

Thank you for attending the 2017 Region X Conference!!!!

This booklet and the associated powerpoint presentation has been produced by Tennessee Federation of Chapters 1st Vice President Ed Evans.

The material was first presented at the 2017 Tennessee Federation Convention and some portions may appear to be specific to Tennessee. However, it is hoped that you will be able to use the information in a creative manner to help Chapters within your Federation become a viable entity that will attract new members to NARFE.

SETTING YOUR CHAPTER MEETING ON FIRE

61st NARFE Convention 2017

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NARFE Chapter Website Information Sheet

OPTION 1: Use the Chapter Website option available on the NARFE National Website.

For most chapters, this will be the easiest to set up and to maintain and probably the least expensive. It does not require any special software or a lot of technical expertise. You will need basic computer equipment and skills.

It is part of the NARFE Online Activities Module (OAM) and can be set up and maintained by either of these Chapter Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Membership Chair, Editor, or Network Coordinator. The cost is \$29.95 annually invoiced to the chapter treasurer. Your chapter web address will be an extension of the NARFE National website, such as:

www.narfe.org/site/chapter672

You must use the predefined layout or templets. You are able to upload content about your chapter, pictures, newsletters, web links, etc.

OPTION 2: Someone in your chapter who has the skills can set up and maintain a website.

There would need to be someone in your chapter or associated with your chapter who knows at least the basic skills of creating websites. They would need an account with a web hosting service like Go Daddy, HostGator, 1&1, etc. (I do not recommend the free website hosting services as they place Ads on your website.) Many web hosting companies generally have website building templates that makes the process of creating the website easier. But, the person creating the website could manually create it using computer software such as what is called:

HTML Editor Program.

Your chapter would be responsible to register and maintain a Domain Name unique to its chapter to use for its web address. For this option, the costs would vary. Typically the costs for the Domain Name is currently about \$15 per year, the costs of web hosting currently runs anywhere from \$5 to \$15 per month.

Advantages to this option would be more control over the content and layout of the website. Additionally, this option would generally allow you to set up email accounts for your officers and members with the same Domain Name as your chapter. Also there would be many other benefits with option.

OPTION 3: The chapter could hire an individual or company to create and maintain a website.

The advantage of this method would result in probably a more professional look and feel, but it would have the disadvantage of a much higher cost.

Someone in the chapter would still need to supply content to whoever is maintaining the chapter website.

Important For All Websites: For websites to be effective, they must be maintained and contain up to date information.

If you set up a website using Option 2 or 3, let the NARFE National office know your website address (you can do that using the Form F-7. And for all options let the Federation Network Coordinator know your website address.

Setting Your Chapter on Fire **Looking for Champions**

By Ed Evans

I want to begin by telling you I served 30 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, around the world, and 17 years as a federal civilian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — again, around the world. At age 65 I was in Iraq dodging bullets and missiles with them as they rewired and re-electrified the battered nation of Iraq.

So I speak with some authority when I tell you that the men and women who have served this nation in and out of uniform are champions.

We tend to think of those on the football field, in hockey, baseball, basketball, tennis and golf as champions. I don't care who you suggest, they don't hold a candle to the sacrifice and bold heroism I've seen federal workers exhibit in the field and in the office. Those are America's champions.

But we might as well face some hard facts. One of the most common assumptions when building and leading an organization is that if you build it, they will come. But face it: you're not Kevin Costner and this isn't "Field of Dreams." You're better off to assume they won't come. That way, you're already thinking of creative ways to keep people engaged.

That's what this session today is all about. Giving you some creative ground to build on, some things to keep in mind when the going gets tough.

And, incidentally, we do this because you, right here today, you are among those champions. You come from a field of champions who have seen the elephant. You have your stories to tell. You deserve the career and the retirement you have chosen. Because you are here today, I salute you for choosing to share what you know, what you hope for, what you can see ahead of us - - - with other federal champions. Thank you.

Presiding Over A Successful Chapter Is A People Problem NOT A Planning Problem

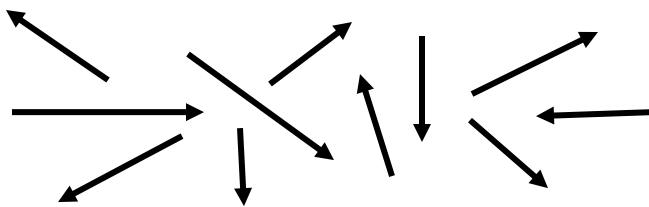
Perhaps your local NARFE Chapter President is lying awake nights; can't sleep because he hates to live with problems. He'd rather solve problems. He needs a strategy.

So, what is he worrying about? *People*.

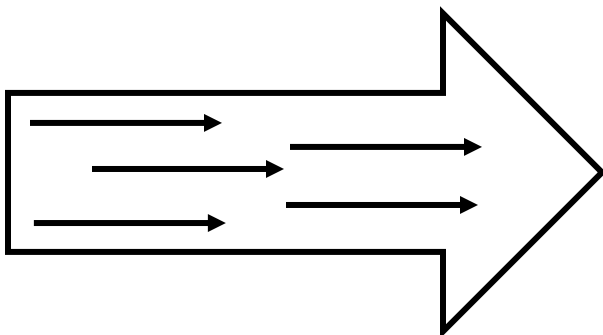
Which is precisely what he *should* be worrying about. However hard it is to plan a smart strategy, it's even harder to get people to execute that strategy. A poorly executed strategy, no matter how well-planned, is worthless.

