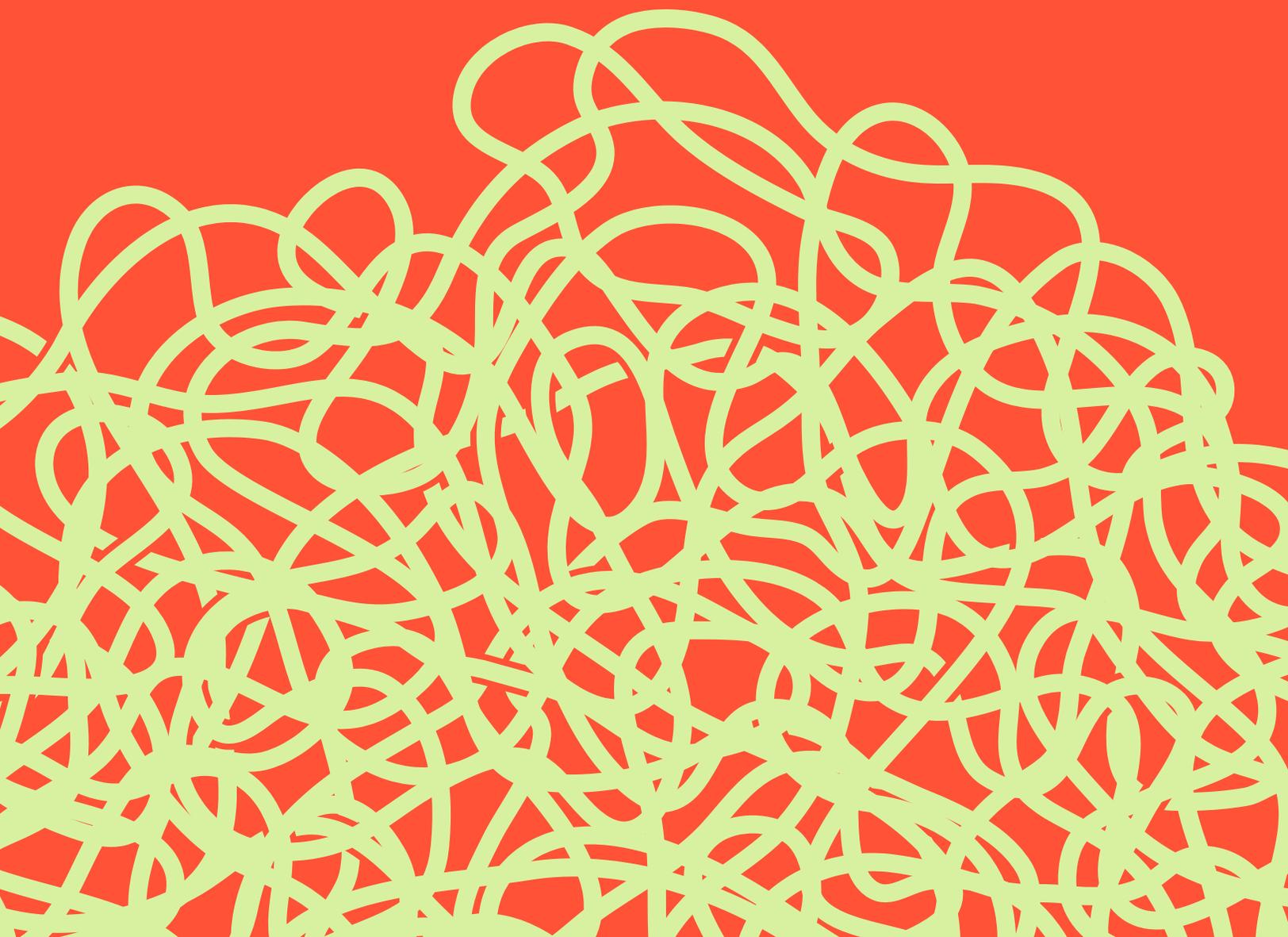


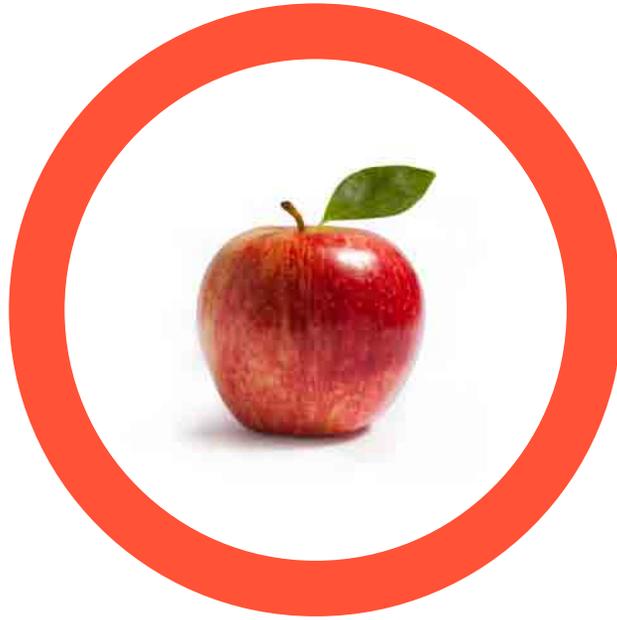
G R E G L U L L

10 STEPS TO  
**UNCRAZY**  
YOUR LIFE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Newton's Law	3
Breathe	5
Shhhh...	8
Flatter Your Favorites	11
Put 1st things 1st	13
Grab a Towel	15
Remember	18
Skip It	20
Make a Decision	22
Spiritize	25
Take A Selfie	27
Just the Beginning	30



## IT ALL STARTED WITH AN APPLE

**Kind of.** Sir Isaac Newton observed a falling apple and developed the Law of Gravitation. One thing led to another and it led him to develop the first Law of Motion.

### **NEWTON'S LAW OF MOTION**

Every object will remain at rest unless compelled to change its state by the action of an external force.

Yup. That's exactly what happens when we allow our lives to become crazy with appointments, deadlines, routines and tasks.

They will probably continue to be crazy and, as time goes on, crazier, unless you take action.

**Let's break it down in 10 easy steps...**

**YOU ARE THE EXTERNAL  
FORCE THAT CAN ACT TO  
UNCRAZY YOUR LIFE.**

# 1. BREATHE

## BREATHING IS UNDERRATED.

I know that sounds silly. After all we don't really have a choice, do we? We breathe or we die. The truth is we take breath for granted.

We are a few short breaths away from extinction.

The average person takes over 23,000 breaths each day! But those breaths can come fast and furious, accompanied by heart palpitations and sweating. All too often we hold our breath, waiting for something to happen or fearing the worst.

It turns out that the respiratory system is there for a reason. When we breathe we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Out with the bad, in with the good. It's that simple.

But the benefits are great! Your metabolism decreases, your heart rate slows, your blood pressure decreases, your body sends a message to your brain to relax.

Dr. Herbert Benson named this the "relaxation response" but it has been practiced for centuries.

Who would have thought that something as simple and fundamental as breathing could uncrazy your life? Thank you, God! I am fearfully and wonderfully made!

### **SO TRY THIS:**

- When an unexpected bill comes in the mail, breathe
- When the kids have pushed you to your limits, breathe
- When the boss fails to appreciate the wonderful work you've done, breathe
- When the pie is in the oven and you realize you forgot the sugar, breathe
- When your best friend becomes your worst enemy, breathe
