

October Newsletter

Dear Friend,

You hear the word all the time and it is constantly seen as a personality asset in our fast-paced culture. Multitasking. Potential employees use the word often in job interviews and on resumes. Employers value, perhaps more, a worker who can do more than 3 things at once.

But is multitasking really a benefit or just the conduit for a mental meltdown? How well are we really "doing" our jobs or living our lives? And how does it affect our mental well-being?

Francesca

Multitasking or Meltdown?

We live in a face-paced, busy world, one which we create ourselves. **We are always talking about multitasking as a asset to our resume of skills. This means we believe we can do more than 2 things at once...well.** At home we are often moving around frantically - on the phone, while making dinner, while helping a child with homework. This kind of face-paced environment affects us in more ways than we know. It affects our ability to connect with people, to connect with ourselves.

It is hard to slow down the mind at the end of the day if we have constantly bombarded it with different, overlapping tasks. As well, it is hard to organize the mind and the thoughts that come in when we are constantly asking it to multitask. I believe learning how to slow things down, *unitask*, and organize our mind are integral to sanity and good health.

I read an article recently in *Real Simple* ("Stop the Madness", September 2009) and in it the author, AJ Jacobs, talks about his experiment in becoming a unitasker. In the experiment called Operation Focus, this self-described multitasker who worked from home, realized that his circuits were overloaded, he couldn't think straight anymore and it affected just about everything. So for one month, he focused on unitasking instead of juggling multiple tasks throughout the day. Jacobs learned perhaps more than he thought he would.

The article was an eye-opener and a great reminder of how much damage I believe multitasking creates. While multitasking makes us feel efficient it actually slows our thinking down, Jacobs says. **What we term multitasking, he suggests is just *switch-tasking*. Our brain can't handle more than one higher cognitive function at a time.**

We do live in a culture of distraction where multitasking is actually rewiring our brains and making us less happy, less able to connect with people, and even less able to form a conscience (*Jacobs, p.198*).

I have thought about this term often and have felt its negative effects. When I worked in a more fast-paced environment I felt as though my job *required* me to multitask, or nothing would get done. When I think back, things must have gotten done (I didn't get fired!), but my mind definitely suffered. I was frantic, felt stressed, and always felt there was something to *do*. My mind wasn't organized and constantly felt as it were moving too fast. **Mind organization is important and it definitely takes a back seat to the traditional ideas of what we think it means to be organized.** Truth is, it is a big part of what it means to be organized, happy, engaged and sane.

You've heard me say before that the most important tenet of organization is that everything must have a home. And there are non-physical things that need a home as well. Ever feel as though you are...going a little nuts? It is probably time to organize something and likely it is your thoughts.

We have all felt this kind of crazy feeling I am talking about. **It's that feeling like you've lost control or you just can't get a grip on anything. You feel like you are going crazy.** And by crazy I don't mean you need to check into the loony-bin. If that were the case, we'd all be there right now. Sometimes you feel crazy when you've lost money, or a client, or when you are constantly trying to hone in on your next step but can't get it concretely. You feel crazy when you are juggling many tasks - all seemingly important. **Pay attention to the mental madness you feel, and work to slow it down.** There are ways to conquer the craziness.

Instead of typing while on the phone with someone or watching TV during dinner you will connect more with the task and likely, get to know the people around you better if you don't do those things. **When you practice all ways of unitasking you will be more aware when your mind wanders and what you are thinking about. It calls you to task and forces you to be efficient.**

We shouldn't be focusing on how well we can multitask rather on how well we can gain perspective and awareness of what is going on around us, how well we live a mindful life and balance our emotions. We set a great example for the young people around us when we do this. Children feel the angst, the franticness, the stress. Slow down, so things won't pass you by, opportunities won't pass you by, a better way to look at something or do something won't pass you by. Focus on unitasking and create a more calm, focused, efficient and happier life.

HOW TO...Unitask and calm the mind!

Here are just a few suggestions on how to unitask and organize the mind at the same time.

1. To best organize your mind and focus on one thing at a time make a list! **Putting things on paper in the form of a list that you can SEE is invaluable because it allows your mind to relax.** It's as if you have given your mind a vacation... or a

message even. When you put things on paper, your mind is healed mentally. You allow your mind to let go of that task, until it is time to actually address the task. So mentally, you aren't thinking constantly about the 17 things you need to do, trying to do them all at once, or trying to remember them all (which is tiring). **Your list is the *home* for your thoughts.**

2. **Learn to say no as you set your priorities.** Instead of taking on too much and aiming to then *do* too much, schedule your day so you aren't forced to focus on more than one important project in a given time block. Learning to say "no" is especially important with daily interruptions like phone calls or visitors. **Know your schedule and what you can and can't fit in.** And don't forget to schedule in down time for you.

3. **Drive with the car radio off or better yet, your cell phone off!** Use the time to gather your thoughts and be in silence. Multitasking can be so noisy; grab each opportunity you can to experience quiet. Eat dinner with the TV off, and the newspaper closed; instead, have good, open conversation with your partner or your children.

4. **Meditate.** Some people are adverse to this mostly because they don't know how to do it. It is not easy and does take practice. Think of it as a gift you give yourself. **You allow yourself to stop, let your brain refocus and recharge.**

5. **At work, try to have only one screen open on your computer at a time.** This way you won't be tempted to be sucked in by facebook or any other social media. Focus on one major task at a time.

6. Get to bed early! Remember, **being organized not only means that your physical surroundings are neat, in order, systematic, it means your mind is as well.** What better way to settle your mind than to give it a good night's sleep.

Quick Tip

2 quick tips:

Go to: <http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/life-strategies/time-management/stop-the-madness-0000000020965/index.html> and read AJ Jacob's article.

Put a post it on your computer or set an alarm every few hours to remind yourself to take a break, go for a walk, rejuvenate your mind, slow down.

Cluttered with Keepsakes?

Contact [verri organized](#) to help you make decisions on what to keep!

Spread the word...



verri organized makes a difference in many people's lives. And there are still many people who don't know about the benefits of becoming *verri organized*.

You can help! Forward this newsletter to your friends, family and co-workers and ask them to sign up now to receive future newsletters by visiting: www.verriorganized.com

The verri organized photo gallery is being updated with more great pictures!

Go to verriorganized.com and click on Gallery to see some of the latest work of verri organized.

ABOUT VERRI ORGANIZED?

Francesca Verri Gove is a professional organizer and coach and owner of *verri organized*. Having a knack for making order out of chaos, and a passion for creating workable systems to improve efficiency, Francesca sees a great need for her talent and services among mothers, businesses, home owners and children.

A former assistant dean for administration at a college outside of Boston, Francesca has spoken to mothers, college students and businesses on how to get and stay organized, and has coached professors, professionals, home owners and doctors on how to experience life in a lighter way by getting verri organized.

Francesca believes life should be "light", and in order to experience it in that way, we need to look at what we "have", assess our "systems", and believe in our own ability to become verri organized.

For more information about verri organized and the services it provides, please visit www.verriorganized.com, or call 978-337-3614.