In other words, your NARFE Chapter's biggest strategic challenge isn't strategic thinking - - - it's strategic acting.

If we were to depict the challenge graphically, it would look like arrows pointed in every direction:



What it needs to look like is a shower of arrows all pointed in the same direction:



But how to get from the first example to the second one? Most organizations rely on communication plans to make that shift; based on saving your job and obeying your supervisor. Unfortunately, strategy communication for volunteers,

even if you were able to do it daily, is not the same and does not have enough drive to move people to strategy execution.

Because while strategy development and communication are about knowing something, strategy execution is about doing something. And the gap between what you know and what you do is often huge. As you attempt to have everyone acting in step, in concert with each other, the gap just gets worse.

Now, the reason most of us miss this and fall into this "gap trap" is because we don't recognize and treat the problem as a human behavior one. We don't lack planning or buy-in, it's a natural human behavior problem.

If we were going to achieve the "best of all best" results, our Chapter staff and membership would need to be super aligned and laser-focused on the highest-impact actions that will drive the organization's most important outcomes.

But even in well-run, stable organizations, people tend to be misaligned, too broadly focused, and working at cross-purposes. And this is often especially true in non-profits and volunteer membership organizations.

If we can admit we have seen this in our own commercial organizations, in government organizations and non-profits, imagine how susceptible those Chapters filled with people who have reached the point in life where we just want to retire and enjoy life. But there are hard and fast reasons an organization like NARFE exists, and important reasons we need to belong and support NARFE, reasons that have to do with our own financial survival.

Therefore we can see that any time it's critical to focus on strategy - - - and when isn't it? - - - the most important strategy question you need to answer is: How can we align everyone's efforts and help them accomplish the organization's most important work? Isn't that why we belong to NARFE - - - to accomplish the mission of caring for and protecting what we have earned, the future for ourselves and others.

But perhaps first and foremost, we as Chapter officers, as organizational leaders, must identify the most important goals NARFE needs to achieve over the following months. Those at NARFE Regional and National HQ have created a strategy and product roadmap that needs to be supported by the entire leadership team. The

hardest part of this is getting to that one most important thing, the thing that would be a catalyst for driving the rest of the strategy forward.

So let's take a hard, honest look at what will move us forward.

- Will success in the survival of our NARFE Chapter drive the mission of the larger organization forward?
- Are the actions of our Chapter membership supporting, and supported by, our primary goals?
- Will achieving our Chapter goals make a statement to the organization about what's most important?
- Will our success lead to the execution of NARFE's strategy?
- If we, each one, stretch ourselves, can we accomplish more?
- Are you, as an individual, excited about what your Chapter can accomplish? Do you have an emotional connection to that goal? Do you share it with other members?

If you can answer yes to these questions, your Chapter has the opportunity for a dynamic future before it.

Along with that outcome clarity, we also need to discuss behavioral clarity by identifying the most important behavior that would lead to achieving the outcome. For starters, the behavior that represents trust and transparency. Other people can see right through us when we play games with our words and our actions, and basic trust washes right down the drain. Less than honest effort is what will make the drive for success harder and less likely to achieve. Success needs a full commitment.

❖ **Who Are The High Impact People?**

First, as a Chapter member yourself, identify the people who are most essential to achieving the Chapter's goals. Doing this is critical because you want to focus your efforts and resources on the people who will have the most impact on the viability of the Chapter. Who do you see as being core to the Chapter's survival? Who already demonstrates organizational authority, and who may already be highly networked. Do your best to identify people with leadership traits at all levels of the organization. As you think about who might be appropriate for building and nourishing the Chapter, ask questions of them: Who has the greatest capacity to affect the forward momentum of our Chapter? Who is an influencer in the organization? Who has the talents, if not to lead outright, to support, sustain and

encourage positive organizational behavior? Those are the people you should put into positions that best impact Chapter growth.

❖ **Help Them Sharpen Their Focus**

Once you have identified and put these key people into position, we need to work with each of them; do more than salute them and walk away. Help them to:

- Identify their key contribution to moving the Chapter forward;
- Determine their pivotal strength that will allow them to make their key contribution; and
- Foresee the game changer, the thing that, if the person improves, will most improve their ability to make their key contribution.

One of the things that makes this process successful is its simplicity. Settle on **one** pivotal strength and **one** most critical game changer. Strategy execution needs to be laser-focused, and one of the biggest impediments to moving our Chapters forward is trying to get forward momentum on **all** our work at once. Simplicity requires that we make choices. What will have the biggest impact on your Chapter and on your membership? Then, make that one thing happen.

