

Create Work Life Balance & Stability with a Rule of Life

Session 1: Intro / History / Background

What is a Rule of Life and why do I need one?

A Rule of life is a structure that allows us to recognize the unique ways we experience rest and rejuvenation. It is founded on the principle that we are limited in our time and capacity and therefore what we can do or accomplish is limited. This may sound obvious, but somehow we all find ourselves living outside our abilities. What happens when that goes on for too long? Disaster!

A Rule of Life helps us recognize and establish our own limits so that we can devote the life God has given us to the things he wants for us. When we acknowledge our limits (or boundaries), we can then organize and structure our lives based on what God is asking of us and not around what others maybe asking. In the end, this brings freedom and liberation from the demands of the world. Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden is light.

If followed well, this will result in balance and stability in your life for the season it is applied to. This is because creating a Rule of Life is itself a process of planning and looking ahead, and making the adjustments necessary to succeed against the obstacles that life throws you for a given season.

"The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it."
Proverbs 22:3

An affect of the Rule of Life is Work Life Balance in the short term and stability in the long term. This is because it's easy to put things into balance for a short while, but maintaining that balance, while much more difficult, is what brings about stability in your life, and over time that brings peace. This is an important point. There are many extreme ways to live, but I can't think of any that are actually beneficial for us in the long term. An example may be while workaholism will often get you the career success you desire, you may have to give up relationships to get there. On the other hand, while leaving work early all the time will allow you to spend more time with your family, you may be sacrificing your family's future security to have that time with them now. This is why the Rule of Life is so important. It forces us to acknowledge where we are out of balance and readjust so that we can focus on what God is asking of us, and letting everything else handle itself.

Another affect of a Rule of Life is increased productivity. A Rule of Life takes the statement, "work smarter, not harder," and forces us to be intentional and specific about it. It's setting you up to be more productive and effective in your work schedule because you've become intentional about protecting the things that actually motivate you to work. In connecting with what really matters for the coming season, it motivates you to work well, because you are now giving much more than lip service to the values you claim as important. You've made a plan to protect those things.

Biblically, we see the same principle given to the Israelites as they leave Egypt. God sets up a structure for them about how to worship Him, how to be at peace with each other, how to stay healthy, how and how often to rest, how often to party, etc. We no longer have this structure but have become more at the mercy of what the culture or our traditions dictate is valuable to us and our lives, with consequences.

Where did the Rule of Life come from?

The concept developed out of monasticism in the 6th century as a semi-specific way monks were to live in community with each other and God. While the specific rule developed then may or may not be effective for us today, the concept and principle works exceptionally well still.

Some Definitions:

Energy: The totality of your energy reserves: emotional, spiritual, and physical. It's important here to acknowledge that the spiritual/emotional and physical are interlinked. If I eat well (physical act), I feel happy (spiritual/emotional affect). If I am depressed (spiritual/emotional), I don't get out of bed (physical response). This distinction is important because we must not think of energy as purely eating, drinking, and sleeping. Those are all very important things (and they may make it onto your Rule of Life), but for our purposes, we want to get to the things that lead to the feelings (responses).

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What causes you to feel a certain way. If we can identify what acts the feelings of happiness come from, then we can make a plan to prioritize those acts, making it more likely happiness will show up.

Work Life Balance: Work Life Balance is a rhythm of life that allows you to expend and replenish energy without becoming depleted. Work Life balance ensures that you are getting enough nourishment for the tasks and requirements of the season. Think of yourself as a plant. Each season it has one goal, to grow to seed or pollen and multiply. It only grows if it gets the right mixture of light, water, and nutrients. Every plant is different and the amounts they need, as well as the soil they prefer to be planted in, among other things, all make up the unique nature of what makes that plant grow. Humans are the same. While incredibly adaptable, there are things unique to each of us that help us experience wholeness and fulfillment. Some symptoms your life is out of balance may be: exhaustion, significant stress, lack of motivation, and trouble sleeping are all warning signs. If you feel like your life is not your own, it's probably out of balance. If you feel like you have no time for yourself, it's probably out of balance.

Getting Uncomfortable:

Feelings are a barometer or symptom of both positive and negative things going on in our lives. If you feel sick, it's a good idea to pay attention to that feeling because something is wrong on the inside. Likewise if you feel joyful, it's beneficial to know where that joy is coming from so that you can prioritize the things that give you joy. Paul said it this way, "pursue what makes for peace." With the understanding that God is our provider of life, we should pay attention to the things that are life-giving.

