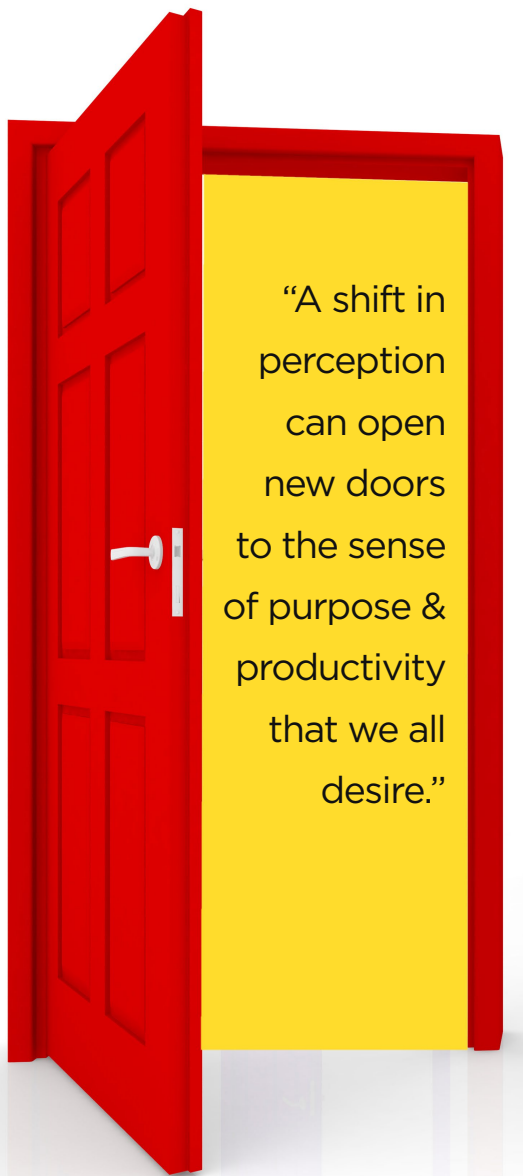


# 5 Ways to Calm the Chaos in Your Life



Since the richness of life and all its opportunities are not going to go away, what needs to change is how we perceive all that we have to and want to do. A shift in perception can open new doors to the sense of purpose and productivity that we all desire.

*-Jackie Woodside, Contributor*



**Busy is the new rich. We have come to equate being busy, overwhelmed and living in chaos with the notion that, "I am important. I matter!" It feels like a fast moving stream, and we are unconsciously being swept away!**

Life is so rich, stimulating and amazing; opportunities and activities are everywhere. It's like being a child at the carnival where everything looks exciting and inviting. While being awake and aware of life's beauty makes it delicious and full, pursuing every possible ride at the fair makes life unmanageable. How do we live with that tension between passion and what is humanly possible to explore, experience and enjoy? We need to learn to calm the chaos in our lives because too much of anything -- even if it's great -- is still too much.

I first learned this with my grandmother's fudge. I loved grandma's fudge. It was beyond delicious. But one afternoon, when all of the adults were busy doing other things, I ate a whole plate of it. Let's just say that it went from being a "good thing" to a "lesson learned." We are living in a time when opportunities are endless and yet rather than everyone feeling energized and stimulated, what we hear over and over again is how overwhelmed, and chaotic everyone feels. Why is this? Let's go back to grandma's fudge: Too much is too much.

# 5 Ways to Calm the Chaos in Your Life

1



**Manage your energy,** not your time. Time management is the biggest misnomer ever. How are you going to manage time? It moves of its accord without regard to your opinion. Everyone has the same allotment of 24 hours each day. You can't manage your time, but you can manage yourself and your personal energy. The next four ways to calm the chaos will show you how.

2



**Shift your focus** from all that you have to do or the content of your life to who and how you want to be, or the context of your life. The things you have to do in life are endless. Instead of frantically running about trying to “get it all done,” focus on the context of your life -- what you care about and want to be, what you want to contribute and how you want to feel.

## Inhabit your days.

That's right— BE IN the experience of your life lived. Feel what you are feeling, think about what you are doing (not what



3

you have to do next or wish you were doing). I experienced a few months when my spouse couldn't walk or drive after an operation. I had to do everything: get our son to school (an hour away from our home) and my spouse to work, as well as run our family life and my business. I thought I was going to go nuts. But one day while driving my son to school thinking about all I had to get done, I realized that there was only one thing I needed to do right now, and that was to drive my son to school. I could enjoy chatting with my son, enjoying the gorgeous fall morning, the sun coming through the trees, the blue sky overhead. In an instant, I recognized that if I could just be in each moment as it occurred my stress level went way down. That is what is called being mindful. It saved my sanity!

4

**Say “no” more!** The amount of options and choices in front of us at any given moment is

staggering. If you say “yes” to everything, you will be saying “no” to your peace of mind. So maintain a “yes to life!” attitude while consciously choosing where you are willing to commit your energy and time.



5

**Operate your days with a plan** and have that plan reflect what you value. Research shows that people are happier when actively pursuing

meaningful goals. In fact, they are happier while pursuing the goal than after they achieve it! What does that tell you? You were born to grow, develop and expand. If you are not planning your life, someone else will surely do it for you. You end up living your life by default rather than with intention and design.

