws>. Dr. Shaler is the creator of the Living Richly™ Programs. For further articles, free ezines, upcoming teleseminars and booking information, visit www.OptimizeLifeNow.com today! For permission to reprint this article, please contact Jane@OptimizeLifeNow.com

Prioritize Your Life for Success

By Jan Wallen

Today, it is hard to open an e-mail newsletter, a website, or an offline magazine and not see someone talking up the importance of time management.

The time management gurus are going out of their way to teach us how to set priorities in our work week, how to organize those priorities, and then finally stick to our priorities to get more done. I applaud their efforts.

Yet in all of the dozens of articles that I have read that speak of the importance and power of priorities in our work day, I have yet to see one person apply this principle to our lives outside of our jobs.

Let me show you how this is important. There are in fact 168 hours in a week. Of those 168 hours, we spend about 40 of them working, and we spend about 4 hours a week in transit to and from our jobs. As a result, we are spending just over one quarter of our lives taking care of business.

We spend approximately another 56 hours each week sleeping and another 7 hours grooming ourselves each week. Add to this the 7 hours we spend eating, and we are left with 54 hours in our week that no one is talking about.

I find it truly startling that people fill volumes talking about how to manage just over 25% of our week, and completely ignore another 33% of our week that is left to our free time pursuits.

Most times when I count down these numbers for people, they are dumbfounded to realize that they have more free time available to them than they spend actually working! Work seems such a prevalent portion of our lives that we fail to realize that we have lives beyond work.

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So let me ask you a question. One third of your life is devoted to non–work related activities. What priorities have you set for yourself during these 54 non–work hours available each week? Okay, now let me take that same question one step further. Are you acting on these priorities each day? If I asked your children what priorities you have set for your own life, how would THEY respond?

So many people recognize a need to set priorities on the job. Yet most of these same people fail to place priorities on their lives. Why do people recognize the need for one and not the other? Some would say that the problem is rooted in not having God in their lives. But, even that falls far short of the truth.

Even Christians fall into this same rut. That seems to cancel out the argument about a lack of God in our lives.

The only argument that bears out in fact is that we pay more attention to giving our priorities lip service, than we do to finding the strength, determination, and integrity toward defining and then honoring any real priorities in our lives.

The Christian knows to place his priorities in the order of God, spouse, family, job and then finally hobbies. Yet human nature guides him down the road that lays waste to any priority he may set for himself while in church on Sunday mornings. Most of the other religions of the world teach these same principles as well, and still people of all faiths stumble down this same road without fail.

Priorities, like God, require a commitment in our lives. We must commit ourselves to establishing our priorities and then to meeting them one at a time. God, of course, should be the number one commitment you make to yourself. As through God, you will find the strength and fortitude to establish and meet each of your other priorities in life; priorities of spouse, family, and job, each in their proper order.

Romans 12:2 NIV

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

It is not enough to sit in church on Sunday mornings and pledge to make God the priority in your life. You must go to the further extreme. You must make a commitment in your life to make God the number one priority in your life. And then you must follow through on that commitment. Then and only then, will you find the abilities within yourself to reach beyond what you ever thought you were capable of doing, to commit yourself to setting priorities in your life, even outside of the work place, and to follow the commitment to your priorities with the fulfillment of your goals.

If you do not have God in your life, I encourage you to meet Him so that you may experience the joy and fulfillment of the renewing of your mind, as so many of us have experienced. If God is only in your life on Sunday mornings, I encourage you to reach into your heart, past the lip service that you are offering, and finally make the commitment to put God as the top priority in your life.

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In conclusion, I applaud each of you who make the commitment to manage your time and priorities in the work place. It is my hope that this article has opened your eyes to the part of your life that is bigger than work, the 33% of your life that is spent doing non-work related activities. Spend them well.

Jan Wallen is the owner of

a site dedicated to helping Christian

business people conduct their businesses based on Christian principles. Her free bi-monthly newsletter, the Straight Paths Ezine, is filled with sensible, practical advice to help you in the work place. Subscriptions are available by visiting her website or you may send a blank e-mail to

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