

*Seasoned managers share their very best practices, practical tips and timeless insights on...*

# Doing God's Work at 100 mph — On Empty

By Mark Cutshall



Joseph Crockett



Dan Maltby



Sharon Swing

## Joseph Crockett A caution light for change

Losing focus and energy, for me, is a warning and a caution light for change. It means it's time to take a step back from the trenches for a more aerial view. And here's what helps:

First, I recognize I do have options for dealing with issues. I have choices. The writer of Deuteronomy calls us to choose between life and death, blessing and cursing.

Second, to get back in balance, I remember my own moral compass and what God has appointed me to be and do. The temptation is to focus on the global sense of everybody called to everything, but it's really about how God has called us to use our giftedness and talents to do the things he's appointed us to do.

The caution light of change should lead us to Genesis 2:2-3, which reminds us that even God rested. It's more than arrogant on our part to assume we can work beyond our limits – or the limits of God.

Most of our behaviors are driven by habits, but those habits can be changed. And change can be an ally. Instead of continually pushing ourselves to exceed our capacities, we can admit our human limits and practice what someone called the Four Ds. *Dump* what you can. Practice saying “No.” *Delegate* what can be done by others; share the work. *Defer* what can wait. *Do* that which is left.

**Dr. Joseph V. Crockett** serves as director of research for the American Bible Society in New York City.

## Dan Maltby A 20-year breakfast

When I'm feeling depleted in life and the well is dry, one source of encouragement remains. Every two weeks, I have breakfast with a longtime friend. We each drive 60 miles and meet at a restaurant. Over the past 20 years, we've learned how to share our lives on a fairly deep level. Because discussions about work can be all-consuming, we make it a point to talk about our families first.

There's incredible value and blessing in having a friend who will listen, give feedback and (maybe) offer advice. It's not so much about one of us fixing the other, but rather helping each other walk through whatever we're facing.

If I didn't have these twice-a-month gatherings, I'd have lost perspective so many times. I continue to need the affirmation and encouragement. Recently, each of us has lost a key player on our respective work teams, so we've really been there for each other. There's something very powerful about looking someone in the eyes and knowing it doesn't matter what I say. Two weeks from now, we'll be back at the restaurant—different table, same commitment to remain transparent, listen and keep going.

**Dan Maltby Ph.D.** is director of the Master of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership at Biola University, LaMirada, Calif.

## Sharon Swing Saying “Yes” for the right reasons

The older I get, the more I tire of being overly busy. Two things have

helped me find balance and refreshment:

First, I've made a practice of reviewing the things to which I've said “Yes.” Looking back, I'll ask myself, “Did my involvement give me energy? Did I feel called to it? Was I good at it? Would I do it again?”

I've learned how easy I say “Yes” to opportunities, while my spirit inside is saying “No.” I've looked back at some things I've done in busy time and realized I've said “Yes” for less than healthy motives (I thought it would be good for business or good for networking, or not wanting to disappoint people), and so I ask myself, “Who was I trying to impress?”

The second thing that helps give my life balance is to realize I've been created in God's image and therefore need to be creative, too. For me it's photography and pottery. It's having my hands covered with mud at the pottery wheel, being present in the moment, and being aware that what I'm doing – and what I'm enjoying – doesn't need to have a specified outcome. I need to be unhooked from the compulsion to be productive, and just enjoy the process of creation.

**Sharon Swing** is president of Swing Consulting Inc., offering strategic planning and organization development services for churches, nonprofit organizations and for-profit enterprises.

**Mark Cutshall** works from Seattle and helps Christian leaders and organizations tell their stories. Tell yours at [mcutsh@aol.com](mailto:mcutsh@aol.com).



Mark Cutshall