

Managing Stress and Work/Life Blend

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One of the things I often mention in my workshops is that we bring *all of who we are* everywhere we go.

We bring our experiences, perceptions, values, strengths, weaknesses, and styles into every interaction. I once believed that it was important to compartmentalize different aspects of my life so that I could have clear delineations between them. Now I am persuaded that, even though I bring all of who I am to every situation, I have the opportunity to discern how I can be most effective - showing up at my best and helping others to do the same. I can choose to be authentically me in the way that best fits the situation and that is most effective for others.

Everything in life requires us to be aware and to make wise choices; the stress that stems from attempting to have a work / life balance is no different! In fact, we are recognizing now that balance is not a realistic goal – that it's more about work/life blend over time. We all have seasons of our lives that demand more from us than we would prefer to give; this is part of living. But when a season turns into a lifestyle, we become less effective and sometimes lose our joy and optimism – our tanks are depleted. In order to press forward with positivity, energy and enthusiasm, we need a plan to adjust the blend.

A stands for AWARENESS. Take some time to assess where you are and where you would like to be. Discover or remind yourself of your personal core values and make sure that the environment you're in is aligned with what is most important to you. I find that I am most productive, joyful and healthy when I honor my values. If you find yourself out of alignment, you may influence, adjust, or make a change. In some circumstances, we must put a stake in the ground in order to live our values. Are you living, working and leading in alignment with your core values?

B stands for BE SURE to use your strengths and take advantage of the diverse strengths of your teammates. Don't try to do everything yourself, allow others to offer their gifts – leverage your team and take a

step back. Avoid overcommitting or over-managing; operate where you are at your best! Where might you be able to delegate and tap into someone else's talent?

C stands for CHOICE. We choose where we spend our time and energy. We choose our attitudes. We choose to draw boundaries so that we may be healthy, effective and satisfied. Sometimes, I have to navigate competing values - that can be challenging. Where might you need to draw a boundary this month so that you may be less stressed, more centered, and live into your potential?

Beyond these ABCs, try:

- Giving yourself permission to say “no.” When we constantly say “yes” to everything, we find ourselves running late, feeling frazzled and not as focused or prepared.
- Choosing an accountability partner to help you stick to your goals. You will have a higher success rate. This could be a co-worker, spouse or a close friend.

How do you manage stress? Share your strategies with me. I'd love to hear them! Comment below or send me an email at carla.ruiz@innerwill.org.

If you would like to learn more about your core values and Values Based Leadership, visit www.innerwill.org.



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innerwill.org 844.898.WILL info@innerwill.org

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