- When you see the ticket on your windshield, breathe

Your first response to these things is anger or panic or fear. Those only make you crazy! Breathing allows your body time to react appropriately and buys you time to think about a more appropriate response.

And it works both ways too. When things are going well and life is good, breathe in and appreciate the moment, and give thanks. Just remember that how and when you breathe is a choice. Include breathing into the events of your day.

Breathe **“when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”** (Deuteronomy 6.7) Intentional breathing is training the body the way you train the minds of children.

A crazy life thrives on snap decisions made in the heat of a moment, without thought. A deep breath is like a buffer that protects you from a knee-jerk reaction and reminds you that you live and move and have your being in God.

**SO BREATHE**

## 2. SHHHH...

### **HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO LIFT YOUR FINGER TO YOUR LIPS AND SEND THIS MESSAGE TO SOMEONE?**

Some people don't know how to listen, they just talk. And sometimes "some people" is you.

When our lives get a little crazy our reflex is to steady them, to do something. We don't always know what that something is, but doing something is better than doing nothing, right? Almost always, wrong!

After you finish breathing, make a decision to do nothing. Don't try to fix things or run in circles, instead put your fingers to your lips and go, "Shhhhhh." Listen to the voices around you. They are always speaking but you are not always listening.

- Find a trusted friend and sit and listen.
- Find a YouTube sermon or inspirational talk, sit back and listen.
- Find someone who has "been there" where you are right now. Ask them how they handled it, and listen.

A popular You Tube video points out the difference between the way a man and a woman view situations. It's titled, ["It's Not About the Nail."](#) It may seem obvious to you what "the problem" is but shhhhh. It's time to listen and learn.

You might be surprised by the source. Remember the story of [Elijah in the cave?](#) God decided to teach the prophet something about listening. He put on a show, everything from a windstorm to an earthquake to a fire. But God was not in any of them. Instead, while Elijah stood shell-shocked, God spoke to him in a low whisper.

### **LESSON**

To listen, you sometimes need to filter out the other stuff of life to hear what God is saying.

