



## ADEPT INSIGHT

### *A Conversation on Productivity*

Recently I went out to lunch with a couple of friends who I tend to get together with once a month to have a “back to reality” conversation. Our professional lives drive us and push us and pull us in so many directions that we have these lunch dates just to bring ourselves back to earth and help us keep hold of our sanity.

As always, the conversation moved in the direction of and focused heavily on our professional lives and how we are coping with being productive in our respective fields while being supportive husbands/wives and involved parents. One of my friends asked the group “Do you think you are productive? And if so, what exactly is productivity and how do you measure it?” I didn’t say much at the time because it was a question that immediately sent me into a moment of CSR, Critical Self-Reflection. I began conducting a mental check of my to-do list to determine if I had accomplished everything I set out to do over the last month. That period of self-reflection lasted a few hours and even after getting home, I spent a great deal of time continuing the conversation with myself - thinking about what being productive really means. Through my thoughts I came up with three dimensions to measure my productivity: *What I have to do*, *What I should do* and *What I would like to do*.

#### **What I Have to Do**

The first dimension, What I have to Do, focuses on the things that I need to get done both professionally and personally to achieve balance in my life. Professionally, owning a business that provides corporate training solutions as well as coaching and consulting services is demanding and extremely time consuming. In addition to partnering with clients and spending time understanding their challenges before I can determine and develop the appropriate intervention(s) for them, I have to identify what my ever-changing responsibilities are in my role as husband and father – which for those of you who share this role, fully understand how demanding and time consuming but utterly rewarding and fulfilling this can be.

I have found that over time I began to rely more and more on the power of pen and paper (including electronic versions of these) to keep track of the things that I had to get done. For example, I had to meet with client A; I had to develop a two-day seminar for them. I also had my wedding anniversary coming up that I would not forget and had to switch into the role of responsible and responsive husband. I had to drop off and pick up the kids from school. These are things that I have to do and cannot get away from doing. These are things that have great meaning in my life – having a successful career and a successful family.



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### **What I Should Do**

The second dimension, What I Should Do, is an area that many people struggle with. In the early stages of my coaching engagements, I tend to ask the client what are the things they should be doing. I've noticed that many people struggle with this – professionally and personally. Some people have become so reliant on their job descriptions, or their boss's agenda and desires dictating what they should do that when you ask them what they think they should do, they draw a blank. It is almost like they do not have a vision of what their own success should look like – they have not thought about it or even begun to plan for it. They have become so caught up in just maintaining or getting by in their careers that they cannot look beyond the building(s) they work in.

Being immersed and in-tune with the things that your job description and your boss's assignments require are important, but having personal goals, vision and an agenda are equally necessary. Likewise, having a goal for your family is also vitally important. Making sure that you are affording enough attention to your spouse, your kids and your personal happiness while being attentive to and proactive in your career helps to make you whole. Achieving this balance is instrumental in being truly productive.

### **What I Would Like to Do**

The last dimension, What I Would Like to Do, speaks partially of your plans for the future and the action items that need to be implemented in the present to attain those future goals. Some of you may interpret this dimension in terms of the things that I have to do and the things I should do are not necessarily the things that I would like to do. While that may be true, I implore you to look a little deeper, and if you've accomplished a balance between the first two dimensions, then the third dimension, the one that outlines goals for the future and how actions in the present serve as incremental steps toward the realization of your dreams, become less cumbersome and more attainable.

However, I caution that before you begin taking steps toward achieving the goals in the What I Would Like to Do dimension, you need to make sure that you have a good handle on the first two dimensions. If you are doing the things that you have to do and the things that you should do, and you feel comfortable, balanced and fulfilled, then working on the things you would like to do is the next logical step – one that feels natural. So, for me, being productive begins with achieving a balance in the first two dimensions and then working on the third. So I ask you, "Are you productive? And how do you measure it?" Send me an email with your thoughts. I look forward to it. [lhsan@adeptinsight.net](mailto:lhsan@adeptinsight.net)