

# Faculty Development

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### Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. June 2007.

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*"Saying 'No' to someone else is like saying 'Yes' to yourself ."*

-- Helene Lerner, Author of *Time for Me*

→ Some pages will open in a new browser window. M. D. Anderson does not endorse external sites.

### Are You Ready for Change?

The organizing shows on TV are magical. In a half hour or hour, someone's entire house is completely re-organized and re-decorated, and the owners are oohing and aahing over the dramatic results. In reality, that half hour program can take weeks to accomplish. We all want the big change like we see on TV, and we also want everything NOW. In the real world, actual change is slow and the result of hard work. Any change in organizing and time management habits begins with small steps.

At the National Association of Professional Organizers 2007 Conference, change in those habits was a hot topic. Here are a few tidbits for you:

- Reward yourself for small and big successes. Working toward a specific reward is a great motivational tool.
- Victory is when you finish an organizing project, says KJ McCorry, author of *Organize Your Work Day in No Time*. "Real victory is the six-month follow-up to see if the system was maintained."
- "Change is a process, not an event." -- Casey Moore, Simply Living Consulting
- "Weak organizing skills result in an employee's difficulty in focusing attention, planning ahead, scheduling time, and developing workplace strategies."

-- Lynne Johnson, president of the National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization

### The Success Principles

Jack Canfield, author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and *The Success Principles* and commentator on *The Secret*, shared several of his tips for being successful, setting goals, and attracting good things to you. Canfield points out we all want to take the shorter, faster route to success. "We want to go further faster with less effort," he said. "Everyone wants to double their income, have more free time, and spend more time with family and friends."

We can spend so much time planning our goals that we don't take any action on them. We wind up spending most of our time figuring out all of the steps to take or waiting for the perfect moment to leap into action. Canfield advises to plunge ahead, even if we don't know how to get there. "It's like driving with the headlights on in the dark," he said. "You only need to see 100 yards ahead. After you pass that 100 yards, the next 100 yards will appear. You don't have to know where to turn. Get on the road and get going. You don't need to get it perfect; you just need to get going."

**Believe It's Possible.** We all engage in self-talk all day long, and we have 50,000 thoughts a day, most of which are negative. Eliminate the negative thoughts and focus on believing it's all possible. "Harness the power of your thoughts," Canfield said. "Your thoughts and expectations precede you. When we focus on our failures, we weaken ourselves."

**Rule of Five.** Do five specific actions every single day to promote your goal. For example, let's say your goal is to reduce clutter in your life. Toss out five pieces of junk mail or file five pieces of paper. Every step forward, no matter how small, takes you one step closer to your overall goal.

**Overcoming Obstacles.** Canfield suggests treating obstacles, not as hindrances, but as problems to be solved. "If you believe you can do it, you can do it," he said. "Self-doubt kills us."

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### **Taming a Collection**

Most of us are collectors of some type. Some people are into collecting art, stamps, or vintage kitchenalia. Then there are those other collections we all harbor, the kind that sneak up on you. Take a look at your pantry, refrigerator, bathroom counter and other nooks and crannies. Did you wake up one day and suddenly notice a large collection of stuff had taken over your space? It's not unusual. In fact, grocery stores and retail discount stores count on us popping in a for "just a couple of things" and leaving with a cart full of goodies.

- Use what you have first. Take an inventory and see how many bottles of shampoo you have. Someone told me recently how she went through her house and gathered up all of the half-used bottles of shampoo and conditioner, and she has pledged to use them instead of going out to buy another bottle of shampoo.
- Toss anything that's expired, old, changed color or texture, or no longer like. If you don't like it, you can see if someone else wants it, but the goal is to get rid of it.
- Declare a temporary moratorium on shopping -- whether you lay off for a week, two weeks or even a month. This allows you to use what you have first and saves you a few bucks.
- Sell or giveaway your books and CDs you no longer want.
- Recycle or toss outdated magazines and catalogs.

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### **Blogging Your Way to Organization**

Two newsletter readers passed along a couple of helpful websites. Academic Productivity, a blog for science types, boasts to be about the irony of blogging about productivity. The site offers great tips and resources for scientists. Past postings include tips on how to work on more than one computer without courting disaster, musings on why you shouldn't become a scientist, and discussions on tenure. Check out the [website](#).

BNET.com is the "go-to-place" for management, and the site offers a wide range of management articles and tips, including the art of an apology, writing livelier memos, having productive meetings, selling ideas and managing the boss. The site also features podcasts and other useful resources for those in the world of work. Check out the [website](#).

And a word on online banking. For you online bankers, here's a recent Newsweek article on the growing trend of online banks. Since the online banks don't have buildings, tellers, and other overhead, they offer higher interest rates and are easy to use. Check out what Jane Bryant Quinn says in the [article](#).

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### Got Clutter?

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing and time management. Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department.

I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061 or e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org) (jsimon@mdanderson.org).

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org) (jsimon@mdanderson.org).

*Happy Organizing!*

-- Janice

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