### **FIND A PLACE.**

It might be an easy chair or a spot under a tree or behind the wheel on your commute to work. It's a place where you shhhhh and listen for the voice of God. Ask to hear Him, expect to hear Him and listen. You'd be amazed!

### **FIND A PERSON.**

Give him or her permission to talk. Say, "Talk to me about how you uncrazy your life." Then sit back and just listen. You'd be amazed!

## **FIND A PRAYER**

The Book of Psalms is loaded with prayers; actually every psalm is a prayer or a song. Taken together they encompass the full spectrum of life's emotions. There are psalms of praise, psalms of lament, psalms of complaint and psalms of worship. Pick one and let it speak to you. Shhhhh and listen to the voice of God.

**WHEN LIFE GETS CRAZY,  
TAKE TIME TO LISTEN.**

# 3. FLATTER YOUR FAVORITES

## IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY, AND YOU SHOULD NEVER BE ASHAMED TO DO IT, ESPECIALLY WHEN LIFE IS A LITTLE CRAZY.

A couple I know fell on some hard times. Their business began to fail at the same time their spending habits began to catch up with them. They felt the only alternative was to file for bankruptcy.

It was a wake up call. They told God that they would never again put themselves in that position. Their plan was simple: close the business, sell the house and start over, with the aim of living simply and debt-free.

They now are building a one-room home on a small foundation that they hope to have through their retirement. The experience has brought them both closer to God and they are now active in our church and their story as an example to all of us.

When you have come to an end of your resources trying to uncrazy your life, look to someone who has already done it and imitate their example.

### **IMITATE SOMEONE WHO HAS FAILED**

History is full of [famous failures](#): Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, J.K. Rowling, Albert Einstein and more. They didn't set out to be failures but learned from failure how to succeed. Take a step back from your crazy life to see how they did it. Imitate someone who succeeded. These include the "failures" above but also people you know who have somehow learned to manage their lives in such a way that the crazy goes away. They set boundaries, goals and standards for themselves and they would love to share them with you!

### **IMITATE SOMEONE WHO IS ELDERLY**

Older people are a great untapped resource and like the successful, they love to share their stories. My father-in-law is in his eighties now and is one of those people who doesn't speak unless spoken to. When he does speak, the stories range from wartime in the orient to searching for sea glass on the pacific coast. Best of all his favorite phrase is, "Whatever." He ends most stories with that word. It is his way of not taking life – even the full life he has lived – too seriously and leaving room for the most important things.

Good Tip! Much craziness is a result of taking our lives so seriously that we miss out on what is truly important. So why re-create the wheel when someone has already done it and is waiting to show you how it rolls?

## 4. PUT 1<sup>ST</sup> THINGS 1<sup>ST</sup>

### LIFE IS LIKE A CHECKOUT LINE

You are the cashier and one-by-one the days pass. You make decisions, meet deadlines and keep appointments. That's just the way life is. We have responsibilities that won't wait and need to be checked off.

Recently I was waiting in line at our town office to register my car. I was fourth in line, then third and then second. The line coursed through one of two doors and I was making progress. Until a lady appeared at the other door and was taken next, before me!

The line-cutter softened the blow when she turned to me and apologized saying that she was running late and had to pick up her child at day-care. OK, first things first. I was happy to help her out and felt pretty good about doing it.

C.S. Lewis quipped, "You get second things by putting first things first." He meant that real fulfillment comes from doing what is most important even if it means passing over less important tasks.

A crazy life demands that we do things out of a sense of urgency, sometimes without thinking. In the rush of life's checkout line the decisions pass by one by one while important ones often yield to

the urgent. Read [Michal Hyatt's persuasive case for making time for oneself](#) based on the little classic, "[Tyranny of the Urgent](#)" by Charles Hummel.

So how do you begin to put first things first?

### **IDENTIFY THE FIRST THINGS**

When I was in seminary my last class was called, "Philosophy of Ministry." Our guest was a local pastor who, we thought, was going to tell us how to do ministry. Instead he told his story with some tears of how he almost lost his family by throwing himself into his work. He warned us never to make that mistake. I went home after that class, hugged my wife and told her I would never sacrifice our family on the altar of ministry. A good first step is to identify what is most important to you and develop a plan to make it a priority.

### **IDENTIFY THE RESISTERS**

This is my word for those things that get in the way of your pursuit of first things. These may be good in themselves (reading, working out, hanging out with friends, etc) but they siphon off the time you need to put first things first.

### **IDENTIFY A STRATEGY**

If the resister is being too lazy to workout or eating poorly, then maybe you come up with a thirty-day plan to workout and eat well. [My Fitness Pal](#) is a great resource to get you and keep you on track. It's loaded with menu and fitness ideas. If the resister is a person, maybe a broken relationship, make a call, set a date to talk. It's a start.

