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When Things Go Haywire

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Have you ever encountered times of our life when things go haywire? You feel you have everything in order, your life is going smoothly, you have made plans for the future and wham! the car falls apart, a family member becomes ill with not one but two conditions, an in-law is rushed to hospital with a life threatening illness, the dog runs up \$2000.00 in bills from the vet (I swear, in my next life, I am coming back as a vet!), you require a root canal and are scheduled for abdominal surgery (which means you are not allowed to bend, lift, stretch, sneeze or virtually breathe) but can't get a date until the New Year. You still have a business to run and would like to find time for yourself?

Welcome to my world. You know, as a productivity consultant I always pride myself on being there for all my clients. I joke that I understand their situations because I have and continue to live a life that is challenging on the organizing and productivity front. Well, I have just added some more wisdom to my arsenal. What am I learning as I proceed through this difficult time? Several suggestions come to mind:

1. An organized and simplified environment with easy, systemized processes is essential. Regular trips to the grocery store and wholesome, energizing foods mean I don't have to grab unhealthy meals as I transit between hospital, work and home. Bills that are due are either post-dated on the Internet to be paid or are filed by date so I can process payments quickly. Client files are arranged weekly by date so they are easily accessible. Phone numbers are downloaded on my cell phone and entered on my calendar beside each appointment so I don't have to search for information. Whatever I need, I can find without difficulty.
2. What I thought was of prime importance and that I just had to do today, obviously is not going to get done on time. And you know what? It really doesn't make a bit of difference, because what I am anxious and concerned about are things that my perfectionist tendencies are telling me are important. They are not, in the scheme of things as relevant as I thought. Clients, friends and people are understanding of the situation as long as I communicate an alternate arrangement. I find myself constantly reprioritizing on a daily basis.
3. I need to take care of myself so I can take care of everyone else. That means restricting activities that are not essential at this time. I communicate by email,

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cancel non-relevant activities, get proper sleep and take regular breaks from the tedium of waiting in hospital rooms. The Jewish mother-martyr tendency is very difficult to overcome, but I need to do it for everyone's sanity.

4. I have wonderful family and friends who are willing to help and you know what? I am letting them do just that. This is a big step for someone who always thinks she can do it all. I understand they are assisting out of love and concern and I also know that when the shoe is on the other foot, they will be able to count on me.

The most important lesson of all? I am learning to appreciate the good times that have also come my way this year. A terrific wedding of my youngest daughter and the joy I am taking in the couple's new found happiness. So simplify, organize and get your ducks in order because you never know what is around the corner.