



If you're at capacity, it's time to give yourself permission to simplify your life and push a few things back—or off your plate completely.

Five Signs You're "At Capacity" — and What to Do About It!

by Marie Moran

You're working as long and as hard as you've ever done. It seems like there are never enough hours in the day! You wonder how you can keep up this pace indefinitely. And when's that proverbial light at the end of the tunnel going to show up? When will things ease up a bit so you can breathe, not pant?

If that self-talk sounds familiar, then you or someone you know may very well be beyond

capacity with your workload – and maybe with your life overall! As an executive coach, one of the most common complaints I hear today from colleagues and clients is, "I'm stretched too thin! I need more hours in the day!" One wonders, how did we ever get so darn busy? And what are the costs to this trend, both personally and professionally?

Five Sure-Fire Signs You're "At Capacity" – or Beyond!

- You find yourself making little mistakes, omissions or oversights that wouldn't normally happen if you weren't so jammed up.
- You get irritated beyond reason when another task, responsibility, or commitment is suddenly added to your plate.
- You postpone or cancel "important but not urgent" meetings or commitments such as training opportunities or collegial engagements that you'd really benefit from if you had more capacity.
- You feel as though you can never get caught up, let alone return all your calls and emails.
- You find yourself postponing vacations and allotments of personal time that you'd earmarked for yourself.

What does "being at capacity" cost you and your organization?

- **Your motivation and enthusiasm suffer.** It's hard to put your best quality into your work when your energy and drive are waning.
- **It's difficult to truly relax.** When you feel drained and you aren't recharging, your immune system is weaker. Thus you're more prone to getting sick.
- **It's tough to stay focused on the big**

picture when you're so busy going from one project or commitment to the next.

- You don't have much quality time or energy to give others, because your own cup is half full and dropping!
- In situations which require good judgment and analysis, you might tend to either react too quickly or procrastinate making a decision because you're not at your best.

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What are Some Solutions?

1. **Schedule a mental health day** to step back and re-evaluate your priorities. What is really important to you personally, in your current role at work, and to your organization? Identify where the fine line is between what are truly your responsibilities, and when you are feeling obligated and doing things just because you think you **should**. Ask yourself, "Where do I keep giving more time and energy when it would be advisable to delegate or move on?"
2. Once you've stepped back to get a fresh perspective, **determine the specific opportunities for change**. What can you delegate, do later on, or drop altogether? Give yourself permission to simplify your life and push a few things back or off the plate altogether.
3. **Communicate**. With whom do you need to talk to re-negotiate and implement these changes? If needed, have a heart to heart chat with your manager to gain agreement to re-focus or re-prioritize. Let your Administrative Assistant know what your intentions are and how that will affect your calendar. Talk with your family members as needed to clarify upcoming changes in your behavior and why they are beneficial for everyone.
4. **Commit to taking quality time for yourself** on an on-going basis to keep a healthy perspective and to recharge your batteries. Even a 10 minute a day "Time Out" of personal thought time is a great way to start. And be sure to plan your vacations well in advance (that way you'll know they are coming!) and then stick to your plans unless there is a family emergency or business crisis.
5. In the future, **when you decide to say yes, make sure it's really a yes**. Or if you determine it's advisable to say no, make it a firm no. Most of the time, an indecisive commitment is unhealthy for everyone.

Make the concrete changes to your schedule and your routine, such that your new intentions translate into action and new behavior. Now, get ready to enjoy more quality in your life and fulfillment in your role!

Are you or someone you know "at capacity" and close to burnout?

*In our **Recharge & Renewal**[®] workshops, we examine fundamental choices and learn to take steps which will connect to greater fulfillment. This is how we each discover more joy, greater freedom and ease in life – even in areas where we previously were "at capacity!" For information, please call us at 888.284.2442.*

About the Author

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Marie Moran & Company offers workshops, seminars, and one-on-one consulting to develop personal leadership and life effectiveness. We impart skills and principles to enhance excellence in the workplace, and increase Life balance, fulfillment, and joy!