

Ten Keys to Manage the Chaos

When I feel out-of-whack, I know it's because I'm not doing one or more of the following ten keys to manage the chaos.

1. **Do it now.** Now is good. Now is always better than later. Update your budget when you have one receipt. Put the dish in the dishwasher now, not later.
2. **Know where your time is spent.** Keep a log of your activities until you are better at being intentional.
3. **Have less stuff.** I decided this was what I wanted when I realized I was spending too much precious time putting stuff away. That's not how I want to spend my time.
4. **Give new purchases a home the first time you bring them in your house.** Before you buy something, do you know where its home is going to be? Is the container/shelf/drawer already crammed? If so, do you need it? If so, get rid of one thing so it fits in the proper home.
5. **Spread out the task over time.** By coming up with a system that allows you to do part of the task at a time, you can easily accomplish the mini task. For example, fold laundry when you have only one load to fold.
6. **Plan for balance.** After doing Key #2, assess to see if you need to tweak your plan to achieve better overall balance and a sense of well-being. Planning helps you recognize your available time for work AND restoration. Remember Stephen Covey's idea of "Sharpen the Saw". For example, put self-care on your list so you are energized and not running on empty.
7. **Stop making things optional.** Just start. Start small. (And remember Key #1.) If things are not done because you are self-consciously making them optional, ask yourself "Is this actually a priority?" Strive to be a person whose actions demonstrate their priorities.
8. **Make a list** and knock it out. Daily, I make time to pull things over from my master task list onto a 4"x6" Post-it Note. Maybe, if it's relatively useful, I put them in sequence and add a start time for each task.
9. **Prioritize the list** so you don't run out of time for the things that are most important. Saying "yes" to something means saying "no" to something else. If there are items on your master task list that are just not getting done, make a concerted effort to do, delegate or dump them. Otherwise, they drag down your energy like clutter.
10. **Dump or delegate the repetitive tasks that clog most days.** What could be delegated for others to do? Let family members contribute; it's the considerate thing to do. **Bonus points for family members, aka REWARD THEM, when they:**
 - Put THEIR stuff away right when they see it.
 - Are told or asked to do something, and they say "yes" and do it right away.
 - Are proud of their actions instead of hiding the mess.
 - Put music on and make it fun!

