

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. As always, please click on the link below and give us the benefit of your comments, and click on our social media links, that helps us with search engine optimization and we appreciate that.

So, this week I want to talk about busyness. The number one thing that we hear from our clients, and this has been going on for my entire 29 years, is how busy everybody is. Some family businesses have a little bit of a ... they say, "Oh, man, I'm thrilled that it's Friday, because that means there's only two days left in the work week." That's kind of normal for most family businesses, they work ... I don't know how you guys do it, you work so many hours. To me, it's just so draining and exhausting. I guess I'm lazy by nature, I just don't have it in me to work that hard. But, I just don't know how you do it. It's almost as if you're not in a family business, you're in a family busyness, everybody is just going 100 miles an hour all the time. I wonder how productive it is.

In a book that I read four or five years ago, *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely, he wrote about a locksmith, this is a supposed true story. When the locksmith was young man, he would go and he would be helping somebody get into their car, or home, or something, and it took him a long time to do the job. A lot of times, he ended up breaking the lock and having to put in a brand new lock as a part of ... People would say, "Oh, thanks very much." And they would even give him a tip after the job was done. Well, as time went on, he got better and better and better at his job, and it took him much less time, he didn't break the locks anymore, and nobody gave him any tips. It's like they didn't appreciate it. Dan says that really, what people were appreciating was the time and effort. It's almost like they didn't care about the results. If I can get in my house quicker, that's better. The locksmith was providing better service, but actually getting less reward, because people value time and effort.

Now, today is different from what it was 50 or 100 years ago. Back 50 or 100 years ago, there were more constraints. For example, a farmer didn't have all the technology of today, so if it was too wet to plant he couldn't plant. If the crops haven't come up to a sufficient size, then he couldn't harvest. Manufacturers had constraints on their inputs and their outputs in the equipment and all those kinds of things to a greater degree. So, people worked super hard back then, but it wasn't the 24/7 of today. Now, so many more people work in the knowledge economy. Constant texts, constant emails, constant social media monitoring, I mean, you just can never get away from it. It was almost better in the old days. People worked really hard, but at 5:00, or 6:00, or 7:00 in the evening, they went home and had dinner with the family, and that was that.

One of the reasons that Dan and other writers think that we are so addicted, and it is an addiction, to busyness, is that busyness today is associated with status. So think back a few hundred years ago, think about that TV show *Downton Abbey* where really rich people had an amazing amount of leisure. Having leisure, back then, was considered a status symbol. If you were of the nobility and you didn't have to work super hard, that was a symbol of status. Today, the pendulum has swung entirely the other way, and the status symbol is busyness. I can't tell you how many meetings I've been to where people are almost competing to talk about how busy they are and how little free time they have, almost as if it's a badge of honor versus a sign that maybe they're not as efficient and effective as they could be.

So, I've got five tips here for how to not be so darn busy all the time. The first one comes directly from Dan Sullivan and The Strategic Coach, and that is, get your calendar out and look at the next 90 days and block off your personal

and family time first. We're going for a long weekend, we have a week vacation planned for Thanksgiving week, whatever. Block that off first and make that sacred, so that you do separate yourself from your business, and you devote sufficient amount of time to your family and yourself.

The second thing comes from a psychologist who used to work with us, named Jean McClendon. Jean always, not always, often held her retreats outside, at the beach or at the mountains in particular, because she said, "People who are struggling need to see something bigger than themselves. They need to get outside." So if you can put on your calendar to walk, especially maybe with your spouse for 30 to 45 minutes at a time, three times a week, get outside and just realize there's something bigger. There's more to life than busyness, and being in the office, and putting your head down and working with your computer and all those things.

The third thing is, ask yourself ... This is a legitimate question, who sets your schedule? Who is in charge of your calendar? Now, if you're the Fortune 500 CEO, maybe you really do have people filling up your calendar for you. But, I've never seen a family business leader that wasn't in charge of her own, or his own calendar. I just don't understand how we get to a point of success in life, and yet we exert so little control over our own time and effort. We're not jealous about our time the way we should be. So think about that really hard. Who controls your calendar? If you're too busy and you're kind of miserable about it, who's really responsible for that?

The fourth thing is, learn to say no. Our clients are so sought after, the hospital wants them on the Board, the bank wants them on the Board, the non-profit of all kinds, the church, I mean, everybody wants you on their Board, or they want you to contribute time and money in some way. I think family business leaders are often too reluctant to say no, even to business opportunities. Some business opportunities aren't in your best interest. Learn to say no. Learn to say no to your people as they try to delegate upward to you. Learn to say no and protect your valuable time, whether it's a non-profit or not. And, say no without guilt. There's only so much of you to go around, and if you learn to say no and you put limits on how often other people have access to you and your time, you'll actually have a little more balance in your life.

And, the fifth thing is, evaluate results. Results are much, much more important in a family business than time and effort. So whether you're evaluating your sons and daughters, or your non-family key employees, or whoever, man, I don't care if somebody stays until 9:00 at night to get their work done. To me, that's a sign of inefficiency, I'd rather hire somebody that's a little sharper and works smarter, and can get home at 5:00, and come back well rested the next day. So evaluate results and stop this foolish focus on time and effort.

Kind of a bonus sixth tip comes from the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey's blockbuster book. Habit number seven was sharpen the saw. That meant you preserve and enhance your energy, your intellect, yourself, because if you don't protect yourself and look out for yourself, who is? You're not going to be effective as a husband, a wife, a father, a mother, a business executive, if you give too much of yourself and you're burned out, you're not going to be effective. So make time to sharpen the saw.

We'd love to have your comments. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.