Question and Answer: Resource Management

Q: The Russian playwright Chekhov said that life and work are inseparable. Our work is not in competition with our lives – it is merely one part of life. And in the end, we’ll be remembered for what we did with our life and how we live it. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

A: I agree to some degree. With only one body, life and work are inseparable. The visual imagine I have is a pie. The pie can be cut into different sections but it still is a pie. Having said that, I try to keep work/ministry and home life separated to some degree. Ministry can be 24/7 if a person lets it. I do bring work home and people have access to me by phone but I try to not let it overtake my home life. Having a break from ministry is important for sustaining ministry. There are so many elements to life it is not possible to keep them totally separated. But, some separation is good. Do you see why I agree to some degree?

I image at my funeral people will be talking about what I did and all those meaningful (or not so meaningful) moments of life. Thank goodness our gracious God does not judge on what I have done or not done but on faith alone.

Q: How does the 5S concept apply to individuals, families, and homes?

A: The 5S concept refers to “Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain”. These five principles, in essence, produce less clutter which improves productivity while sustaining a consistent appearance. In the home this principle provides a way to organize and utilize spaces. Everything has a place. In the home this would require a proper amount of storage space and an organizational system for maintaining the order. Goldsmith says the reason for 5S in the home is to upgrade efficiency and to have a pleasing sleek appearance. The first two thoughts that come to mind are: Does the family like this sleek appearance? Does this allow for personal, sentimental items? Is this an easy system to maintain the home?

I am a person that likes to have items in the proper place and for items to have a place to be. I also like the simple, modern look with interesting lines. But, I also love to have personal sentimental items to be displayed. If that is not allowed there is a cold feel. I want my home to have a warm feel when people step in my front door. Would the person need to be OCD to maintain this environment?

Q: Managing change is inherently messy. Why is that?

A: When talking about change being messy Goldsmith uses these words and phrases: complicated, lead to conflicting demands, plans don’t always happen in right order, don’t turn out right the first time, means new patterns of power, influence, and control. Goldsmith stresses that change is important, but often we don’t know how to handle it.
Change requires the ability to move forward and to do that people must understand the forces that help and impede change. Change requires momentum and shift thinking.

Change is messy because there is never just one correct, easy way to make a change. When working with people there are always varying needs and solutions. All this makes managing change challenging at times. One of the key elements I have learned in making changes in our congregation (I.E. a task force with a specific task) is to periodically involve the congregation in conversation about the process and possible changes before recommendations are given. Letting them have a voice empowers them to buy off on solution. Also, being transparent builds the level of trust with the team assigned a task. Communicating information in a number of different ways is helpful in making change. Also, once a congregation is used to change....changes are more easily made. There is a momentum for change and past history of change. Change is messy at times.

Q: **The German poet and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, “I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.**

A: As a mother I wholeheartedly agree. Have you heard the saying “If the momma's happy – everyone’s happy. If the momma's not happy, no one is happy.” People have tremendous power to set the tone for people living or working together. I suspect that at times when I don’t want to make everyone miserable because I am miserable, a person can internalize that misery for a time. But, eventually it is obvious and it seeps out to those around us. This is true in work settings as well if the team is close. For me this is a key time to relearn that personal pity parties don’t bring God glory and use it as a time to practice repentance. Hopefully, forgiveness is extended. Life is all about learning. Most definitely one person can set the tone for a group.

Q: **Describe the drain theory of human energy and explain why it is inadequate.**

A: The drain theory suggests that people wake with a certain amount of energy and as the day wears on each activity used up some energy until at nighttime the energy is depleted, people sleep and are reenergized. Then the pattern repeats the cycle the next day. Some challenges with this theory are: not all people are highly energized at waking in the morning, during the day different things (food, exercise, and excitement) refuel people, each person has different rhythms which can be altered by events, and all people experience ups and downs to alertness during the day.

I myself do not have a lot of energy when I start my day. When I wake I am not very energized until I have worked out. (I like to exercise then because I am half asleep). I
probably do have the most energy mid-morning between 10-11 a.m. but I hit a low by 5:30 in the afternoon. Sonic cherry limeade drinks are good for a burst of energy in the afternoon (California people who don’t know Sonic are missing a real treat). Also, working with children or making progress on a project can be an energy boost. For me the 10:00 news and a monologue is the end of my day. I certainly understand where this theory originated and at first glance it works. But, in detail it has flaws.

Q: Why do nearly 70 percent of retirees take Social Security before age 65? What are the pros and cons of this decision?

A: Choosing when to start social security is individual and personal. My guess is people start with early social security because of

- poor health (but Medicare does not start until 65)
- there is a need for money to make ends meet
- they speculate they won't live to old age (so why not quit work and draw SS)
- they are unhappy with their work

It seems this is a difficult decision for most people to make.

There certainly are advantages and disadvantages to drawing SS early. Some advantages are:

- If person is not working, they can have money to make ends meet.
- If they have poor health and don’t expect to live to an old age, they can get income.
- If you are a lower earning spouse and your higher earning spouse can wait to file for a higher benefit, the lower earning spouse may want to receive SS.

The primary disadvantage to taking early retirement is you will receive a lower benefit, a fraction of a percent each month. Although some say it all works out to about the same amount of money....lower income but for a longer span of time versus a higher income for a short span of time. Certainly if you delay you get credit for that and receive a higher amount each month. The decision of when to start is personal, individual, and I suspect for many people a difficult decision to make.

Q: What are the resource management needs of single parents?

A: My interest in single parents stems from the fact I saw my sister be a single parent for many years and my congregation has a number of single parents. I agree with Goldsmith that “raising children is a difficult task in itself, but raising children all by oneself can be even more challenging.”
What a single parent does not have is relief, someone to share ideas with, and no one to share daily task such as discipline of a child. Often the single parent does not have sufficient income. Sometimes the single parent is left with the challenge of trying to get the other parent to pay child support as the family income has dropped at the end of the marriage.

What a single parent can have is the advantage of consistency and stability for the child. If the marriage had spousal substance or child abuse there could be a relief from that. In essence, the home situation is better without the other parent.

Each family’s needs are different and as such need to be individualized. There is a big difference between an unwed teenage mothers and a middle aged father without a wife. My congregation has watched a middle aged woman opt to have a child (artificial insemination) because she loves children and knew her biological time clock was about to expire. Each single parent’s needs vary. This variance includes legal, economic, social, personal, and psychological.

Reference