❖ **Coaching Sessions Build Cohesion**

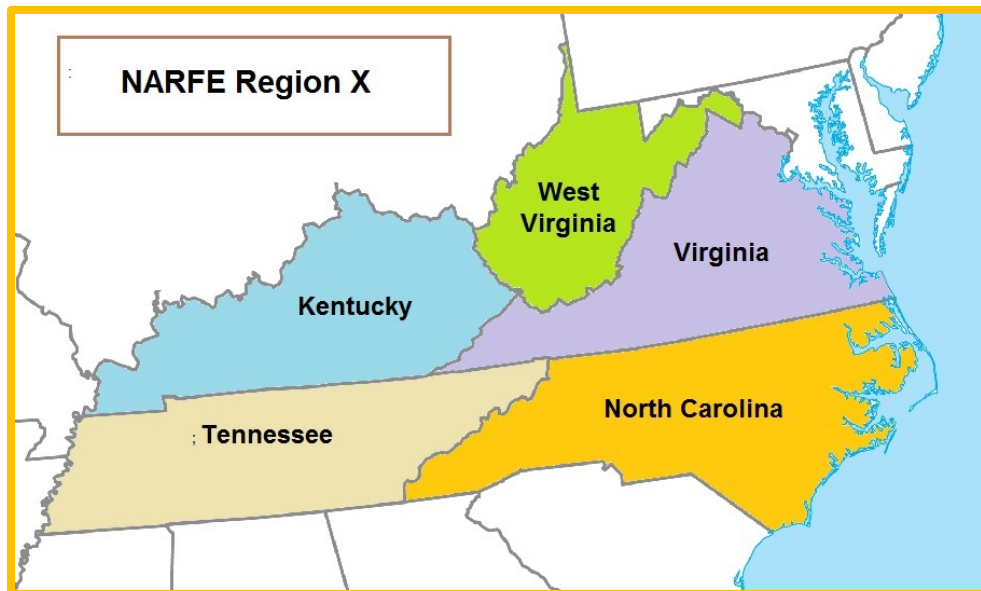
Once we make sure the right people have the right focus, we need to coach in laser-focused coaching sessions. If possible, join with the Chapter staff 30 minutes before a monthly meeting. Some organizational staffs do this to identify and fix a leader's flaws, but that must not be the focus of this kind of coaching. Here, the staff leaders are coached to focus on making clear headway on their key contribution to the Chapter's movement forward. Only focus on larger behavioral patterns to the extent they are getting in the way of the task at hand; never central to the meeting.

❖ **Fire Up Relationships That Will Shrug Off Problems**

The senior leadership needs to focus the coaching effort on addressing the typical challenges people struggle with when urged to execute strategy: how to communicate priorities, how to deal with someone who is resistant, how to influence someone who doesn't respond, how to say no to distractions, and so on. Prioritized helping people build relationships, collaborating with trust and transparency.

Those members who are aware of and aligning with the goals of the organization are valuable to driving continued growth and success, a value encouraged by seeing support from the entire leadership team. This also becomes a momentum that builds and encourages future leaders, contributing to the very basic element of the organization:

SURVIVAL OF THE CHAPTER



“Together We Can Move NARFE Forward”

Nine Little Productivity Hacks That Deliver Way More Than You Think

By Carey Nieuwhof

Like most leaders, you have far more opportunities and responsibility than you feel like you have time for. It's hard to juggle all the competing demands, keep your mind focused on what matters most and get it all done.

I believe the best thing you can do is change your overall approach to managing time, energy and priorities. There are also little things you can do to deliver way more relief than you think.

Here are nine simple productivity hacks I've discovered that deliver in big ways.

1. Pick Your Clothes Out The Night Before

One of your key assets as a leader is your mental energy. It drives thought, clarity, focus and so much more.

The problem, of course, is that life gets in the way of your mental energy, and if you're not careful, the thousands of decisions you make in everyday life will suck up your focus, thinking and clarity before you know it.

A number of years ago I noticed almost every high impact leader I admired had a morning routine. I was developing mine, but I wanted to go deeper.

- I started noticing that people like Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs wore the same thing every day (grey T-shirt and jeans, black mock turtle neck and jeans, respectively).
- Albert Einstein bought several versions of the same tweed suit and wore that look every day.

So is this a fashion statement, a personal brand or something else?

Actually, it's more about mental energy and decision fatigue. Einstein reportedly said his decision to dress the same every day was so he didn't need to think about what he was going to wear.

You would think Einstein would have had brain power to spare, but he realized that mental energy gets spent like money gets spent. He did not think clothes were a great focal point. I agree.

Conserve your mental energy as though it were a finite resource. Because it is. I have not committed to the same clothes every day, but on big days (like Sunday or a key meeting day), I will select all of my clothes the night before. I'm shocked by the difference it makes. I'm no longer rummaging through my closet at 6:30 AM on a Sunday morning thinking thoughts like:

- *Did I wear that last week?*
- *Have I worn that in this series?*
(We're a video church people notice these things.)
- *Do these even match? (I'm color blind and fashion-challenged.)*
- *Are these the pants that are too tight/too loose?*

All of those questions get answered the night before.

What am I focusing on instead? The message. The delivery. The people. I even have more time to pray.

Try it. Pick your clothes out the night before.

2. Follow A Morning Ritual

I also noticed that almost every great leader and top performer typically does the same thing at the start of each day. They can vary, but from pre-game rituals for athletes to the morning routine of high impact leaders, almost everyone has a set of steps they go through to get ready.

My morning starts between 4:30 and 5:00 every morning with a cup of tea, Bible study and prayer. Then I move into writing on important projects. After a few hours I have breakfast (the same high protein breakfast every day—a piece of fruit, eggs, and sausage or bacon) and a shower, and then I go back to work on big projects. The point here is not to imitate others, but to figure out what routine works for you.

If you don't have consistent habits to start your day with, the morning can quickly become frazzled and haphazard, or at least pointless. Before you know it, three hours have gone by, you've accomplished nothing and your brain is already tired. Routines force your mind and body to be disciplined.

If you don't have a morning routine, start one. And don't use the excuse that you've got young kids. I did too once. (Kids can benefit from routines as well.) Even if it's just an intentional 30-minute start to your day before your kids get up, it can transform your mindset for the entire day. You might even become a kinder parent. A morning routine doesn't guarantee a great day, but it positions you for one.

