



Business - Satisfying Your Personal and Professional Needs - What Do You Have to Do?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Life is complex and it can become confusing when it comes to deciding what you have to do. Following are some basic guidelines.

1. **PROVIDE BILLABLE SERVICES** - If you aren't making money, you aren't in business. There are specific activities which you must do in order to earn money. Be very clear about what these are and invest most of your day doing them. If you find yourself doing things that cannot be invoiced, you need to readjust.
2. **OBSERVE HONEST, ETHICAL PRACTICES** - Make sure that what you do in both your personal and business life is honest and ethical. As a solo professional, there is a very slim line between the two. Many people have large incomes that they gain through illegal or immoral activities. Your reputation is based on your practices and you will not have an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of your labour if you are in jail!
3. **DO YOUR PAPERWORK** - Many professionals procrastinate in doing their paperwork and then try to justify this by stating that they focus on clients instead. Both are necessary but if you have not updated your files, done your bookkeeping or filed documents within the expected time lines, you will jeopardize your business and waste time. I once returned from my holidays to find out that a baby on my caseload had died. The file was given to the investigators and I didn't have access to it again. How thankful I was that all my notes and documents had been completed before I had left for my holidays. You never know when you will be held accountable for your work and therefore need to have everything done up to date. Courts generally observe the unwritten rule that notes made within 48 hours of an incident are best.
4. **PAY YOUR BILLS ON TIME** - It may seem like common sense to do this but I have been surprised over the years to learn how many people who describe themselves as professional do not have a good financial reputation. I'm sure that you want to be paid on time for your work and others feel the same way. When you owe money to your vendors you risk tarnishing your reputation. If you cannot afford to pay the balance in full, at least call the vendor, send post-dated cheques or at least make regular payments until the balance is paid in full. (And do not expect the vendor to do you any favours or provide further services in the meantime).
5. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF** - You are the business and it is therefore important that you protect your physical and mental health. That way you will be able to continue to work and enjoy the benefits earned in the business for years to come.

There are many distractions that interfere with people's ability to do well. Ensure that you are doing all of the above and you will soon develop good habits that will build your business in a healthy manner.