



## **DOING LESS TO ACCOMPLISH MORE**

### ***LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION***

(Including citations and references)

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## ***Doing Less to Accomplish More:***

### ***The Ministry of Strategic Delegation***

**By Allen H. Quist**

#### ***Introduction***

How can a leader do less and yet accomplish more? At first glimpse this may appear impossible. After all, doesn't everybody know that if you want to accomplish more you must work more? In contrast, I argue not only can you work less and accomplish more; you can also care more for people while giving your organization a greater capacity for growth.

You may be like most leaders; you work long hours under constant pressure with little time to rest. You like the excitement and the victories, even the admiration from people for the responsibilities you carry. Meanwhile, you have to admit you feel a tension between your responsibilities and your time with family and friends. You often feel tired and irritable and you see no solution. There is a way out – called “strategic delegation.”

You will meet Randy and Sharon and their struggle with Randy's work life. You will read about likely outcomes from Randy's choices. You will then discover a solution that will provide several benefits. First, it will help Randy and Sharon with their time and potential health tensions. Second, it will provide Randy a practical setting to display his value for people. Third, it will start the process of building a greater capacity for growth into Randy's church.

#### ***Randy's Dilemma***

Randy keeps telling himself one of these days he is going to catch up; but that day never comes. It has been nine years since Randy accepted the Pastorate for First Church – nine exciting years. The church has been growing nicely and the church members are constantly praising him about how critical he is to their success. Every year presents greater challenges and greater rewards. Life just could not get better – except perhaps he could use a little more help getting everything done and a little more rest.

“Honey, come on. You need to get some sleep.” Sharon poked her head into his office, “You just can't keep going like this.”

"I'll be fine. I just need a few more minutes," Randy responded.

"That is what you say every night," Sharon retorted. "But it keeps getting worse and you don't even recognize it. Every night, you get to bed after midnight and get up at five-thirty – and that's on a good night!"

"She is right," Randy thought. "Every year, life does get more intense. While it is exciting, I must admit I feel more and more exhausted – maybe even a little burned-out."

### ***The trap of success***

People develop an addiction to a sense of urgency, a rush of adrenaline where everything people do is an emergency and they feel significant.<sup>1</sup> This describes Randy's life and he fails to recognize it, even though he feels it and his wife Sharon often points it out.

With inadequate sleep, Randy risks a car accident every time he gets behind the wheel. According to a 2008 report by the National Sleep Foundation, one-third of those surveyed have fallen asleep while driving and many drive while drowsy one or more times a month.<sup>2</sup> Sixty percent of those surveyed between the ages of 18 to 29 say they drive while drowsy;<sup>3</sup> at 31 years old, Randy is close to that age group. Without a serious change, Randy is heading for family and career crisis.

Randy seldom thinks about his health, but should. A lack of sleep can contribute to heart problems.<sup>4</sup> If Randy's lack sleep does result in major health problems, then Randy's neglect for his own health will affect many people outside himself.

Whether Randy understands it, his work efficiency suffers from lack of enough rest. In many ways, Randy has been wasting his time with all the extra work hours. Lack of sleep coupled with increased stress on-the-job provides an atmosphere for more mistakes, difficulties dealing with people, and problems making decisions.<sup>5</sup> Unless Randy does something to correct his work-sleep balance, he could be leading the church he pastors into serious problems.

### ***The Contradiction***

At first glimpse a person might recommend to Randy that he start recognizing he cannot do everything and therefore he must sacrifice less for the church for the sake of his family and his own health. But I suggest just the opposite; Randy needs to sacrifice more – a great deal

more. For the sake of his life, his family, and the church, Randy must sacrifice the greatest love to which he clings – his exciting hyped-up life of ministry success. He must replace his source of exhilaration with a servant's heart, emptying himself for others.

Randy needs to learn to sacrifice himself, his need to be the “one, who can do it all,” a super-person. Randy will have to step out of the light and shine the light on others in his ministry team. This will be a struggle for Randy because of his addiction to the hype.

Randy needs to begin by strategically delegating much of his work. When a leader strategically delegates to others, it frees the leader to focus on important issues the leader might otherwise ignore because of all the not-important-but-urgent issues. It will free Randy to spend more time with family and friends and renewal. So there is a time management benefit within strategic delegation; but that is only the first benefit. Delegating just for time management purposes, even if done sacrificially, stills misses the primary benefit for God's church.

Randy also needs to remember that Christ's plan for his church was making disciples, not super heroes. This means loving others by enabling them to grow into their potential. Randy will do this by strategically delegating to others much of the responsibility he now carries so they can grow in their leadership skills. Through strategic delegation, he builds a growing ministry team to share the burdens and the successes.

When Randy enables people to grow into their potential, he also increases the capacity of the church to “make disciples” for a growing and future ministry. Without a continual flow of new capable workers and leaders, the work of making disciples will eventually stop. To carry out the task of preparing people, Randy will need to match the growth needs of people to the ministry needs of the congregation, leveraging the opportunity for the benefit of both. Every ministry project needs to have two elements, the goals of the ministry itself and the goal to develop people.

As Randy develops the members of the church into stronger disciples better prepared to serve and lead, Randy will find relief from his harried life and the church will assure a continued line of worker and leader succession. Randy will work less and the church will grow more.

### ***Your challenge***

In many ways, Randy has been his own worst enemy. He remained captive by his success and his drive for more, while he, his family, and the church suffered. Randy thought that by working

harder he was helping, but he was actually hindering all three. Randy hindered his own growth, he hindered his relations with his family and friends, and he hindered the church's capacity for individual and corporate growth. His solution came from giving up his need for personal success to focus his attention on making disciples through strategic delegation; leading an initiative to develop others into workers and leaders with greater capacity and skill. The outcome of Randy's renewed focus will be a personal life more in balance, time to minister to his family and friends, and a church capable of engaging the future with the capacity to grow.

Perhaps you identify with Randy; you also live hyped and stressed and long for relief even though you enjoy the excitement. If you are willing to step out of the spotlight you enjoy and reverse your dependence on adrenaline and caffeine, you can increase your effectiveness while simultaneously taking back your life. You may recognize your need for more rest and more time with family and friends. You may recognize the need for your organization to develop its capacity to better engage the present and the future. The best way to accomplish what you recognize is to focus on the next generation of workers and leaders, using strategic delegation as a teaching platform for their learning. You can work less while being more effective, if you will give up the spotlight of success while focusing the light on the success of others.

**Resources:**

**1 Barbara Bartlein, "Fighting Urgency Addiction," *Commercial Law Bulletin*, May 1, 2003, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed February 16, 2009), 16-17.**

**2 National Sleep Foundation, "Longer Work Days Leave Americans Nodding Off On the Job," March 2008 Press Release, *National Sleep Foundation Website*, <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=huIXKjM0lxF&b=4172327&ct=5079541&printmode=1> (accessed December 29, 2008).**

**3 Mary Harvey, "Sleepless in America: A Lack of Rest Reaches Epidemic Proportions," *American Demographics* (July, 2000), [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m4021/is\\_2000\\_July/ai\\_64335660?tag=content;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m4021/is_2000_July/ai_64335660?tag=content;col1) (accessed December 29, 2008).**

**4 "A Good Night's Sleep Can Keep Your Heart Healthy," *Jet* 103.8 (2003), *OmniFile Mega Full Text*. <http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com> (accessed October 25, 2005), 23.**

**5 Kevin McManus, "Sleep Well." *Industrial Engineer* 37.10 (2003), *OmniFile Mega Full Text*. <http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com> (accessed October 25, 2005), 20.**