



Dear Friends and Clients,

Living and working from two homes poses organizational challenges. It's frustrating when you know just what you need – but you left it in the other house.

One tool that helps me to simplify the two-home lifestyle is my big travel basket. When I realize that I'll need a client file or some object during my next visit to the farmhouse, I put it in the basket. I make a practice of always moving an item to the basket the instant I think of it, and I never fail to take the basket with me when I drive back and forth between town and country.

This little basket practice saves me energy and anxiety. I don't have to try to remember what I'll need for various projects, and I don't spend much time packing, since I'm always ready to go. The practice isn't exactly a habit, because I still must discipline myself to deliver each item to the basket just as soon as I realize that I'll need it.

The concept of a "practice" is one that I use regularly to create order and tranquility in my life. And often I encourage clients to examine their patterns and habits, and to build practices that would support the kind of lives they really want to live. As I'll discuss in this issue, new practices, no matter how small, can have the power to bring big change to your life.

Warm wishes, Bev

Create Harmony & Fulfillment By Creating Practices That Work

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Our routine practices – our normal ways of doing things – shape much of our time, even though we may not be conscious of these habitual patterns. But we have the power to transform our lives by examining our own activities, and replacing some of our habits with a new set of practices that are both mindful and rewarding.

This kind of mindful "practice" is close to the conscious, regular activity you might undertake if you pursue yoga or the martial arts. This "practice" is something that

you do on a regular basis, as an integral part of your daily life, while remaining fully aware of why you are choosing to do it. Practices have the power not only to take you to big change, but also to bring you a sense of fulfillment while you are still moving slowly along the path.

It took me a while to grasp this concept of “practice.” What it requires is that you take a fresh look at some specific aspect of your life, identify a small change that would bring better alignment with your goals and values, and promise yourself to frequently and consistently act on that change. As you incorporate a few conscious practices into your routines, you will subtly change your state of mind. The consistency of the practices may enrich your life, even if the progress to your bigger goals is quite slow.

Wherever you are in your profession, or your broader life, you can restructure everything by breaking major patterns into a series of new practices. Here are examples of transformational practices:

- **Use checklists.** We may waste time and worry packing the same suitcases, planning the same kind of events, or completing the same old tasks. We can avoid forgetting things and reduce hassle by following the practice of creating checklists for repetitive activities. When you consistently rely on checklists you can let go of some nagging thoughts and dedicate brainpower to more interesting challenges.
- **Manage your health.** Even if you haven’t been taking good care of your self, you done have routines for staying well groomed and healthy, like brushing your teeth and bathing. Expand your established habits to include daily practices that will help you to become more fit. If you don’t already exercise, consider the practice of accumulating 30 minutes of walking every single day.
- **Clean as you go.** If you are tired of the disorder around you, consider a few practices that could change it. Consider practices like cleaning your desk at the end of the day, or making your bed as soon as you get up, or putting away clothing every day. Even very small steps, like finding a regular place for your keys, may reduce stress and help keep you grounded.
- **Listen.** Sometimes we become so entangled in our own thoughts that we stop really listening to the people around us. When you are no longer listening, you may feel disengaged or overwhelmed, and at the same time you may turn off other people. You can regain a sense of connection by committing to a listening practice. That might be as simple as adopting the practice of deeply listening to your family members or co-workers for at least five minutes, three times a day.
- **Change the rules of engagement.** You can agree with other people to choose the practices through which you will work out disagreements. For example, for some couples a classic practice is to avoid going to bed angry.

Others may choose techniques like asking for a “time out” when they feel the need for a cooling off period, or treating each other with specific forms of kindness.

- **Develop new skills.** Do you want to learn to play a musical instrument or learn a new language? Committing yourself to a regular schedule of practicing will bring you results, and the daily commitment is itself a practice. If you remain conscious that you must squeeze in a little time every day for something you care about, you tend to deeper awareness of how you manage your time.

Want to hear something interesting? In addition to providing executive coaching, Bev and her Clearways colleagues are available to speak about many issues related to your work and work life success. We'll build a program to meet your needs. Learn more at **www.ClearWaysConsulting.com** or email to **Bev** directly.