

COLLABORATIVE LIFE COACHING
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Take It Up A Notch

We can cope with our family and work life doing the same ‘ol same ‘ol. You can tell you have arrived at total complacency, however, when you get to the end of a busy week and realize you have no idea what you accomplished. Instead of this fate, you can choose to take it up a notch. You might ask: “How? I am already so busy I can barely sleep!” When you “take it up” you are not busier, but are more productive because you have figured out what to prioritize.

So many people have the sense their life is wasted and time is running out that Randy Pausch’s posthumous 2008 book with Jeffrey Zaslow called “The Last Lecture” has been a best seller. As you may know, Randy was the young professor at Carnegie Mellon University who died of pancreatic cancer. His book describes not only his life and parting advice, but why he decided to present his last college lecture as series of photo slides about his life. That task forced him to rank what had been really important. One of the slides was him carrying a huge stuffed animal he won at a fair. In another photo, he, his wife, and his children were all dressed in bulked-up Superhero costumes. The caption says “Chemo has not dramatically affected my superpowers.” He also learned how to “take it up” as a parent. In his book, he stated “A parent’s job is to encourage kids to develop a joy for life and a great urge to follow their own dreams.”

If you looked at the photos of your last two or three years in retrospect, what events and decisions would you find were really important? It is a powerful exercise. Please take the time and do it.

Stephen Covey designed a system of quadrants to help us sort life that look like this:

Quadrant I Important, urgent	!	Quadrant II Important, not urgent	
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Quadrant III Urgent, not important	!	Quadrant IV Not important, not urgent	
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I hope you choose to do this exercise to sort out your life. Here are some typical family and work life tasks to get you started. Into which quadrant do/should these go in your life?

attending family member ball games and school programs,
answering business e-mails,
marketing your business /assuring your job security,
getting a health check up and exercising regularly,
visiting your neighbor(s),
going to church,
opening junk mail,
cleaning your work desk top,
cleaning your kitchen,
posting or reading on MySpace,
cooking from scratch,
answering text messages,
talking to a financial planner,
mowing your lawn,
talking to your wife/husband/partner,
losing (or gaining) weight,
answering e-mails from friends,
“dating” your spouse or partner,
pet care,
buying new clothes,
doing volunteer work,
getting more job training,
sleeping at least seven hours.

I encourage you to take the time to decide what is important. Only then can you “take it up a notch” and have a life with meaning and fulfillment.

Warmly,

Jeanne Erikson, PCC, PhD
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