The Better Way to Live: Chaotic to Controlled, Flustered to Focused

Chaotic to Controlled

The 10% Advantage

- Gaining just 10% more of our available time through organization skills offers a great opportunity to do more of the extras in life. 10% more time in a 16-hour day is 1.6 hours or 90 minutes a day, 10+ hours a week, or 32+ sixteen-hour days/year.
- Even small adjustments and minor improvements in time management skills make a tremendous difference.

Reduce by Half

- Reducing personal possessions by half brings peace and liberation.
- Cleaning out and cleaning up gives us control in many areas of our lives.
- Useful and needed items are kept, useful but not needed items are shared or stored, not useful and not needed items are discarded.

Discipline Routines into Patterns

- Disciplined patterns can help life run smoother. For example, addressing paperwork on certain days of the week, having a particular time each day for scripture study, praying, and journaling, and keeping Monday evenings reserved for Family Home Evening move our lives to a place of patterned routines.

Do It the Same Each Time

- Whenever possible, respond in a specific way to everyday tasks. For instance, paid bills can easily be found because the envelopes have been opened and discarded, the extra paperwork shredded, and the bills stashed in the second drawer of the desk. Having a known place to collect and keep all pertinent data and vital documents will save much time when retrieval is necessary. Putting keys in the same place, dropping your wallet in the same location in your bedroom, and keeping your purse on the same shelf helps!

Flustered to Focused

Filter and Funnel

- "Filter" through projects until they are defined by priority and "funnel" them until they are specific activities. This helps us to be more productive.
- Move general goals to personal and definitive projects. For example:
    - Save the world → be diligent home teachers and visiting teachers
    - Serve the needy → attend temple or participate in ward service project
    - Feed the hungry → give a generous fast offering
    - Clothe the naked → frequently donate to charities from your closet
    - Educate the ignorant → teach literacy skills or donate to the PEF fund

Strive for Relaxed Pacing

- If we are five minutes early, we will never be late. Timeliness can make all experiences more productive, help our lives to be more evenly paced, and allow for more creative output.
- If we come prepared, more will be gained from every meeting. Having a written list of: 1) subjects to address, 2) assignments to report; and, 3) questions to answer will facilitate confidence and accomplishment.

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The Better Way to Live: Haphazard to Habitual, Madness to Method

Haphazard to Habitual

Systemize Responsibilities

- Seeking for success includes systemizing home management responsibilities such as housework, yard work, paperwork, and regular maintenance chores.
- It makes more sense to address household needs before they become an emergency. For instance, it is easier to get gas as part of your habitual routine than to make a special trip when the gauge begins to glow "empty." It is easier to mow your lawn at a scheduled time than to squeeze that activity into already overscheduled weekend because "it needs to be cut NOW."

Establish Great Habits

- Good habits take time and commitment to invoke lasting change. Putting canned fruit in the frig at the beginning of the week to chill and taking frozen meat from the freezer to thaw helps meal preparations proceed smoothly. When well-established, personal and household habits will move most of the tedium to the background of life. Then there will be more time and energy to solve problems, build relationships, and serve others.

Madness to Method

Use Tools, Systems, and Routines

- Responding by mood to the demands of cooking meals, getting the laundry done, filing papers, and paying bills creates chaos and dysfunction. Updating and improving tools, setting up systems, and establishing routines for dealing with everyday needs will increase productivity significantly. Is your laundry area set up to effectively complete the laundry, your kitchen set up to efficiently cook, and your desk set up to easily handle paperwork?

Get Excited About New Skills

- Gaining and practicing new skills helps immediately and will make it easier for all the years ahead. Learning to cook simple and quick meals, setting up a standardized menu, and using a printed grocery list will increase the time available for other important matters.
- Practice until routines begin to "run themselves." For example, when towels are washed on Tuesdays, sheets handled on Thursdays, and stained clothing addressed on Saturdays, our minds are free to address current problems and seek for answers, because the laundry is a dance in the background of our lives.

Down Pace for Greater Success

- Juggling many activities, responsibilities, and relationships is a normal part of life. Handling too many stresses at once makes life very difficult. Moving from simultaneous to sequential handling of pressures means that everything will suffer a little delay, but you will be able to handle <u>more</u>, better. Sometimes it is necessary to pull down a mountain a little at a time to make a road to success.
- Remember, every NO is also a YES; every YES is also a NO.
- Can the request wait, can it be done part way, or can it be refused?
- Sometimes a flat, outright "Thanks for asking, but this is not a good time for me" answer allows you to delay addressing a request until another season in life.