Spring is in the air. It’s often this time of year when many of us are ready to do some spring-cleaning in our homes. But do you do the same at work?

By the time you have an opportunity to read this, it’ll be March 2016. Can you believe how fast time flies? It seems like it was just yesterday when we were ringing in the new year.

Many of us will start asking ourselves how we are coming along with our professional resolutions and the goals we’ve all made.

Do you find yourself saying, “I haven’t had time to complete that goal?” We’ve all done it, I know I have.

It seems that no matter how hard you work on that big project, there are always more waiting in the wings. It doesn’t matter if you’re there for 8 hours or 14, there will still be a list of projects waiting for you. There comes a certain point, however, when you are no longer productive. It is essential that we find a work-life balance.

Over this past year, I’ve come to learn many important life lessons. I find myself translating those into my both personal and professional lives. We are so used to helping others that we often neglect to take care of ourselves. Are you guilty of bringing the stress of your job home? (We become so stressed at work, at times we bring that home.) This is unfair not only to you but also to your family.

I have come to recognize some basic principles that have changed the way I work while consequently changing many other aspects of my life.

I’ve listed many of the changes I’ve made below in hopes that you, too, will find them useful:

1. Start your day the night before. Before leaving the office, make a list of what you need to get accomplished the following day. Then rank those tasks in order of importance.

2. Decrease the distractions. By this I mean, choose to open e-mails and listen to voice mails at certain times of the day. Try not to keep your e-mail open all day. Otherwise, it can become a constant distraction that keeps you from completing those goals you set the night before.

3. Set time aside each day if you can, but at a bare minimum, at least three times a week to work on important projects. This means carving out time with no meetings, no e-mails, and so forth. You’ll find by blocking out this time, you are able to remain focused, less stressed, and, therefore, more productive.

4. Don’t be afraid to delegate. You can’t do it all, nor should you. I always try to stand by the adage: Neither my program nor my staff can continue to grow and develop if I am the only one doing the majority of the work. It is also important to note that if someone asks you to do something, and you simply do not have time to complete, it is OK for you to decline and say no.

5. Do one project at a time. All too often we get assigned to multiple projects at a time. We may feel as if we are pulled into a thousand different directions. Try focusing on finishing one project before starting the next. Starting with the most urgent and impactful one first.

6. Keep yourself and your workspace organized. (A clean station is a happy station.) Being organized saves time. Spend a few minutes at the end of your day putting things where they belong so that you can find them the next time you need them. This is also a great time to make your to do list for the following day.

7. Keep a pad of paper on your nightstand. Too many times I have found myself unable to turn off my brain at night. By keeping a pad of paper on my bedside, it’s helped me keep track of my thoughts. As soon as I think of something that I need to do, I write it down and then I’m able to relax and fall back to sleep sooner.

Remember, some of the most important things in life are health, happiness, and truly enjoying what you do. Take the time to “smell the roses or accomplishments” and prioritize tasks. You will be amazed at how much of a difference it will make.

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