The Power of 80-20

October 24, 2010 By Alexander Avila

Do you ever feel overwhelmed in life--with too much to do and not enough time to do it in?

If so, you're likely to experience more stress, and have a higher risk of developing high blood pressure, migraine headaches, low energy, and other health problems.
Now there's a solution to being overstressed and feeling time pressured--the 80-20 rule. The 80-20 rule is the psychological law that states that 20% of your efforts, yield 80% of your results. Also known as the Pareto principle (named after the Italian economist. Vilfredo Pareto), the 80-20 rule applies to many areas: 80% of your business comes from 20% of your clients, 80% of your fun comes from 20% of the people you know, and 80% of your happiness comes from 20% of the things that you do.

Think about it in a practical sense. If you were to list the things, people, and activities that truly give you pleasure and contentment, you would likely have a much smaller list when compared to the actual things that you do on a daily basis. In other words, we do a lot of things that we shouldn't really do, and we spend time with a lot of people that we really shouldn't be spending time with.

It's not about being more efficient or effective with our time, but in determining our priorities in life, then putting most (80 to 90%) of our time, energy, and resources on those few things. Put your most important eggs in one basket, then watch that basket carefully. That is the essence of the 80-20 rule.

As an exercise, write down THE TOP THREES in your life:

*The Top 3 Activities That Give You the Most Happiness
*The Top 3 People Who Give You the Most Contentment
*The Top 3 Ways You Have Made the Most Money
*The Top 3 Things That Have Made You the Healthiest

Now, with these top 20% priorities in mind, organize your life, and your schedule, so that you spend most of your time on your TOP 3s, while eliminating or delegating the other 80% of things that don't bring you much in the way of results, satisfaction, or happiness. The bottom 80% are the things that a) you don't like, b) you are not that good at doing, or c) don't bring you maximum pleasure in life.

Here’s the 20% bottom line: If you follow the 80-20 rule, and focus your time and energy on your true priorities in life, you will be much happier, healthier, and successful than ever before.

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