

Moving from 0 to 100

Fall is one of my favorite times of the year, with all its beautiful colors, crisp air and listening to NFL announcer John Madden. But for many professionals the fall also brings the experience of going from 0 to 100.

In the summer, most of us focus on enjoying family, seasonal activities and vacation, but after Labour Day a new routine begins that requires much more planning and energy. The expectations and speed of life increase, with more projects and deadlines such as year-end, performance reviews, budgets, etc.

Each fall, around the first of November, an increasing number of clients report that life is becoming overwhelming and often the root cause is the perception of not being able to keep up to all the perceived demands and expectations.

When a person feels like this there is often a sense of losing control that can be stressful, and stress can trigger internal dialogue such as, “I can’t cope; there’s not enough time in the day,” that compounds the problem.

Stress can deplete a person’s energy and create symptoms such as fatigue, irritation and poor coping habits and lead to a decrease in self-esteem. People don’t like pain, so to get away from pain it’s common to turn to food, alcohol, TV or more work. These kinds of coping behaviours can, if not kept in balance, become habit forming and potentially problematic.

To make the adjustment to the demands of the fall it’s helpful to adopt a set of strategies, such as:

- **Start the day with structure** – When life speeds up it can be better managed with a structured routine to reduce decision making. The more decisions made before the day begins, the more capacity one has to cope with the additional requirements put on them during the day.
- **Be clear of priorities** – Define your priorities in writing and make your daily decisions based on this decision tree. No one has the ability to do everything. Be clear on what you’re willing to give up.
- **End the day with an affirmation** – Recognize and acknowledge all the things you have accomplished to ensure you’re ending each day with a positive focus on what you did, not on what you didn’t get done. That’s for tomorrow’s list.



- **Find a comfortable pace** – Find a pace that works for you and commit to it. Haste makes waste. By pushing or rushing we increase stress that may result in conflict with others that takes more time to fix than moving at a steady pace.
- **Focus on passions** – Spend time thinking about your life passions to help fuel your spirit and soul. If you don't have a passion, take time and get one. Life is short and it's meant to be lived and enjoyed. The mind is a powerful tool; just thinking about what you love doing each day can charge your batteries.

Make health a priority – Humans are like cars. What you put into your body impacts how well you run. If you leave your car sitting around it will rust out. People need exercise and nutrition to keep the mind and body as strong as possible to help cope with the demands of life.

