

## Own your own life

Are you living life at an ever increasing pace?

Do you feel as though you are reacting to events and other people in all aspects of your life?

Do you feel as though you have little or no control of your time?

Do you feel you have a lack of choice about things – feel disempowered?

Do you take time to think about what is important to you?

I was running a training programme for a number of middle ranking people with a large global organisation. In common with many of us, the attendees would have answered the questions above with a “yes” in nearly every case, apart from the last one! How many of you would do the same? Part way through the programme, I signed onto my email and amongst them was one with an attachment labelled “Slow Dance”, (written by David Weatherford). The verse below gives a clue as to the overall tone of the poem.

*Do you run through each day on the fly  
When you ask "How are you?", do you hear the reply?  
When the day is done, do you lie in your bed  
With the next hundred chores running through your head?*

*You'd better slow down  
Don't dance so fast  
Time is short  
The music won't last*

As we restarted after lunch, I read the whole poem to the group as it reinforced the underlying philosophy of the programme. When I finished there was a long silence while people thought about what they had just heard – before asking me to repeat it! We then had a great discussion about how it struck home to so many and what they would do to slow down!

It led me to think about how so many of us live in such a frenetic and disempowered way that we lose sight of what is important to us. We allow other people and events to own our lives! Perhaps we find this more comfortable as it means we do not have to take responsibility for our actions and reactions? We overlook one of the most powerful things we have available – CHOICE!

- We choose what activities we do, based on our values and beliefs (including the limiting beliefs which are often holding us back).
- We choose our emotions and responses to people or situations.
- We choose our values and priorities in life – and how we spend our time

The challenge is to accept we have choice. This puts responsibility right back with us! We have to stop blaming others for causing our feelings or “making” us behave in certain ways. We have to stop feeling as though we are stuck

with a particular employer, boss or situation. To do this we have to accept and own this responsibility. For many it is truly liberating – and empowering. For others it is scary - even terrifying!

Learning new skills in order to develop more choices can transform your life. e.g. Recognising that you can choose your emotions can stop you carrying lousy feelings with you for the day. Taking them home to transfer them to your partner or children can become a thing of the past. Start to behave more assertively at work so that you no longer accept other people controlling your time, or giving you so much to do that you frequently work late or take work home can make you, and those around you, a lot happier!

A challenge for many of us, is to learn to value our own time and to realise that it is our time. To quote Peter Drucker, *“Time is a perishable resource and cannot be stored. There is no substitute for time, it is irreplaceable!”* Think about this, and what difference it can make to your life if you choose to adopt the message and begin to treat time as important and valuable.

Remember it is your life – you can choose to own it! Sometimes, starting on this journey can be cathartic and painful – breaking through this to the empowered future is worth it.

I know for me, I treasure the fact that I own what I do with my time (and how I choose to respond to client demands on my time compared with the “home” needs). I feel more centred by recognising my emotions and responses are MINE. If I find myself becoming annoyed or frustrated – it is my choice to let this continue, *or to change it*. The result, I am much calmer, give people around me more time – and love the fact that *I own my own life*.

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