3. Guard Your Peak Energy Window

Even though you have 24 equal hours in a day, not every hour is created equal. If you're like most people, you have a three- to five-hour a day window where your energy is at its highest, your mind is sharpest and you can produce more than normal.

And you have other windows where you feel sluggish or tired.

In ***The High Impact Leader Course*** - - - I show you exactly how to discover your personal energy windows and how to optimize them for maximum effectiveness and productivity.

Here's a quick hack you can start using now. Don't squander your best window.

When you're at your best, do your most important work. Too many leaders end up wasting their peak hours going for breakfast (or lunch), sitting in meetings they don't need to be in, or even exercising. Unless working out is your top goal, don't do it in your peak hours. Do it when you're a little more tired later in the day (it will rescue those hours in the process).

For me, my peak hours are 5 a.m.-10 a.m., and I do all the writing I can in those windows. Like writing this blog post. What takes me two hours in that window might take me five hours when I'm tired. And the quality is better when I'm sharp.

What's the secret to high impact leadership? Doing what you're best at when you're at your best.

4. Use Distractions As Rewards

Let's face it, when you have really important work to do, you feel the urge to do anything except the work you're supposed to do.

So you might:

- Jump on Instagram.
- Stop by a co-worker's desk to chat.
- Raid the fridge.
- Check out the YouTube video on how to fix your garage door opener.

More than ever before, our lives are full of distractions that push to every device we own.

Here's a tip. Use the distraction as a reward.

Don't tell yourself you can't scroll through Instagram. Just tell yourself you can do it after you've worked for an hour, or completed five pages of that report, or designed the retreat, or whatever you're doing. When you use distractions as rewards, your productivity will jump.

5. Turn Off All Notifications On Your Devices

Speaking of distractions, turn off ALL notifications on your devices if you really want to be productive.

The default for most apps on your phone and computer leans more often toward "on" these days rather than off.

Look through your settings and disable them. The only ones I routinely leave on are texts. (I don't give out my number widely and my teams knows to text me if it's urgent.) It's amazing how focused you'll become.

A focused leader is a productive leader. A distracted leader isn't.

6. Take A Break To Find A Breakthrough

As focused as you are, sometimes it can be really difficult to find that breakthrough idea you're looking for. Your natural instinct is probably to stay longer, work harder and stare at that blank notebook or screen a little longer. For years, that was my instinct too.

But have you ever noticed your best ideas often come to you when you're not trying to think of them?

You wake up in the morning and there it is. Or you're out for a walk or a run and it hits you. Or you're in the shower and the breakthrough just dawns on you. You're not alone.

There's good research that shows our brains actually connect the dots in the background when our minds are relaxed. In my experience, you have to do some solid grinding on an idea before taking a break. That's the "work" part.

But often when designing a sermon series or writing a book, I'll work hard on the concepts when I'm at my best, but then I'll take a break. It can be anything from cutting the grass, to going for a one-hour bike ride, to taking a drive into town. For me, it's the combination of a relatively mindless physical activity preceded by some deep work on an issue that produces the greatest quantity of eureka moments.

If you're searching for that elusive breakthrough, take a break.

7. Have An Easy Capture System For Ideas And Insights

Because your best ideas will come to you when you're not expecting it, you need to develop a foolproof method for capturing them.

Whether it's a notebook you carry with you or some app on your phone is irrelevant. You simply need something to capture them before they vaporize. Because they will vaporize.

I use Evernote because I can record them if I'm not able to stop or write. I've recorded whole sermon series ideas while cycling (on the road). But whatever you use, make sure you have it with you.

8. Go To Bed Early

Before I burned out 11 years ago, I thought sleep was for weak people. Since I burned out, I've found a new enthusiasm for sleep I never had before.

Why?

A rested you is a better you.

As Greg McKeown wrote in his New York Times best-selling book ***Essentialism***, sleep protects the most valuable asset you have: *you - - - your body and your mind*. You can listen to my interview with Greg here: <http://careynieuwhof.com/episode122/>

If you're really struggling to stay focused, just go to bed early tonight and get eight hours of sleep. Do that night after night until you feel fantastic.

I really believe ***sleep is a secret leadership weapon*** most leaders miss.

When I wasn't sleeping much, I had a smaller church and had written zero books. Since I've taken sleep more seriously, our church has doubled in size and I've written three books, launched two courses, host two podcasts and speak to leaders all over the world. That's not entirely coincidental.

9. Take A Nap

It's surprising how many highly effective leaders have adopted the practice of napping. From Benjamin Franklin, to Winston Churchill, to Thomas Edison, to Michael Hyatt, to Adana Huffington, napping is the practice of many amazing leaders.

For me, a nap in the middle of the day feels like plugging my phone in. I move from 50 percent to 80-90 percent in about 20 minutes.

Or as Winston Churchill put it: Nature has not intended mankind to work from eight in the morning until midnight without that refreshment of blessed oblivion which, even if it only lasts twenty minutes, is sufficient to renew all the vital forces. If you're sluggish, struggling with focus or your mind just isn't that sharp, take a nap.

A rested brain is a better brain.

Five Things You Say That Kill Your Leadership

By Carey Nieuwhof

The innocent phrases you say every day impact you - - - and others - - - more than you think. Have a look at the list below, and you'll immediately recognize that you say some of these things without even realizing it. They're almost verbal ticks in our culture. Even if you don't really mean anything by them, these statements undermine your effectiveness as a leader.

