READY TO USE MENTORING

# Spinning (and dropping) plates

Up for a little challenge? Bet your mentee whoever can’t do this pays for the coffee! Sit down and lift your right leg in the air in front of you. Make clockwise circles with your foot. Now raise your right hand and draw the number six in the air without changing direction with your foot.

My daughter who is a psychology student tells me the reason this is impossible is because you are asking the same part of your brain to do opposite things at once; you can’t separate those tasks to different parts of the brain. Or something.

The tenuous link here is the question: are you trying to simultaneously juggle multiple things in your life that realistically are impossible? There are things in life that look like they should be easy – or at least realistically achievable – but it turns out they are basically not possible. For example, do you have a crazy work-life balance? Are you trying to do two people’s jobs? Are you trying to be one thing to some people and another to others? Do you have a dream that is in clear conflict or opposite to the direction your life is heading?

## With your mentee

Take a moment to look at the commitments and roles and other activities you have in your life. Which of them do you struggle to manage, which get on top of you sometimes or seem to act as a distraction from other aims and goals? What do you get upset about?

First, write it down. Name the issues, own up to your irresponsible multitasking, your excessive people-pleasing or your overly ambitious willingness to take on more tasks or roles than you have time for. (Why you do this is a whole other conversation!)

Secondly, write down the collateral damage. Who are you hurting by trying to juggle too much? Who and what is being neglected? Are you damaging yourself? Are you dropping too many balls by juggling too many?

Thirdly, what are you going to do about it? Again, write it down. I’d suggest three options:

**STOP**

Do you need to cut one or more thing out of your life, at least temporarily? What is not for now, or not healthy at all?

**REDUCE**

Who could you delegate things to? Or who could you offload emotional baggage to and get help managing feelings, pressures, workloads or doubt or shame?

**STRATEGISE**

How can you behave or work smarter not harder? Where do you need to not go? Who do you need to spend less time with, or more? What are your triggers and how can you mitigate these? Can you compartmentalise rather than trying to do things simultaneously? Or vice versa??

Try to turn all this into a sentence-long specific and measurable goal. If this is a Christian mentoring relationship, take a moment to invite the Holy Spirit to help you as you give it all to God.

**JOEL TOOMBS**

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