Business Alignment
STRATEGIES, INC.

Time Outs: The Secret to Optimal Performance

By: Pat Lynch, Ph.D., President

Just as marathoners need to rest their bodies regularly during training in order to complete their events successfully and employees need breaks from stressors in the workplace, we also need to find ways to rest and re-energize ourselves in all aspects of our lives. One technique for taking periodic time outs is to create and make liberal use of "white space." This concept was suggested to me by a colleague, Bill Corbett. What he means by this term is a space where you free your mind to wander. Below are some examples of how I create my own white space. Each of these techniques is done without any specific end result in mind other than to give myself a break – i.e., no multi-tasking allowed!

- Take a walk on the beach or in nature

- Meditate

- Read an engrossing book

- Write in a journal

- Go for a swim

- Lie in the hammock and observe the birds and flowers in the yard

- Listen to some favorite classical music with my eyes closed

It doesn't matter HOW you create your own white space; what matters is that you DO it on a regular basis. You choose the time period: it can be very short or it can take the better part of a day. When you "return" from that space you will feel rested and/or re-energized. As a bonus, you may even discover some great ideas have presented themselves!

Here is how you can get started today:

1. List three ways that you can create your own white space.

2. Pick ONE of them and do it at least three times this week.

3. Observe how you feel afterward.

4. Repeat on a regular basis, identifying additional ways of creating your white space.

5. Enjoy!

Time outs are never a waste. I promise the return on your rest "investment" - e.g., in the form of increased energy or positive frame of mind - will be exponential! ➡

Pat Lynch, Ph.D., is President of Business Alignment Strategies, Inc., a consulting firm that helps clients optimize business results by aligning people, programs, and processes with organizational goals.