

# Clearing Away the Clutter

The spontaneous tendency of our culture is to add more and more to our lives: one more option, one more problem, one more commitment, one more expectation, one more purchase, one more debt, one more change, one more job, one more decision. We now have more “things per person” than at any time in history. Yet, one can only comfortably handle so much stuff! Exceeding this threshold is called *overloading*. Overloading occurs whenever the requirements upon us exceed what we can handle.

As a new year begins it might be important to ask yourself “What I am going to do about the overload in my life? Some of our confusion comes from not learning and respecting physical, emotional, spiritual and mental limits. We justify “overloading” by telling ourselves that we can do everything. Can you? Can you fly? Can you go six months without eating? Can you swim the Pacific Ocean? The truth is, you cannot live a healthy life while living chronically overloaded.

Tips for setting your limits:

- **Setting Limits to Your Schedule:** You must accept the non-negotiability of the 24-hour day. As you know, everybody else has a plan for your life, and it is draining to give and give and give. To stay within our limits, it is important to discipline ourselves to say “NO” to the good, so that we may say “Yes” to the best.
- **Setting Limits to Your Responsibilities:** Learning the difference between what is important vs. what is urgent. Not everything that presents itself as urgent is important. Many times, the urgent distracts us by holding us captive from engaging in what is important.
- **Setting Limits to Your Emotional Capacities:** There is no value in worrying, and it won't change anything. However, if you are determined to worry, then at least worry about the important things and not the minor issues. When you worry about the important things the secondary things fall into place. Remember there are two rules for managing worry and stress - #1 Don't sweat the small stuff & #2 It's all small stuff.

In summary clearing away the clutter in your life involves identifying an area of overload and selecting one specific thing to be removed. Then, ‘Just Do It!’

FCSS offers workshops as well as individual counselling to help you learn more. For more information call 587-370-3728 or email [counsellingservices@fcss.ca](mailto:counsellingservices@fcss.ca). Visit [www.fcss.ca](http://www.fcss.ca) for more information.

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