So why do little phrases matter to your leadership?

TWO REASONS

First, what we say reflects what we believe. Especially the little phrases that slip out without giving them much thought. They expose convictions that are worth letting go.

Second, they matter because each of these five phrases I'm sharing with you is a lie - - - not in the horrible moral sense, but in the sense that they're actually not true. Of all the lies we tell, the lies we tell ourselves are the most deadly because they follow us everywhere we go in life and leadership.

Thoughtfully choosing your words about how you handle time is one small step out of the spin of constant busyness and low productivity that kills both your leadership and your life.

But to truly be effective, you need a strategy and a new system that gets time, energy and priorities working in your favor.

I've tried to eliminate all of these phrases over the years. It's hard because they roll off the tongue so naturally. But I think I've become a better leader, husband, and dad as a result.

Of all the lies we tell, the lies we tell ourselves are the most deadly.

1. I Didn't Get A Chance To

It's so easy to say you didn't get a chance to do something. You didn't get a chance to get that report done, or write that email you promised someone, or empty the dishwasher.

Actually, you did get the chance to do whatever you said you didn't get a chance to do. You just didn't take it.

Imagine what might happen if you started admitting to yourself that you had all the chances in the world to do whatever you needed to do... you just didn't take them. A little sobering. But a little liberating too. Hours and minutes don't discriminate. They let you do whatever you decide to do. You just didn't decide to do it.

Hours and minutes don't discriminate. They let you do whatever you decide to do. You had the chance to do it, you just didn't take it.

2. I Just Don't Have Time For That

That phrase was one of my most frequently uttered responses anytime someone asked me to do anything new or extra.

Then one day I woke up and realized all high impact people I admire who produce so many great things with their life don't get any special treatment. They get 24 hours in a day. Just like me. Just like you. Nothing more. Nothing less.

You have the time and I have the time, just like we had the chance. So how do you counter this one?

Well, years ago I stopped saying that I don't have the time; I started admitting I didn't make the time. That sounds like a small thing, but if you do it consistently, it can be revolutionary.

Try it for a week. Stop saying you don't have the time (because you do). Start admitting you didn't make it. (***Pro Tip:*** Don't use your outside voice. You will have no friends left. Just admit you're not making the time to yourself.)

When you (silently) admit you aren't going to make the time, it forces you to ruthlessly evaluate your priorities. You'll realize that never making time for your mom, or your most important priorities - - - or a life dream - - - is a mistake.

And when you're dead honest with yourself about not making the time to work out, or do proper sermon prep, or have a date night with your spouse, or work on your top priorities it's so much easier to change.

Stop saying you don't have the time. Start admitting (to yourself) you didn't make time.

3. I'm Busy

In many circles, the #1 response people give to "How are you?" is "I'm busy." What's up with that?

Whatever happened to "I'm doing really well" or "You know, things are a little challenging, thanks for asking" or "I'm great. How are you?" Everyone you meet is busy these days. Even retired people.

So why is saying you're busy not the best way to respond to a simple greeting?

Well, first, how does being busy help or engage the other person? It doesn't. But more importantly, mediocre leaders wear busyness as a badge of honor: Look at how busy I am. I must be important. Before you think I'm judging, I used to wear busyness as a badge of honor when I was in my thirties. Then I burned out.

Busyness is not a sign of effectiveness. It's a sign you can't manage your life. So why tell people you're not effective? If you feel too busy, do something about it. Then you won't feel compelled to tell anyone how busy you feel.

Busyness is not a sign of effectiveness. It's a sign you can't manage your life.

4. I Can Squeeze That In

I was talking to a leader this week that's making great progress. His former approach to time management was to squeeze as much in as possible. He said his old mantra literally was "I can squeeze that in."

It was consistently becoming more difficult to do because his church is growing by leaps and bounds. That strategy has a lid: eventually, you can't squeeze anything else in because nobody's making any more time.

Fortunately, he realized he just couldn't keep squeezing things in. If you abandon this approach, you'll see great gains as well. Instead, he's learned to say no nicely to carefully assess his priorities and from that, he determines what he's going to do and not going to do.

You can't squeeze everything in. And if you do, it will eventually squeeze you so hard there's nothing left. Surprisingly, when you stop trying to squeeze everything in, your capacity as a leader doesn't shrink; it grows.

Squeezing everything in eventually squeezes you so hard there's nothing left.

5. I Just Can't

A final challenge with overwhelm is that it leaves us feeling like we can't. And so we end up turning down great opportunities by saying things like "I just can't."

My guess is that even recently, you've probably said / can't to something you really wanted to do. Like maybe a family night, or a vacation, or a promotion, or an expansion, or some meaningful time with God, or training for that half marathon.

Want to hear the bad news? You can. You really can.

Everything competes with anything. When your priorities are confused and you've chosen everything over anything, your dreams die. If you stop saying I just can't and start admitting that you actually can, you will begin to clear your life of the lower value things that are robbing you of what could bring you the highest value.

Get Back 1,000 More Hours You Can Use In 2017

If you had a gift of 1,000 more hours this year, what would you do with them? How many meaningful projects could you take on? How much more time could you spend with your family, doing the things you would like to do?

Okay, you've got them. They are yours, 1,000 extra hours. Well, not extra, they've been there all along. You just need to invoke the principles and strategies that will break them loose for you to use; to gain about three hours a day.

