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The Myth of Multitasking

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Let's face the facts, if you work in Real Estate there is never going to be a time when we don't have SOMETHING to do. Usually while in the middle of that particular "something" we are also in the middle of seven to ten other "some-things" that are equally if not MORE important than the original task at hand. And if you are like so many other agents and brokers the calendar on your IPHONE is telling you the time to get it all done is NOW if not sooner.

I mean our buyers have the day off and they want to go "look at a few things." Our sellers think we need to do a MID-DAY, MID-WEEK open house, just in case the magic house buying fairy, who is looking to pay an extra FIFTY GRAND has off on Tuesday mornings from 11-2. Our brokers are on the phone, our mortgage guy is NOT, and we haven't even had a cup of coffee yet. If you find yourself working in Real Estate you are B-U-S-Y. Aren't You????

Let's take another look, shall we? This time through the eyes of an imaginary third party. In this case I will play the third party and we can see if there are some tasks we might be able to get away with skipping. Or we might find some things we can do away with COMPLETELY. Wouldn't that be nice? We'll see.....

Why don't we take a look at our example above and see if we can "trim some fat" from our hectic schedules . . .

1. “IPHONES, BLACKBERRIES, BLUETOOTHS, OH MY!!” I bet you didn't know that instant messenger, texting and instant email are more addictive and MORE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE than marijuana. A recent study done by a psychiatrist at Kings College in London in 2005 pitted the pocket sized, "time saving" device against the drug with the 'laziest' reputation of them all.... Pot.

The results are shocking. However, they really point out where a TON of our effort and energy goes should we be, like so many others in America, addicted to the Blackberry. To make a long story short, because I know you are busy (after all you need to check your email soon), Blackberry users scored 6 points less on an IQ test than those stoned on marijuana in a head to head test in a laboratory setting.

In order to bring a modicum of sanity back to my life I shut off text messaging and internet on my cell phone. It drives people nuts at first.. But we'll just call that an added bonus. 😊

2. What's in that Double Latte? About a year ago a very good friend and I were sitting at Starbucks one morning having a cup of coffee and I noticed his speech continued to get faster and that his train of thought began to switch from topic to topic. And as I was sitting there enjoying my own Hawaiian blend I began thinking, “ Does he know he won't shut up?” It was amazing as I watched my best friend turn from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde by the time he reached the bottom of the cup.

I began to monitor my own experience as well as read about some of the side effects of too much caffeine and realized that it can be a major disruptor to those who are sensitive to it. It stimulates your nervous system and adrenaline production which can make you feel agitated as well as making it more difficult to focus. So we trade the slight bump in energy that we would use to complete

a task for the ability to focus on one task at a time and then we call ourselves multitasking. When the truth is we just can't concentrate. I like to have a cup in the morning and than one around four o'clock. I use short bursts of exercise and vitamins to keep me focused and productive the rest of the day.

3. Phone calls and interruptions- JUST SAY NO! As with the other drugs mentioned earlier (caffeine and marijuana) interruptions should be treated as dangerous substances. Because they are, at least to your career.

I was with my nine year old daughter the other evening and we sat down so I could teach her the value of assets verses liabilities... Okay, we were playing Monopoly, but you get the point. So my phone rang and it was MY father so I answered it. And as I was on the phone my child said to me, "Is it really that important? We are in the middle of something." YIKES!

It was not that important. After all with caller ID and voice mail there is always a chance to call back. A bunch of things happen when we put our ringers on silent and let the calls go to voice mail. The first being we are uninterrupted which as we have seen has more value than can be quantified. Second, it shows respect for the people we are dealing with in the moment.

So many times it has happened to me that I will be with someone working on something and my phone will vibrate and I just press the ignore button. The most common reaction from those in my company is, "Aren't you going to get that? It could be important." To which I get to reply, "So are you."

Wow! Do you want to drop somebody's jaw to the floor? Tell them they are important. Better yet show them by leaving your attention on them and leaving your ringer on silent.

These three tips are so easy that they are EASILY overlooked. And when we

over look the little things we often find HUGE problems that demand our attention later on. Then once we are drowning in our SELF MADE huge problems we attempt to do too much at once and call it MULTI-TASKING.

“Concentration is power... Controlled focus is like a laser beam that can cut through anything that seems to be in our way.”- Anthony Robbins

Be well.