Don’t drop your crystal balls!

As a Pastor, the demands on my time can be quite suffocating, at times. And, I am sure, that ‘opportunities,’ on your path are also demanding and time-consuming. There seems to be so much to do and so little time. In the attempt to be all things to all people and ‘seize the day’ we run the risk of losing that which is most important in our lives.

I pray that the illustration, I am about to share with you, will help place responsibilities, opportunities and duties in its proper balance and perspective. It has changed my life pertaining to time management, accepting new responsibilities, evaluating the effectiveness of the things I am currently doing and intensifying my devotional life.

Picture yourself juggling many balls, some are rubber balls of many colors and in amongst those colorful rubber balls you are also juggling several crystal balls. You are working hard to keep all of the balls in the air. As you are juggling you find yourself needing to drop some balls in order to keep up your juggling act. Which ones will you drop?

Let’s examine the relevance of the balls you are juggling:

- The crystal balls - these delicate glass balls represent the responsibilities in your life that are most important to you (I refer to them as the main pillars in your world). This would include your relationship with God, spouse, your children, yourself, your dreams and goals, your most valued friendship … you decide - what’s most important to you?
- The rubber balls - these are responsibilities that are always trying to crowd out the “crystal balls.” Some can be very valuable to you; others (most) just want you to believe they are valuable to you. These rubber balls represent many activities in your life like grocery shopping, dentist appointments, committees and committee meetings, parties, celebrations, attending a ‘big meeting’… you know your list.

Now the hard part may be in determining what is important and what could be dropped.

Here’s the test:

If you dropped one of those rubber balls would they bounce? Yes, they most certainly would - and many of them would only bounce once, maybe twice and a different juggler would catch that ball and start juggling it with their set of balls.
If you dropped a crystal ball, (eg, marriage) would it bounce? Most certainly not! It would shatter. You would be devastated to find you had lost one of your most precious possessions/relationships in life.

**Here’s the lesson:**

Too often we have a tendency to let the rubber balls take all our time and attention. We do this at the risk of dropping one of the crystal balls in our life. We need to evaluate which balls we are supposed to be juggling in order to give our best attention to the crystal balls in our life. Only you can determine what that will look like in your life. Only you know how many rubber balls you can juggle before you feel unbalanced and at the crucial point where one of the crystal balls may be dropped.

Some rubber balls cannot be dropped and allowed to bounce out of your life. For instance, if you stopped grocery shopping you would soon realize that no one would catch that bouncing ball as it left your juggling act. Unless, someone else in your family would be willing to take on that responsibility. (What works for your family?) Once you have analyzed which rubber balls stay then you must determine how many more you can add (or allow to remain) in your juggling act. The choice becomes yours. You are not out of control. It is a deliberate decision you must make. And you have the power within to make that decision and find balance and peace in your life.

“We must turn away from a thousand topics [activities] that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things.” *Ministry of Healing*, p. 456.

“Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time… The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains… Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal and earthly matters, in a treadmill of care and anxiety for the things that are but an atom in comparison with the things of eternal interest.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 342, 3.

So for today, take time to evaluate all the balls you are juggling. Give each ball a score - crystal or rubber. Determine which balls you will keep and which you will allow to bounce right out of your life. Then, and most important of all - decide to pay special attention to the crystal balls in your life.

*Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success... don’t drop your crystal balls!*

**Paul Charles Ph.D**

*Communication Director - Southern Africa Union Conference*

Tell us what you think of this illustration.

e.mail: sau.educommdir@adventist.org.za / paulinperson@gmail.com