

How To Avoid The Ravaging Effects Of...BURNOUT!

By Craig Forte, Senior Editor

I always knew that practicing real estate was stressful. But what I didn't realize was that the real estate profession is ranked in the Top 15 "burnout" professions in America. Right up there with air traffic controllers, SWAT police officers and NCAA coaches, real estate agents not only feel the pressure to perform, but frequently sacrifice their personal and family lives for their jobs.

Yet not all feel this way. How is it that some people love the craziness of the business, while others feel overwhelmed and stressed to the point of collapse?

Not long ago, I met a person who shared an interesting observation about stress. She said that people feel stressed when their OBLIGATIONS exceed their COMMITMENT level. In essence, we create struggle and resistance in our lives when we take on obligations, duties and expectations that are inconsistent with our commitment level (deepest desire) to perform them.

This person also shared with me 5 helpful tips for lowering stress levels and creating a life and career of greater balance. And given the "hot topic" lately, I thought I'd share them with you...

Tip #1: Know what you want personally. Your business exists in the "marketplace" because you provide a great service that solves problems and delivers benefits to consumers - you make people better off by what you do. But when it comes to "you" personally, your business exists for ONE reason only, and that reason is TO SUPPORT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE.

How often do you find yourself focusing on your MLS or office ranking or some "guru's" expectations of you rather than what YOU want out of your career?

Everyone has a different vision for what they want personally. Everyone has a different commitment level...or even commitment "tolerance." If your personal desires are in conflict with the expectations you take on from your office, MLS, Broker or anyone else but YOU, you're gonna have stress.

Think about what you want for your life, and keep your focus on serving your clients as best you can, and forget the other "external" standards.

Tip #2: TRAIN your clients how you work. This sounds like I'm suggesting poor service at first, but it's really just the opposite. If you let the inmates run the asylum, you're in for trouble.

Tell your clients up front how you work and you'll be amazed how they'll comply. They'll actually appreciate your forthrightness. Discuss how they may reach you or your assistant. And tell them how and when you return calls that require your personal attention. If they don't know your boundaries, they'll assume you have no boundaries and act accordingly.

Tip #3: Control your time. This sounds like a Herculean challenge for

agents. We think "availability" is paramount in this business - and it is important to be responsive to your clients. Problem is, we confuse giving good service with personal balance. The more proactive you become with your time (i.e. the more you "template" your day based on the activities you need to accomplish) the more balance and productivity you'll have in your life. You'll make much more money, too.

Tip #4: Control your contact/info devices. Once again, the coyote is guarding the hen house. Cell phones, pagers, email, PDAs, traveling computers were all designed to "make us more efficient." Yet, I have yet to meet an agent that didn't want to take a sledgehammer to most of them on a daily basis.

Simplify. Turn your cell phone on ONLY when you're available to take calls - all other times let your voice system or assistant handle them. Control your email - somehow people sending emails think you're sitting right there in front of your computer for the sole purpose of answering *their* message. Your response should vary according to the importance of the email. Clients and potential clients get highest priority. Friends and family get the lowest. Let people know how you operate.

Use a PDA only if you really believe it makes you more productive (Enlightening story: I carry a little pocket phone book. Yes, it's made of high-tech paper. The other day I had a race with a friend with a PDA to see how fast we could look up a name we each had. I found it in 8 seconds. He took 24 seconds. Hmm...productive??). Technology can direct us away from the fact that real estate is primarily a relationship business. Consider your options for contact carefully.

Tip #5: SYSTEMIZE your business - especially your marketing and client generation. There are only 2 ways you can leverage your ability to make money: 1) with other people, and 2) with systems (by the way, in the next edition I'm going to share with you a step-by-step way to systemize your business - it'll be some of the most valuable information you'll ever read for your business and life).

If you're manually prospecting instead of using Hotlines, Newsletters, web sites, and all the systems we teach in the 3-Steps System (www.3-Steps.com) to get clients from gazillions of sources...you are minimizing your productivity and income, and MAXIMIZING your stress level.

Ask yourself constantly: "How can I put my client generation on auto-pilot...and allow my systems to sort and sift for new clients...so I can spend my time working with quality clients, closing transactions and cashing commission checks (and taking the time to enjoy my family and personal life)."

There's an ironic benefit to knowing what you want, and setting boundaries within your business (and knowing what's important from what's unimportant) that SUPPORT your desires. You become much more productive. Your stress level will plummet. You will attract the kind of clients you want - strange but true.

And, most importantly (and the most "ironic" part), you will be dealing with your clients from a place of balance - and that's power.

Article from 'Agent Inner Circle'.