



Everyone Is Getting Crabbier

Presented at the 2008
PLA National Conference
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WORK AND STRESS

Ask librarians about future prospects and you get a tale of woe. Old ways are clutched firmly. Clearly, there is uncertainty of purpose. Morale is down, at the service desk as well as in the administrator's office.

- Lowell A. Martin in his 1982 Bowker Memorial Lecture "The Public Library: Middle-age Crisis or Old Age?"

1. Do you feel as if you have little or no control over your time at work?
2. Does your day seem to be a series of interruptions interspersed with occasional phone calls?
3. Do you feel as if you will never get to the bottom of your endless to-do list?
4. Are you more likely to feel guilty about what you don't get done than proud of what you do accomplish?
5. Do you feel as if every time you get things figured out, someone changes them again?
6. Do you feel as if you are out of the communication loop?
7. Do you feel that your work is undervalued?
8. Do you feel as if you go from one stressful environment at work to another stressful environment at home?
9. Are you tired all of the time?
10. Do you still wonder what you want to be when you grow up?
11. Do you fear for the future of libraries?

CHANGE AND STRESS

The Impact Factory, a corporate consulting and training firm, notes that “staff are inclined to greet every change, no matter how minor as a crisis. In a survey, a group of office workers were asked to list in order of severity what might cause them stress in their work environment. Top of the list was... 'Changing their office chair'.”

In times of change, the work environment becomes:

- Unstable
- Scary
- Unknown
- Inconsistent

In times of change, staff feel:

- Paranoid
- Fearful
- Angry
- Stressed
- A lack of control

In time of change, staff tend to:

- Cling to comfortable routines
- Resist
- Romanticize the past

In times of change,

- There are more conflicts
- The grapevine is more active
- Productivity drops

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

*Advice is what we ask for when we already know
the answer but wish we didn't.* - Erica Jong

PRIORITIZE

In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily trivia until ultimately we become enslaved by it. – Robert Heinlein

- Pareto's Law: "In any group of activities a vital few account for the bulk of the benefits."
- Only you can decide what is important in your life.
- Not choosing is also a choice – just not a particularly effective one.
- Your priorities change as you go through life.
- Be more concerned with effectiveness than efficiency.
- Focus on the end and not the means to the end.
- There is a big difference between *urgent* and *important*.

PLAN

Organizing is what you do before you do something so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up. – A. A. Milne

- Knowing where you want to go is just the first step.
- Thinking is not the same as doing.
- Life is what happens while we are busy with other things.
- There are lots of ways to reach your destination. Choose the way that works best for you.
- You need both project-based plans and time-based plans.
- Stay flexible.
- Find an organizing system that works for you - and then use it.
- No one does better work under pressure.

SIMPLIFY

Out of clutter, find simplicity. - Albert Einstein

- Just say no.
- Get rid of all that stuff that you don't use, don't like, and don't know what to do with.
- Organize what you keep so that you can find it, use it, and enjoy it.
- Look carefully at how you spend your time at work and at home. Ask:
 - Does this have to be done at all?
 - Is there an easier or faster way to do this?
- You don't always have to do everything yourself. You have options.
- Everything worth doing is NOT worth doing well.

MANAGE THE CLOCK

Time is what we want most but what we use worst. - William Penn

- Every year has the same holidays, birthdays, and events. They should not come as a surprise.
- Everyone has the same 24 hours every day.
- Your body has a natural rhythm. Find it and work with it.
- Measure time in seconds and minutes, not in weeks and months.
- Just do it!
- Everything is going to take longer than you think it should. Plan on it.
- If the task is important (see *Priorities* above) then focus on it.
- It is amazing what you can get done in 15 minutes.
- Take regular breaks.

***Everyone thinks of changing the world,
but no one thinks of changing himself.*** - Leo Tolstoy