However, some feelings are learned from past circumstances, or even related to our old nature, and consequently, may need to be adjusted in order to keep in step with the Spirit. So we must be careful.

A Rule of Life also challenges our concepts of boundaries. Because we are thinking through and prioritizing what's most important, by nature, some things are going to have to be set aside and said "no" to. Things that you've been doing are going to have to be jettisoned. This is intentional. These boundaries are designed to protect us. With a Rule of Life we intentionally protect the boundaries. If you still think you can do everything, you definitely need a Rule of Life. The process of change is a two part process: in saying "yes" to something good, we are also saying "no" to something that would have otherwise taken its place. In order for the newness to come, we must say goodbye to the old. This is because all humanity is finite. We can't go on without eating forever, we can't go on without rest forever, We can't just say yes to all the good without also saying no to the bad. Therefore it's important that in preparing your Rule of Life you prepare yourself to say no to some things. If you are unable to do that you will never keep your own rule, and consequently you will eventually end up in the same state you started in, except worse: on top being out of balance, burnt out, stressed out, and out of control, you can add guilt for not keeping your own Rule. Following God is wrapped up with the realities of death and resurrection. In putting your old man to death with Jesus on the cross, and reckoning Jesus as Lord, you're are raised to life in Christ, just as Jesus was raised to life. This is a historic fact, not a metaphor. You are then given God's Spirit to regenerate you and form you into the image of Jesus. Whatever is of the old nature will not come with you to heaven. Whatever is of the new nature (of the Spirit of God) will. So saying no to things is in part putting bad habits and behaviors to death early, that you might realize and God might manifest more of the life of His Spirit in you.

It's very important then to be gracious with yourself and realize that a Rule of Life is dynamic. We're not making a vague list of platitudes and inspirational sayings that we hang on the wall. We're making a list of concrete to-dos that we've determined are life-giving to us, as well as things we must remember to maintain and pour into for a given *season*. When we find out a certain practice isn't life giving, we refine it or get rid of it. This is perfectly normal and acceptable. You are learning how you operate in the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is a learn by doing process. It's not a number or an acronym that is designed to tell you how you behave in different situations or what motivates you. No one knows you better than God, and He will make it clear what gives you life.

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Lastly give yourself time to work through this training. You will need time and space to reflect on your current environment and situation. After each session you will have created a large list of items to do and be aware of. It's best if you give yourself some time between these sessions to wrestle with each new list and allow it to set in, as well as to add things to them as they become clear. So plan on giving yourself a few weeks to complete the whole training. You will gain the most out of it if you do!

So let's get on with it. We'll start the next session with a concept called Gainers!

Session 2: Gainers

Start: Grab a sheet of paper and a pencil and write Gainers at the top.

Gainers: Make a list of at least 10 things you like to do regularly that will give you energy and reduce your stress. These are things you want to do or like to do. Don't list things you should do. Only list what energizes you. Think about all the people, places, and activities that give you energy (sound fun). Be as specific as possible. Describe the action. How often do you need to meet with or call this person, go to that place, do that activity over the course of the next season? A good gainer is specific and measurable. A poor gainer might be written like: hang out with friends. A good gainer would look like: meet with Kathy once a week for coffee for an hour. Some helpful words for creating these gainers are:

- Who: who do I want to meet with, who do I want to do that activity with?
- What: what is the activity specifically. Is it any exercise, or do you love cycling and hate running?
- How often: This is especially important. In order to be intentional about your life for the coming season, a gainer like, "hang out with friends" doesn't give you any context for measurement of how often that is needed in order to maintain a healthy life. Is it once a week? Once a month? Are you in a particularly difficult season where you need to meet every other day? Thinking this point through will make you much more likely to succeed at having the balance and stability you desire.
- Where: What places are especially meaningful to you? Instead of a gainer like "going on walks," think about the place that is especially life-giving for you to walk in.

Next Level:

Because the Rule of Life developed out of Christianity, it is especially effective at helping us connect with God. At the core of christian belief is that life comes from God. It is not a created thing, nor is it a random chance result of the right natural environment. Because of this foundation, it is important to think about things that are life giving for us in light of spiritual practices. One way is from St. Ignatius who termed two words to help us focus on our connection with God. The first of these is Consolations, or: *The interior movement of the heart that gives a deep sense of life-giving connection with God, others, and my most authentic self in God.* What causes these moments?

My own personal preferred way of thinking about my connection with God is through the words "Sabbath Delight" from Peter Scazzero. Back to our Isrealites from before, the Sabbath was supposed to be the time where they were rejuvenated. Life was always going to be hard. So Sabbath and what was included in it was intended to remind them of God's love for them and generate thankfulness for all that He had done. So for us today, an easy way to think about it is:

- What people, places, and activities bring delight to your spirit or soul and cause you to recognize God's hand at work in your life? In essence, what are the things you are so thankful for that you just go, "I'm so blessed to be able to do this!" Or "I just love being around this person." etc. The apostle Paul says that all those things come from God and when we recognize it it connects us with Him and becomes a life-giving moment.
- Next Next Level:** Think of Jesus and list out all his disciplines you are aware of. Now an important distinction, which discipline would you *like* to add to your gainers list. Because a Rule of Life is a

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dynamic structure, this discipline may not entirely work for you and that's ok (not everyone is called to walk around Israel and preach). But the point is to try things that others do who we view as successful or role models.

That's it! You made your gainers list and are ready for the next session, Drainers! But before you move on to drainers, it's important that you take some time, perhaps a week to try out some of your Gainers list. What's working well? What was less life giving than you thought? What needs to change or be modified in order to make the list successful?

Session 3: Drainers

Start: Grab another sheet of paper or write in your journal the heading, Drainers. Do not lose this list we are about to create. Let's start.

Drainers: In the same way that energy powers your life, there are things that suck the life out of you! We call these things Drainers. These are things that sap your energy. Dealing with these things is like giving your car a tune-up. After a well needed tune-up your car runs better. You will operate with more energy, with more life, and with greater productivity. In this way we work to "move the bar."

Imagine there is a bar that is standing in a straight line. What keeps this bar in place are opposing forces. This bar represents the status quo of your life. On one side you have all the positive influencers on your life that are pushing the bar one direction. These were your Gainers. They are positive influencers that make you into the best version of yourself and give you energy. On the other side you have all the negative influencers on your life. Some of these you are currently aware of, others of them you may not be aware of. This keeps the status quo of your life where it currently is. How do we move the bar? There are two ways to *change the status quo* in the positive direction. We can add to the positive influencers in our life. This change increases the positive influencers and moves the bar. This is the most common way in which people try to improve their lives. However, this methodology soon breaks down in light of our limited time and availability. We can only add so many positive influencers to our lives before we run out of the time in the day. This is where our Rule of Life becomes so vitally important. We are limited, so we must be real and reasonable about what we can spend our energy and time doing. Therefore, we must begin to deal with the negative influencers on our lives in order to make real, long term, sustainable progress in changing the status quo of our lives. Otherwise we just end up changing what we are doing on the positive side of the bar, hoping that somehow the negatives will change on their own. We've all been there. We try this new thing and it feels great for a while, but the real issue is on the other side of the bar. We should not think these will go away on their own. That isn't realistic, nor does it help us develop as Jesus-followers. We should not back away from dealing with hard things.

So what are Drainers anyways? They can be the presence of something, such as a messy room, a leaky faucet, or an unresolved conflict. They can be a person that you really have a hard time with, or a place you hate going. They can be a bad habit or addiction. They can also be the absence of something. An example might be lack of money, bereavement or lack of family, missing a friendship, or a forced diet restriction. These conditions, though in a few cases may in fact be healthy, they still drain you of energy and often times add to the stress in your life. By identifying these things, we take our first steps towards resolving, removing, or reorienting these drainers. Let's begin!

Write out all the people, places, and activities that deplete you of energy or add stress to your life. Don't worry about how to deal with each drainer, just identify them for now. You will have plenty of time to make a plan to deal with them soon. First let's identify all of them. Think through each part of your life: home, family, work, health, neighbors, etc. Think about what makes you "sigh" or think, "not that again!"

Next Level:

1. For those who want to take this a level deeper, think of your spiritual life. What things cause a loss of a sense of God's presence in your life. What causes these moments?

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Session 4: Have to's

Start: Grab your coaching journal again and write the heading “Have-to’s” at the top of a new page of paper.

Have-to's: Reality check! If you've made it this far, hopefully you've begun discovering all the things affecting your life on both the positive and negative sides of the scale. But what about everything in the middle? There's many things in life that just are. They don't affect us negatively or positively that we are aware of. They are just realities of our current situation, *and most importantly they take time*. These are the things that must be done during this season. What you feel about them is somewhat inconsequential. Again the time factor is rearing its ugly head. This is why we focused so intently on adding a time component to our gainers. As we begin to look at the whole of our life given the constant of our limited time, we will start to see our lives from a macro perspective, and begin to see how we may be out of balance. You may have started to recognize this already if you've been allowing a week between these sessions. You may have discovered that as much as you want to do everything on your gainers list, you can't find the time for it! This is where our Have-to's come in. They are our reality check. They aren't something to be changed, and they don't necessarily give us energy, they just take up space in our schedule. Some examples of these things may be going to work, taking care of an aging parent, taking care of an infant in the middle of the night, or grocery shopping, saving money for a house down payment, answering emails, keeping the family budget, doing your taxes, etc. These are things that have to be done.

Most of what you call work should find its way here. Unless you are considering a job change, this is what you are being paid to do. You may not always like it, or you may enjoy it tremendously, but it's still work and you can't stop doing it in good conscience. Under this heading, we write all the things that we consider a non-negotiable part of our lives. In the Gainers session we dealt with things we already do that we *like or want* to continue doing. In the Drainers session we dealt with all the things that we really want *changed* or we *want to avoid*. The distinction here is that with the have-to's we are acknowledging there are some things that we must devote time and energy to that aren't going away in this season no matter what we do or feel about them. This is the category for all the stuff of life. It's just stuff and it's there.

Your personal goals should also go in this category. What are the things you really *want* to be doing over the coming season? If you are working with a coach or if you start a coaching relationship with Anchor, we will add your goals to this category. They are things that *need* to have attention devoted to them. In other words we're not leaving them to chance.

This is also the time to look ahead and reflect on what's coming. A Rule of Life is designed as an exercise in prudence. It's about building up a bulwark for when the storm comes or creating a foundation. It's counting the cost of what's coming and making a plan to stay healthy in the midst of it. What do you see on the horizon in the coming 3-6 months that you haven't yet accounted for? Remember the prudent man sees danger and adjusts. If we're not looking ahead, how will we see and plan for what's coming? If we know what's coming but have made no adjustments, how do we know we'll be able to cope with the change?

Take some time to reflect on these things and list them out on this page. Pay attention to how much time these have-to's currently or will take-up. Can you actually get all your admin done in one day, or does it take two? What projects are on the horizon? What changes are coming down the pipe? Examples could be a wedding or child on the horizon, a move, or an upcoming presentation, etc. Take some time to reflect on what's coming that you need to prepare for in the coming season.

If you've made it this far congratulations! You've almost got a working Rule of Life, and you've done a lot of honest self-reflection about all the factors effecting your life right now. In the next Session we will put it all together. You will end the session with an accurate Rule of Life that should reflect the season you are entering into and show you where your life is both out of and in balance.

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Session 5: The Rule of Life - Putting It All Together

Well done! You've made it this far! You've done so much self reflection and processing about your current life and the future, hopefully you've already begun to become aware of some new and valuable information. By now you have 3 lists in your coaching journal, a Gainers list, a Drainers list, and a Have-To's list. Some of you may have lists with only a few items on it, while others of you may have very long lists. Both are ok. What's most important is that *you* feel like your lists are accurate reflections of your life as it currently is, and they take into account what's to come as best as you can predict. Maybe you've even made a few adjustments to your lists.

Download the pdf included in this session. We will now begin to place all the items from our lists onto the Rule of Life structure so that we can see where and how we are out of balance. Notice there 4 categories that you are going to place your listed items into. First you have Rest, then Relationships, Prayer, and finally Work. Each category is a list of things by which you give and receive the Love of God. From a spiritual perspective, unless we are relying on God's love, we have nothing of lasting value to give *John 15:5. The ROL helps us see clearly what it means to Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves. In the middle we see that loving God is the totality of the Rule of Life. The top two categories, Prayer and Rest, reflect how we are called to love ourselves. The bottom two categories are how we are called to love our neighbor. Your wholeness as a person is connected to how you give to, and receive love from others, as well as the things you pour your life into. Your overall energy level is also connected to a balance of all of these areas. It is not defined by any one of them. By looking at energy and fulfillment in this way, it becomes easy to see how our lives may be out of balance, or perhaps how we've neglected ourselves at other's behest (serving on empty), or preferred ourselves, or strove for something not God initiated or supported (building with wood, hay, and stubble), etc. In terms of planning for the future, we can more easily see when we have future projects listed in front of us that are going to effect the other areas of our life. This is ultimately why we are doing this! Remember the prudent sees danger and adjusts. But we can't see the danger ahead if we don't look ahead! Most often, we won't have time to do everything, and some balancing out of the categories will be necessary to maintain a robust level of health. This is why balance in the categories is so important, and why it's crucial to make sure we have enough things that fuel us in order to be able to give energy to the things that we must and want to do.

So let's Categorize it all:

1. Create a sheet with a category in each of the 4 corners of the paper. The categories are: **Prayer, Rest, Relationships, Work**. Each category is a list of things that by which you either give and/or receive the love of God. You can also download the sheet from the website.
2. Write "Love of God" in the center of the sheet. Remember, in the center is you, your health flows into and out from the center.
3. Between the top two categories at 12oclock, write Love myself. At the bottom of the page between the bottom two categories write, love others.
4. Starting with the Prayer, Rest, and Relationships categories, think about what you want most in these areas of your life. Listen to your heart's desires and begin writing your "rules." Try to include joy, fun, and play, into your rules. Use your gainers list to help you create your "rules."
5. Some things may feel like they could fit into multiple categories. Try to reflect on your motivation for doing that thing. Are you doing it primarily for you or are you doing it primarily because you believe it's good / necessary for someone else? For example, taking your kids to sports practice. This very clearly is for your children, even if it gives you joy to do it, so that goes in the relationships category. A good indication of whether it is for you, is whether or not you would do it if the other person wasn't around. You wouldn't go to those sports lessons if your children had grown up and moved on, so it is for them, and should not go in your Rest category. You could also put it in your work category if you feel it's not particularly life-giving to you, but needs to be done. The point is just because you like being around other people doesn't mean everything involving others falls under Rest, far from it. There are many relationships you are primarily being

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called to pour into and others you are being asked to receive from. The “receiving from” relationships go in your rest category. The pouring into ones go in your relationships category.

6. Add “One Day of Solitude” to your rest category. Research has found that periods of solitude are incredibly healthy for humans. It’s not always recognized how important this is, for some of us have a great fear of being alone. What do I mean by solitude? I simply mean taking a prolonged time away from all your normal human interactions. Even better if you can get away from all human interaction and find a place of seclusion that you really find enjoyable. My own personal favorite is being secluded in nature. The further I am away from the man-made the better. This may seem counter-intuitive for some, especially extroverts. Please understand this is not a permanent seclusion, but simply a “time-away from it all.” A few quotes here are helpful. In *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, Ruth Haley-Barton says,

“Just like the physical law of gravity ensures that sediment swirling in a jar of muddy river water will eventually settle and the water will become clear, so the spiritual law of gravity ensures that the chaos of the human soul will settle if it sits long enough.”

She goes on to say: “As we slowly come in contact with our own dysfunctions, we unveil our need for security and all the ways we try to use God and others to get it.” She’s talking about unhealthy dependencies we are unaware of. These are things lying under the surface that you aren’t aware of because you’ve been too distracted to notice them.

Ivan Illich says in his book, *The Culture of Narcissism*, “As people become apt pupils in learning how to need, the ability to shape wants from experienced satisfaction becomes the rare competence of the very rich or the seriously undersupplied.”

The point is if we never take time to “recalibrate” what is actually a need, we end up becoming ever more dependent on ever more and newer things. It’s a personal audit on our own consumerism, whether we are “consuming” things or relationships.

Many of us who have travelled to third world countries have seen this phenomenon. An almost universal take away of those from “wealthy” countries experiencing those living in what we often call poverty is that they seem to be happier and more content than we think they should be, based on our judgement of their circumstances.

Taking time away from our normal routines and information structures gives us the time to become aware of the areas of our life that need to change, our unhealthy dependencies and needs. It also allows time for God to speak. In the old testament, the God of the Bible says in Deuteronomy 30:14 “The word of God is very near to you; it is in your heart for you to observe.” We won’t go into the sheer number of times God speaks when people are alone, but suffice it to say, getting away from distractions is a common theme for gaining clarity on what matters most.

So while you don’t have to add this item, I strongly recommend it for your own health. It is difficult to keep, but it is something to strive for. I try to take 1 day at least every three months (though I strive for once a month) to be alone for the whole day. I find these are often some of my most memorable times of getting clarity for my life and feeling re-energized for the road ahead. If I really need to hear something from God, I prefer to go hiking in the mountains for the day, but have also gone to the beach for the day or to other nature parks. If I just need a break, I’ve gone and explored a city alone before. You can decide how you want to do it. What’s most important is that you are out of your daily routine of the normal people you come in contact with, and as much as possible that you limit (if not eliminate) both virtual and physical human interaction. You must be “alone.” I am positive that you will discover dependencies in yourself you didn’t realize were there as well as gain new appreciation for the things that really matter to you and are truly life-giving. Give yourself a full day alone with nothing to do but focus on yourself and what God may be saying to you.

Back to our Rule:

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7. Add the Have-To's of this upcoming season of life to their respective categories.
8. Add a specific rule entitled "Deal with Drainers" to the work category.
9. Begin filling in the work category.
10. Analyze:

- i. Is your work category significantly larger than your other categories? Think about what commitments you need to say "no" to in order to bring your categories into balance.

Or

What ways do you need to be more intentional in other categories to fuel you so you can actually accomplish the things in your work category without becoming depleted and / or "burnt out."

Take some time to do this.

When I moved to France, after a season of work I was stressed out. So I made a Rule of Life and God used it to protect me from saying "yes" to something I wasn't supposed to do. I was asked to take on a major responsibility at work, and looking at my Rule, I knew that there was nothing I could give up in my other areas in order to create the time for the new commitment, so I said no to it. This clarity allowed the people who really needed to be filling that need to step forward. What transpired was three leaders were grown and developed out of my "no" to that task. Instead of the ministry not being done, or floundering under my taxed leadership, three people developed into leaders by taking it on. I could not have foreseen this, but I knew it was a responsibility that wasn't mine to take, thanks to my Rule of Life, and God multiplied and developed new leaders because of it.

So take some time to revise your Rule using these questions:

2. Are the categories of your rule of life in balance?
3. How realistic is this Rule of Life in this Season?
4. What needs to change to make it a success?

What happens when my categories are out of balance? Research shows that we prioritize whatever is most clearly defined in our lives. Here's an example: you are more likely to act on the idea to brush your teeth than you are on the broader concept of keeping your mouth healthy. Why is that? The answer is brain processing. Keeping your mouth healthy involves a second processing step. In order to act on keeping my mouth healthy, I have to determine how best to do accomplish that goal. Does that mean I need to:

brush my teeth? floss? gargle? go to the dentist? Use a water pick? Stop drinking soda? All of the above?

There are many different options to act on and now instead of moving forward I am thinking through which step is best. Keeping my mouth healthy isn't a specific action in and of itself and therefore it requires clarity before it can be acted on. But brushing my teeth is a specific action that requires no further processing *and* it (at least partially) satisfies the requirement to keep my mouth healthy.

By doing the processing up front, we are more likely to act on the specifics. Instead of looking at my Rule of "exercise every so often" and then having to think - "Am I going to do that today? How am I going to exercise? What do I want to do? What do I feel like" I remove all the extra processing and go straight to "Ride my bike Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays." Then the only processing I have to do is determine what day it is because I've determined already those are the best days for bike riding and hopefully I've blocked out my schedule to allow for that energy giving time. I already know that I like bike riding, so I should have the motivation to do it without further reflection. We act on what is most clearly defined. This also works in the opposite way. If I am asked to clean the bathroom or clean the toilet, which is more likely to get done well? The toilet because it's a smaller more manageable task than cleaning the entire bathroom. Therefore I am more likely to get it done. Cleaning the bathroom on the other hand is a multitude of more decisions that I have to make. So the more specific you get in all

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the areas that need to be filled or increased, the more likely you are to do what is listed in them, the more likely you are to stay emotionally and physically healthy.

Be honest, is your Rule of Life realistic? There is no point in creating a Rule of Life that's impossible to keep. This is in fact what it's for. If your Rule of Life is a pipe dream, then all it will do is make you feel guilty when you don't keep it. Remember your Prayer, Relationships, and Rest categories should be built on play and fun *in reality as it is*, not as you want it to be. If you fill your Rule of Life with things you are hoping to do but don't include room for the things that already give you life, something will have to give. By saying "yes" to one thing you are consciously saying "no" to another. Are you really saying "no" to the things you want to? Are you really saying "yes" to the things you want to?

Remember your Rule of Life is designed to protect you by protecting the ways you receive energy and protecting your emotional well being in light of what's coming. In being intentional about protecting these things we gain balance to our life for the upcoming season. This reduces stress and increases peace. When we have peace and balance in our lives for prolonged periods we become stable. This increases our impact in society, as leaders, and loving family members, helping us become the people we want to be because we are becoming the people God wants us to be!

Transition Well!