

APRIL 2005

Keep Your Soul out of the Lost and Found: Strategies to Avoid Burnout

by *Lisa Whaley*

Life is full of joy and challenge. Although modern technology has simplified our lives on many levels, it has increased the pace of work and life, often adding to our stress level. Add to that the new concerns and threats of our global world, and it is easy to see just how quickly it can all get to be too much.

As people of faith, we know we do not have to go it alone. When we come up against those unexpected or overwhelming challenges in life, we know that through prayer, the support of others, and some practical strategies, we can focus on the truly important aspects of our lives. We can separate the chaff from the wheat, and go forward as productive, faithful individuals.

In my own painful struggles against my own challenges, I learned that it was ultimately my faith that helped me identify who I was not, then helped me discover who I truly am. We each have to define success for ourselves, ensuring that it is not in conflict with our core values, regardless of society's dictates. No longer am I trying to live up to everyone else's expectations.

In my recent book, *Reclaiming My Soul from the Lost and Found*, I share the journey that took me from individual and professional triumph to absolute anguish and my desperate attempt to save my daughter's — and my own — life. I caution women who seek a seamless balance between family and career and who believe their lives are perfect. I was once that woman — the one who seemed to have it all — a loving marriage, two beautiful children, a fast-track career, a fine home, and a stylish lifestyle. But when the façade vanished in a perfect storm of trouble, I had to cope with the reality of my life.

In my book, I share the decisions and actions that led me to lose sight of my own soul, and the ones that allowed me to heal and reclaim my spirit, my family, and my faith. I share the ten guiding principles of finding synergy and harmony between life and work that I developed years ago—principles that I disregarded for far too long and, at last, have incorporated back into my life.

A sample of the key principles

1. Be yourself and don't try to be someone that you're not. Success is dependent on what we do, not who we are. As we get older, faking it, that is, trying to create a different personality, requires an exhausting amount of energy and will inevitably lead to failure.

2. Set realistic goals for yourself that are not in conflict with your personal values. Goals can keep us moving in the right direction, yet they should not clash with our standards, spirituality, and priorities. For example, if your personal values highlight family time together in the evening, set as a goal finding a job that does not require a lot



Cover Art
Ike Scott

More Featured Articles in This Issue:

"Paths of
Transformation
and Challenge"
-by Beth Marie
Halvorsen

"The Saint John's Bible
Project: Reclaiming a
Vanished Art"
-by Kristin Searfoss

"Lost, but Found:
Knowing Whose We
Are"
-by P.K. McCary

of travel.

3. Take charge of and responsibility for, your own career and your own life. Be proactive, not reactive. Don't let outside actions and events dictate your decisions. Measure your progress toward the realistic goals that you have set. When reverses and disappointments occur, adjust your goals accordingly, but keep moving toward them.

4. Make time for yourself. Arrange your calendar so that you have enough time for your own relaxation, including time for prayer. Remember, you are one of the most important people in your own life. Whether you spend time with a hobby, exercise, meditation, or getting your nails done, you should enjoy your own company.

5. Celebrate successes and learn from failures. Even small milestones should be celebrated. Robert F. Kennedy said, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." There is no shame in failing or making mistakes. Just don't make the same mistakes over and over again.

Lisa Whaley is President of Life Work Synergy, LLC, an organization dedicated to energizing and motivating individuals to be the best they can be in all dimensions of their lives — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

We're glad you enjoyed this online preview of *Lutheran Woman Today*. But there is so much more inside each issue. For just 3 cents a day, you can receive a year's worth of *LWT*'s award-winning graphics and articles in your own home. Don't miss another issue — [Subscribe now!](#)



[Send this page to a friend](#) | [Terms](#) | [Privacy](#)

©2004 Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.