

## Tips to Turn Year end Whirlwinds Into a Wonderful Time of Year Presented by

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It's the most wonderful time of the year, or so proclaims the song playing at least once an hour on the radio. The month of December can go from wonderful to whirlwind with all the demands we as business professionals put on ourselves: end of year budgets, reports, client negotiations and more!

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Top that with pressures at home to create that "wonderful time of the year" for family and friends. Taking a cue from other businesses and owners, perhaps we can find balance in the last couple weeks of the year to celebrate the season and New Year in style remembering what's truly important—our successes in 2009.

How much is on your desk right now saying: Needed by December 31? How much are you assigning your employees by the end of the year? Most of us in business look to December 31 as some magical date when things end—the work simply must get done. Yet, after December 31, the world goes on. There is a date on the calendar--January 1, 2010, with continuing work and deadlines. What makes a remarkable difference is how we will, as business owners and employees, choose to deal with deadlines and maintain balance in our lives.

How are businesses helping their employees cope with business pressure?

A recent article in the Edmonton Globe and Mail (December 1, 2009) reports, "lack of job security, disillusionment and the ceaseless demand to do more with less have triggered the collective angst of an entire work force. To cope, many workers are looking inward for new meaning and purpose in their lives. Some employees.....are turning to their employers..." who are helping people explore how they can find worth in the work they do and lead a more meaningful life aligned with their values. For example, all Bank of Montreal offices, with a total work force of 37,000, have multipurpose rooms where employees can spend quiet time, pray, or practice spiritual reflection. Yasmin Meralli, a BOM vice-president says, "People are starting to step back and ask themselves, 'What's important to me?'" Employers who recognize and allow for that will be the companies of choice for talented people."

What are you doing for yourself?

Reality... we are all busy and economic pressures will continue to make us all work harder (and sometimes longer hours). It's stressful and can sometimes follow us home. To cope, try two practices to create a positive shift in outlook and life/work balance. These suggestions come from our book, "Whirlwinds and Small Voices."

1) "Am I Here?"

This exercise in being fully present in the NOW applies to the transition period between work and home life. After a long day at the office, before opening the door to his home, Rabbi Irwin Kula says he often pauses, takes a deep breath and asks himself, "Am I Home? Am I really home?" We might question the point of even coming home to be with those most precious to us unless we are in a mindset to be fully present, engaged, and ready to share with them the traditions and festivities of this time of the year.

2) "Music soothes the soul"

Music has the power to change our mood and our mood, in turn, can change our behavior. Consciously identify music that puts you in the "I'm away from work" mode, whether it's upbeat Oldies, Classical, Opera or Christmas Carols. Take care to play that music as part of your ritual of being at home, whether you are listening to music, or perhaps, playing a musical instrument.

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These two practices can make a JNI or Just Noticeable Improvement in how much pleasure we derive from being with family and friends. They may make our time away from the office richer and more relaxing. And a consequence of that richness and relaxation is that we return to our work newly restored, invigorated and ready to meet the deadlines, yes, even to deal with the whirlwinds that present themselves there. If we can manage this, particularly during this "most wonderful time of the year," we have made our time at home more enjoyable, which in turn, gives us energy and stamina to take on the challenges that await us in the workplace.



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