Along with three more hours a day, you also discover new insights into time, energy and priority management, providing you more time to do the other things you would like to do, including spending more productive time with friends and family. It's a matter of organizing your time, energy and priorities so they worked in your favor. Do that and you have gained three productive hours a day, which means you also have 1,095 new hours to your credit for 2017.

So how do we accomplish this? Well, here are three ideas to get you started.

1. Set Priorities

Begin by admitting you have the time. Most of us just assume we don't have the time to do the things we want to do. In fact, we even announce that fallacy as if it were true, and thereby we convince ourselves. Think back, how often this past week have you said, "I don't have time for that?" Or, at least thought it?

Join in on a new project?

"Sorry, I don't have the time for that."

Spend time with friends?

"Sorry, I really don't have the time."

Help someone with your expertise?

"I'd love to. I just don't have the time."

The fact is, we all get 24 hours in a day. You, me, everyone. Nothing more. Nothing less. So how do successful people do it? Especially when we all get the same amount of time?

We have all these labor-saving devices, several of which, like recorders and playback machines, help us shift time. Take a cue from that and learn to shift time yourself. For example, stop saying you don't have time. For one week, stop saying

you don't have time, because you do. It's all in how you schedule that time. You have time when you "make" time. If you really don't have time for something, it is only because you didn't make time for it.

It's a beginning. You might even find yourself having some frank conversations with yourself about what you really can accomplish. Sometimes we use the "lack of time" as an excuse not to do those things we find are outside our comfort zone. There really is time to go to the gym, time to stop by your in-laws' house, time to shop for your wife, time to run an errand for a friend, when we make time.

Then we find we have the time we need for the top priorities in our life, or at least those things that should have top priority. Begin Now. Never again say you don't have time.

2. Stop Cheating About Your Gift

You have a special gift at something. Everyone does. Talking to people, organizing your thoughts, or strategic projects, maybe music or administration. Whatever it is, you're good at it. It shows, people know it, and they want you to come and use your gift to help them out. You can likely do it faster and easier than most people.

But, that's also how you get trapped, helping other people. But there must be some time set aside to use that gift on your projects, for your family. And there must be time to develop it further. Otherwise, it never progresses past your natural ability. You never get better unless you make time to do it, and the way to do that is to prioritize.

The one thing actively managing your time does for you is that it forces you to ruthlessly evaluate your priorities, eliminating those minor things you're merely good at, but don't have the potential to be great at. However, this leads you to more fully engage in those areas where your talent lies, which leads to personal growth.

3. Stop Reacting

Plan, don't react. Maybe like me you make a list of what's ahead of you tomorrow. But notice that your to-do list rarely gets done that day. Maybe not even by the end of the week?

First, you have set your priorities in order, but did you keep your priorities straight? Something took up that time. What was it? Everything we do these days

is fraught with interruptions. I call that the "squirrel" syndrome. You start on something important, and suddenly someone says "Look, there's a squirrel!" And your attention is sidetracked. A knock on the door, the telephone, e-mail, someone asks you a question, for our assistance, and you're off-track. Look, there's a squirrel! Something else has taken priority, and you're suddenly accomplishing someone else's priorities.

The only defense is to decide ahead of time how to manage your time. Schedule your priorities and refuse to be drawn off until they are completed. Ignore e-mail. Be deaf to interruptions. Turn off your phone notifications. Ignore that squirrel. You will revolutionize your productivity. Otherwise, someone else will be deciding your priorities for you, and your priorities will still be setting there, undone.

These are just three steps to get you started getting back in charge of your time, energy, and priorities. Once you get control of those, you will find the rest of your life is impacted for excellence, as well.

Be the change. Start now.

Six Things That Leak In Your Leadership

Have you ever had a cup of coffee that leaks on you, or a drippy cup of soda? It's the worst. You finally get to the front of the line, get your java in hand and then notice with every sip a little bit of coffee is splattering on your shirt. It happens.

A leaky cup is frustrating because slowly over time the contents of the cup are lost. Maybe leaky cups are not an issue for you. What about a leaky pipe in your house? Or maybe you have dealt with an oil leak from your car? Leaks are an unfortunately reality in life — those things which are created to hold something good can over time develop a leak.

Leaks are not limited to cups, pipes and engines we as human beings must deal with internal leaks every once in a while. A leak left unaddressed can cause a mess, maybe big problems down the road.

Pay attention to these six things that will leak in your life:

1. **Vision Leaks** - - - This is an axiom made popular by Bill Hybels. No matter how sharp and/or passionate we are, no matter your initial level of buy-in over time vision will leak. Over time we move from, ***"I know why we are doing this"*** to ***"Why does this matter?"*** Find ways to remind yourself of the vision - - - the hope of a better future that fuels you for today. Keep your eyes on the prize.
2. **Attitude Leaks** - - - Have you ever noticed over time a positive attitude can slowly descend into a negative attitude? For better or worse the attitude you have will leak out to the people around you. Let the attitude which leaks out of you be an attitude you would want others to carry on.
3. **Nearness Leaks** - - - Relationships are dynamic, always experiencing a move towards closer together or drifting apart. The nearness you have today will leak over time. If you want to continue experiencing nearness - - - to your God, to family, friends or coworkers - - - then you must be intentional about consistently investing in relationships around you.

4. **Newness Leaks** - - - Planners and organizers talk about the A-zone and B-zone in life. The A-zone is when everything is new and exciting. The B-zone is where everything is difficult and draining. The exciting feel of "new" will leak. Find a way to make your grass greener instead of looking for greener grass in a new location.

