

Changing My Approach

Written by Lillian Chebosi
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It's amazing what time with God does for us. Being quiet, reflecting in his presence, solutions and ideas start streaming in.

Lately, I have found my work overwhelming, demanding, just too much to do. My approach to tackle the load was to try to get it all done, stretching myself as much as possible.

That wasn't a good approach because it left me drained, constantly feeling mentally fatigued even with enough sleep. I felt lazy to do the personal things that usually bring a sense of refreshment and renewal to me.

I have figured out that for me, just because the work load is huge doesn't mean I need to work longer, chipping away at it every waking moment I have. It may seem like the right thing to do but it's not sustainable, at least not for me.

By working longer, I was pulling away from the one thing that gives me power and strength - proximity to Christ. Because after all that work, I felt too tired to wake up early to spend time in his presence. I still woke up, but not as early, so I did the bare minimum with that time.

Some people need just a few minutes with God. I need a little bit more time to get full. In my next post I will write what I do with that time.

Just because the work is a lot doesn't mean I should consistently work longer hours. It means I need to lean in more, surrender more, depend more and let God do what he sees needs doing. Time with God is the easiest item to drop off the list in busy times. I heard a story about John Wesley. He had an assistant who did his schedule. One evening his assistant asked him, *"tomorrow you got all these to do. How are you going to get it all done?"*

John Wesley responded,

"I am going to get up an hour earlier and spend that extra hour with God."

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That response says it all. If we want to succeed in our busy schedules, we can't afford to eliminate time with God.

So, I have gone back to the basics. I write down my goals for the day, jot down my professional and personal tasks, assigning time for specific tasks, meetings, distractions and emails for work, and separate time slots for personal goals.

I have always scheduled my meetings in the afternoon. I find holding meetings in the morning distractive of my day and a waste of my most productive time. What I am changing is how I deal with other people's requests for meetings that require my participation. Most people schedule for morning meetings. I am responding to these requests by proposing an alternative time in the afternoon.

With regards to distractions, one of my challenges has been dealing with multiple requests for information and advice from colleagues. My new approach now is that if someone walks in or calls without a prior appointment, I will request them to allow me to get back to listen to them at a later time, which would be the time I have assigned for distractions.

The other productivity thief I am addressing is emails, restricting the time I check emails. I won't let other people's agenda dictate how I spend my day at work. I will therefore not start my day attending to emails, but rather schedule a time for emails at a later point in the day so that I use my most productive hours attending to specific tasks on my calendar.

If I can't start my day on my own terms, I am not going to get anywhere in the long term. When it's time for emails, I will conclusively respond to quick ones, and pull out tasks from the rest and schedule when I would work on them. So, I won't attend to them right away but acknowledge receipt and advise the senders that I would get back to them at a later point. This way I can give my undivided attention to achieving my goals. Thereafter, 5 o'clock would find me in my car, driving off, without my laptop.

That's my God-inspired approach. Now I can go back to doing life on my own terms, enjoying my work while maximizing my productivity, enjoying my family, having time for rest, and feeling energized for my evening and morning routines. Having already started this, I know I will recover. I will feel refreshed. I will feel excited again. I will enjoy my life. I will have work-life/

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work-rest balance.

If you have been struggling like me, give yourself permission to end the struggle in the way that speaks to your heart and situation. Lean in more, surrender more, then take action when God tells you what to do. Free yourself to live your life by God's design for work and rest.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi