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Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

### **The ABC's of Avoiding Burnout Consistently**

*Bob's Perspective:*

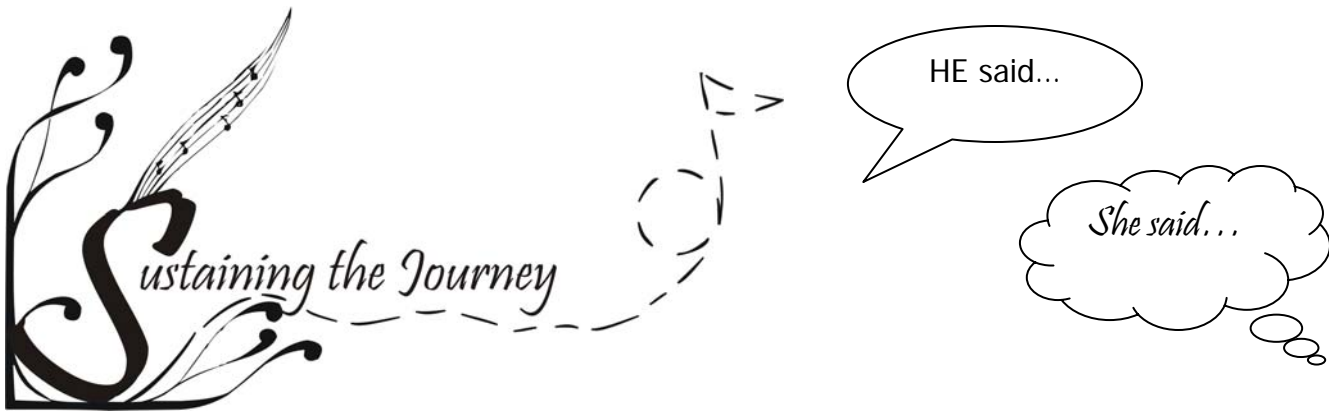
Don't do as much and learn to say "NO!"

OK, so that's easier said than done – or so you would think! However, with a little reflection, I bet each of us would be able to find a number of ways in which this could be accomplished with at least a moderate amount of success.

One way is to put aside the belief that "If I don't do it, it won't get done." None of us are the "common, ordinary, simple, savior of the world's destiny." It's true that in certain areas of expertise one's particular talent is necessary for a successful outcome. But it would also behoove one to discern exactly what they necessarily have to do, and what one is able to delegate someone else to do with a minimal amount of direct supervision. This is not only true on the professional level, but on the personal level as well. While we all like to feel indispensable, the truth is that in many cases, someone else can do it just as well. I don't have to do it all!

Another way is to stop reinventing the wheel. If a plan works well, why constantly reinvent it? Many times, a little bit of updating to keep the concept fresh may be all that's called for, would take far less time to accomplish, and be just as (if not more) effective than starting from scratch. This then leaves one the time to work on other things that may otherwise be put off or neglected – or – have some "me time" to reinvigorate and refresh one's health and outlook on life. This doesn't mean that one should settle for less quality – but if the plan didn't have quality to begin with, it wouldn't have been successful the first time. Metaphorically speaking, if your house is in good condition and functional, building on to it makes more sense than ripping it down and starting all over.

Finally, one needs to SCHEDULE time for one's self. On a daily basis, make sure that there is some time for recharging. While on rare occasion this may have to be adjusted, make sure that



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the adjustment just that – RARE! Being rested and clear minded gets one much further ahead than being tired, burned out and struggling. Statements like, “one of these days, I’m going to take a few days off,” are useless – having very little chance for actually happening. SCHEDULE time off, or personal time that’s just for you. This isn’t being selfish. You can’t be of help to someone else if you can’t be of use to yourself. Striving to make this time a regular occurrence gives you something for which to look forward – a goal of sorts. And by all means, do something fun, or something that you enjoy.

The bottom line is:

Don’t do as much (consolidate) and learn to say “NO,” (delegate)!

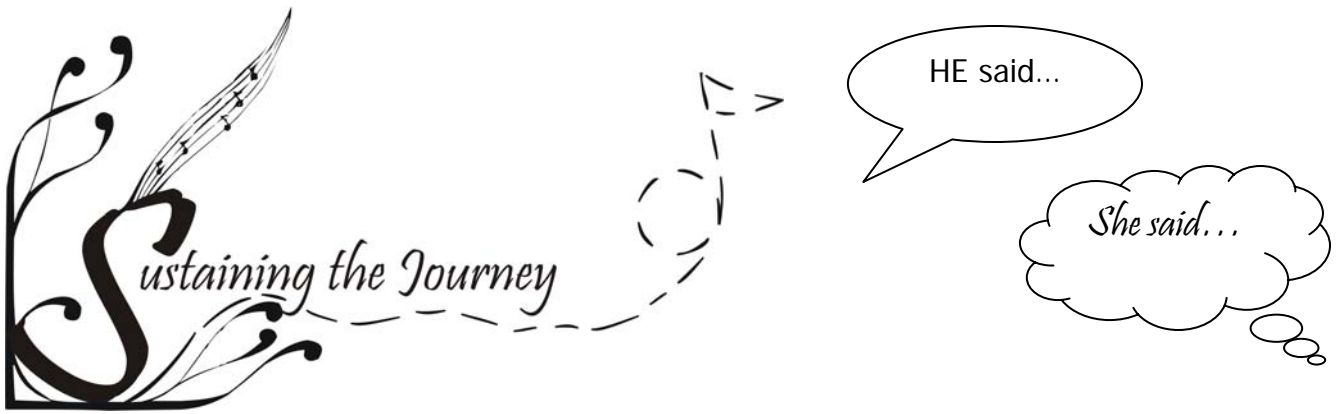
*Mary's Perspective*

Burnout is caused by - and manifest in - mental ways and physical ways. One of the best ways to avoid it is to get rid of clutter.

You can get rid of mental clutter by picking out your clothes the night before, defining days to do a specific task (i.e., laundry or paying bills), planning your meals, maintaining your files (physical and electronic), putting gas in your car, and avoiding making monsters out of mole hills. Recognizing and working with the limitations of your resources, and taking a small-step approach to problem solving are more effective than trying to eat the proverbial elephant in one big chomp. Discern priorities - "good enough" is enough sometimes! (Done is better than perfect.)

Attending to the physical includes surrounding oneself with positive, seeking balance (how many times have we written about THAT?), planning for treats, becoming aware of breath, and being mindful. Rituals are comforting and help us stay on task. Remember, it's not always about the destination - the joy is in the journey!

The reality of burnout is we feel stressed by something - and in most cases, this breaks down to having too much to do and not enough time to do it (or some variation of this theme). So I either need more time or less work. How do I resolve that? Find more time. Do less work. Pretty simple concept - but not as easy to live!



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Here are some basic suggestions: to find more time, be more organized, plan ahead, and solicit help. To get less work, prioritize, re-think how you've always done something, and solicit help. In other words, consolidate and delegate!

I don't always appreciate when I come to the same conclusion as Bob, but I do have to admit he's a pretty balanced guy who doesn't get stressed by much. When he does start feeling burnout, he makes it a priority to care for himself. I'm more of a work in process - attempting to de-clutter in small steps... (somewhat necessary given the short length of my legs).

To quote the crazy yet wise old owl at our last workshop... How can you Avoid Burnout Consistently? Do less. Thank you and goodnight!