5. **Discipline Leaks** - - - New Year's resolutions are a great example of the idea that discipline leaks. Burger joints are slow and gyms are busy during the first 30-60 days of the year. However, the intentionality and focus we have when starting something eventually runs low. Consistent discipline over time requires consistent intentionality right now. Finally

6. **Gratefulness Leaks** - - - Time has a way of allowing gratitude to erode. Just because you have a thankful heart today, appreciating the hard work of your chapter members, their own dedication and positive attitudes, does not mean you will feel grateful about them tomorrow. Deliberately cultivate that countenance of gratitude that informs your feelings instead of being informed by your feelings. Don't let anyone or anything take charge of your happiness, your positivity, your gratefulness. It's yours. Enjoy it and share it.

There you have it - - - six ways to make it a habit in your life to improvise, adapt and overcome to plug the leaks in your leadership.

Twelve Of The Most Common Lies Leaders Tell Themselves

<http://www.lollydaskal.com/leadership/lying/>

By Lolly Daskal

We all try to think well of ourselves, but there are lies we can tell ourselves that do harm to ourselves. Maybe we fear being vulnerable, but we end up insulating ourselves from truths we need, and the cost is high.

Do you recognize yourself in any of these untruths? If so, it may be time to have a heart-to-heart talk with yourself:

1. **I am in control.** Control is an illusion. As a leader, you must allow yourself to drop the illusion of control and let your leadership lead you. Focus on the things you can control and let the rest go.
2. **I can do this on my own.** No one does anything alone. No matter what accomplishments you have achieved, you didn't do it on your own. It takes a great team, a wonderful group of talented people to make an impact. Ask yourself who has contributed to your success.
3. **I don't have time.** Time is precious - - - for everyone, and maybe especially so for leaders - - - but there is always time in the day for what is important. Telling yourself you can't meet a priority because of time is just making excuses.
4. **If I ignore it, it will go away.** It's sad but true: there are times we all still fall for this old lie. Most of the time what we ignore grows bigger and becomes even more cumbersome. Whatever is happening, deal with it. You can't change what you refuse to confront.
5. **I always know best.** Really, is that the truth? Leadership is about inclusion and learning, not about being right. Not all leaders know what's best or have the all the answers, and the best focus on continuing to learn and grow. If you think you know, look around to see where you can ask more questions.

6. **I'm a good listener.** There's a big difference between truly listening and waiting patiently for your turn to speak. One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say. And for leaders, the art of conversation lies in listening.
7. **My ego does not get in the way.** Nothing destroys leadership faster than ego. The next time you feel yours getting out of check—which can happen to any of us once in a while - - - remember that nobility doesn't lie in being superior to anyone else but, but in growing beyond the person you once were.
8. **Everybody does it.** It's a leader's responsibility to know the difference between right and wrong, no matter what anybody else says or does. You can never be right by doing wrong, and you can never be wrong by doing right.
9. **People don't need praise.** We may like to think that people operate independently of our actions. But when people don't get enough recognition, when they feel nobody cares, a big part of their motivation vanishes. What you praise increases; what you ignore becomes invisible and ineffective.
10. **Emotion is weakness.** Some leaders want to hold themselves beyond emotion to appear strong. But to share your weakness is to make yourself vulnerable, and to make yourself vulnerable is to show your strength. The best leaders touch hearts, and that truth always works.
11. **Sometimes you have to cut corners to get ahead.** The only way to lead is to lead with integrity and high standards. Always put your best foot forward - - - life is too short to waste it by living below your standards.
12. **I'm not here to make friends.** The old school of leadership will tell you that leaders can't be friends because it may lead to favoritism. But like friendship, true leadership involves selflessness and concern for the well-being of others, acting for their benefit rather than personal gain.

There will always be lies we tell ourselves. Self-awareness requires that we look beyond them to discover the truth about ourselves and those around us.

Honesty costs nothing, and lying could cost you everything. When you tell the truth, it becomes a part of your past. When you lie, it becomes a part of your future.

Lead from within: Lies are often temporary solutions to a permanent problem. Listen to the lies you speak and learn how to tell yourself the truth.

How To Protect The Relationship

By Pastor Cory Lebowitz

In a team dynamic it is almost impossible to avoid relational breakdowns. In good times spirits stay high, as flexibility and forgiveness are easy to come by. However, under stress we have a tendency to push pressure, blame and frustration towards those who serve alongside us.

My friend Jimmy has a phrase he loves to deliver when processing breakdowns; ***"Protect the Relationship."*** You see Jimmy knows that relationships are the foundation for success on our teams. When relationships fail it becomes impossible to accomplish anything meaningful with your team.

To protect the relationships around you, here are four things to do when breakdowns happen:

- **Trust Their Intentions** - - - If you look for drama around every corner you are likely to find it, but you are also likely the one creating it. Protect the relationships around you by assuming the best in people and trusting that their intentions are good. (click to tweet) It is easy to vilify someone and assume they are attempting to cause problems, but most of the time the intentions of those around you are good.
- **Know The Difference Between Sliding And Lumping** - - - Over time each of us can subtly slide out of alignment. It happens behind the scenes and is an easy adjustment to correct. There is a big difference between sliding out of alignment and jumping ship. Jumping ship is when you have intentionally decided you are no longer content in your current role. Know the difference between sliding and jumping.
- **Solve It With Them** - - - You do not solve relational breakdowns in a hole. If there is an issue relationally, it must be solved relationally. Do not solve the problem for them - - - but walk with them through the process of addressing the problem.

- **Remember Everyone Wants To Win** - - - It is amazing what happens when you consider a person's end game. Everyone wants to be on a winning team (click to tweet), so solving relational breakdowns is a way of helping individuals and the team get closer to a win. People want to win, and fixing breakdowns is easier when you know that each of us want the same thing.

CLOSING Remarks Setting Your Chapter On Fire

Someone in your group knows how to set up a Chapter Facebook page and would probably like to do that as a way to facilitate retirement conversations and information.

Someone in your group knows something about setting up a web site and would probably like to know more, and the Federation's Webmaster Ronnie Collins is ready, willing, and able to lead them through that. It's a learning experience and Ronnie is a great teacher.

Someone in your group loves to talk to people and would like to set up and manage a "telephone tree" group, each one having two or three people they will stay in touch with, people who cannot or will not attend meetings, but who need the Chapter's good will and support.

Someone in your group knows your community, knows the needs and plans for that community, and can see ways the chapter members can play a part in furthering the progress and best interests of that community. It is always a good idea to build up the chapter's good will within the community as a bank to draw against when it is most needed. Are there charity walks and races to be entered as a group? Are there ways to earn funds for NARFE's Alzheimer commitment? Are their lawns to be cut, leaves to be raked, gutters to be fixed for people who can no longer do it for themselves?

Someone in your group likes to garden, probably several somebodies. Could your community use a community garden, where the produce can be provided to local non-profit food banks, given to families in need, or sold at local Farmers Markets to support Alzheimer funding or other community efforts?

Someone in your group likes to write about people, and they can prepare news releases for the local news media on what members and their Chapter are doing in the community. Federal workers are organized, creative and engaged people. They deserve the publicity.

These are just a few ideas to keep your Chapter membership engaged with one another and active in the community where you all live.

You might suggest the membership take one monthly meeting and do nothing but brainstorm ideas regarding how the membership can support your local

community on a continuing basis. You may be surprised at how much you learn about one another and the community around you.

Throughout your career, you have been working on behalf of the men and women, the families of America. This is no different. May each of you be successful in setting your Chapter afire for you, for your membership, your community, and for NARFE.

NARFE Chapter Speaker Suggestions

- Local Police Dept. rep: Crime Prevention for the Elderly
- Local Fire Dept. rep: Fire safety
- Local historic site representatives
- Spring Gardening Preparation; local Nursery owner or Master Gardener
- Local Veterinarian: Pet Training, Pet Health and/or Pet Safety
- Local Hardware Store owner or Home Fix-it Projects
- Local Restaurateur or other business person who just opened a new business; how it was done
- Senior Health Expert to discuss health issues among seniors
- Remaining Active in Later Life - -
<http://jah.sagepub.com/content/9/1/105.short>
- Seniors and Everyday Information Seeking - -
<http://faculty.washington.edu/harryb/courses/LIS510/Assign 2/Team 9 Seniors.pdf>
- Life Satisfaction for Older Female Homemakers, Retirees, and Workers - -
<http://roa.sagepub.com/content/7/3/383.short>
- Leisure Activities and Life Satisfaction in Old Age - -
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J016v16n04 02#.Vdictfl Viko>
- Nutrition and Health Risks in the Elderly - -
<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.83.7.972>
- Seeking Clarity on Behalf of the Elderly - -
<http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/74/2/155.short>
- Talks by Local Politicians or their Representatives: Mayor, Councilperson, Congressman, Senator
- Local nutritionist/sports nutritionist for nearby hospital
- Report by local military person recently returned from combat or military relief regions.
- Local Superintendent of Parks, Federal, State, Local
- State Park Ranger: Camping, visitation and recreation tips.

Specific Speakers

- Shannon Jones
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Division of the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability
Topic: Medicare, parts A, B and D.
Contact: Shannon Jones
Aging Program Director: State Health Insurance Program
615-741-7703
shannon.jones@tn.gov

- Reverend Rosemary Brown
Inspirational Speaker - - "The Good Ole Days"
615-383-2686

- Meet Molly (From a Tennessean newspaper article)
Meet Molly, a 5-year-old therapy dog who is the crisis response dog for the Nashville Fire Department. Molly and her handler, Ron Leonard, visited NFD today to offer their services to those in need during incidents we handle. She helps provide comfort for those who are going through difficult times. While we hope her services are never needed, we're happy to have the chance to make a new partner and friend. And she definitely brightened an already bright morning at Fire HQ today! Molly is part of Canines for Christ, a volunteer, nonprofit dedicated to helping those in need.
<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=1328503003861244>
<https://www.facebook.com/TherapyDogMolly/>

- We are excited to be partnering with the men and women of the NFD! "I know why Molly steals the show. It's Molly's World and we're all just walking through it." - - - Chief Ricky White.
Video:
<https://www.facebook.com/NashvilleFireDepartment/videos/13285030038612441/> - - - Ron Leonard: inChristalone@yahoo.com

- Rob Cross of Franklin, TN:
The Civil War Battlefields of Franklin
A Major Offensive by the Confederacy
615-794-0903

- Nashville Chamber of Commerce Online Speakers Bureau
<http://www.nashvillechamber.com/homepage/Membership/OnlineSpeakersBureau.aspx>

- Money-Saving Ideas
Ms. Cheap: The Tennessean
615-259-8282

- Nashville Art
Phil Ponder
615-880-5149