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*We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage*



July, 2001

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- Surviving the Information Age
- Leading Your Organization Through Chaos
- Coaching and Counseling: The Leader as Guide
- M. L. King Jr., an Example of Personal Empowerment
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- Leading and Following
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Change Management

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Organization Development

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- SimuReal: The Power of an Organizational Mirror
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When Life Intrudes

By Cathy Perme

Recently I heard a high-powered speaker talk about how to get neatly and tightly focused in life and business – like a lean, mean, strategic machine. As I scribbled notes full of good advice and intention, I had a recurring thought: I must be living in a parallel universe!

My universe is one in which business meetings can be interrupted by the needs of a sick child, focus can be distracted by family concerns, and fatigue or stress can drain energy from the day. I don't think I am alone.

There is an old saying that "life is what happens when you are planning something else." Sometimes life intrudes in shocking or unpredictable ways – such as when a loved one dies, someone loses a job, or becomes seriously ill. Most often life intrudes in little ways on a daily basis – a child wants your attention, your mate is mad at you, the school needs paperwork, etc.

When life intrudes it distracts our attention and saps our energy. It is hard to focus on anything for very long. And for competitive spirits like me, it can make us feel dissatisfied with what we are able to achieve.

What I realized is that *life is not an intrusion* – it *is* life! And as M. Scott Peck wrote in *The Road Less Traveled*, life is difficult and it is messy. It squirts out sideways and gums up the lean, mean, strategic machine. And in the end, life is what counts.

So for other competitive spirits like me, here are a few things I have learned over the past few years – while being a business owner, management consultant, wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, author and community volunteer– about what it means to balance work and life in the parallel universe.

- 1) No, it isn't fair.
- 2) It is critical to recognize your own limits – otherwise you could begin a downward spiral by continually committing too much.
- 3) Acceptance helps you focus – by accepting the whole of your life, you can make better decisions about where and how to focus your energy, which is one of your most precious commodities.
- 4) Self-care is important – it helps maintain energy and perspective. Taking time to do this is not a sacrifice of time; it is an investment in energy.
- 5) You can do anything you want in life – just one thing at a time.