Take small steps toward the first things and soon they will lead to second things.

## 5. GRAB A TOWEL

### THAT'S WHAT JESUS DID IN A ROOM-FULL OF DISCIPLES.

They were gathered for one of the last meals they would share together before He left them. They must have wondered what his last words to them would be. Last words are as important as first impressions.

“Will he go around the room and tell us how much he loves us?”

“Will he review his teachings over three years, hitting the high points?”

“Will he pray for us?”

“Will he tell us to go to get some sleep before the longest day?”

It turned out that last impressions are even more important than last words. Instead of speaking, he grabbed a towel and began to wash his disciples' dirty feet. When he finished he said, “You also ought to wash one another's feet.”

In a word he was teaching them to serve. Your crazy life makes it hard to think about others much less serve them. But Jesus knew what his disciples didn't, what you forget in the midst of a crazy life – that serving others helps you gain perspective on your own life while helping others with theirs.

### **SERVE YOUR FAMILY**

Father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife – those closest to you deserve your closest attention. You probably know already how this should work. A guy I meet with for coffee said he was touched when his wife asked him as he was going out the door, “What one thing can I do for you today?” With three children to homeschool and a business to run her life was already crazy enough, but she took time to ask that question.

### **SERVE THE ONES YOU WORK WITH**

They might be shocked that you would actually care about more than quotas and bottom lines and making yourself look good. But the result will be a better working relationship and a ton of good will. Discover a different kind of work ethic in [Dare To Serve Leaders](#).

### **SERVE THE NEEDIEST**

No one else does. These are the people in our lives who have nothing to give back. They probably won't repay your kindness either because they cannot or will not. The neediest often go unnoticed because we are busy with our crazy lives. They are the homeless, the disabled, the very young and the very old. Caring for my mom for three years as she spiraled down into Alzheimer's brought me to a new understanding of service.

**IT REALLY IS “MORE  
BLESSED TO GIVE THAN  
TO RECEIVE.” MAKE IT  
MORE THAN A MAXIM  
AND WATCH THE  
CRAZINESS MELT AWAY.**

# 6. REMEMBER

## MEMORY IS A GIFT FROM GOD.

Just ask your [dog](#). Scientists believe that animals – other than humans – that do have memory, only catalogue those events that help them to survive.

Human memory goes way beyond survival. In addition to helping you function in the present

- Remember to take your pills
- Remember where you put your glasses
- Remember that dentist appointment
- Remember that person's name

A good memory helps you deal with stress in the present by recalling the lessons of the past. Your personal history is like a filter that can recognize those habits that pollute your life and prevent them from entering it again.

I loved my father and his example helped shape me in many good ways. I have many good memories of time spent with him, but the words I remember most were these: “If you want anything done right,

you've got to do it yourself." Dad wasn't a very patient man, and it was always easier for him to do things "the right way" than to let me fail.

Those words have become like background music for my life. My tendency is to fix things and to micromanage rather than allow others to try and sometimes to fail. I know that's wrong and remembering my frustration growing up helps me to fight off that tendency.

Think of memory like a comma in a sentence, a pause. Just like breathing, your memories give you a moment to reflect when life gets crazy. Thoughtful pauses in your crazy life can change the direction of your day.

When you are overworked and underpaid, remember a time when you were out of work and struggled to pay the bills.

When you are overwhelmed caring for your children and patience is growing thin, remember those who lovingly cared for you and the difference they made in your life.

When you are overcome by all of the things that you don't have, remember the things that you do have and be thankful, and cherish them.

Nick Vujicic remembers trying to drown himself in a bathtub, overcome by the challenge of being born with no arms or legs, feeling alone and useless. Now he travels the world reminding anyone who will listen that what you have and who you are makes life worth living. Check out [his story](#).

Memory is a gift of God. Pause long enough every day to receive it and to uncrazy your life with lessons from the past.

Don't forget to remember.

# 7. SKIP IT

## THAT SOUNDS TOO SIMPLE DOESN'T IT?

The truth is there are many things you can't skip. Work, doctor's appointments, parenting, paying bills and keeping promises.

Some deadlines are given to you, but others are made by you. Those are the ones that make your life crazy as you draw near the artificial deadline and

So ask yourself

### **“DO I REALLY NEED TO GO TO THIS EVENT?”**

Recently my wife was invited to a cousin reunion to hob nob with family she hadn't seen in years and didn't know well. She felt guilty not going and increasingly dreaded the thought of going as the date approached. I advised her to skip it and send a nice note apologizing for her absence. Problem solved! She ended up spending quality time with her mother and catching up on some overdue correspondence.

If you have committed to a meeting, rally, workshop or just coffee with a friend, balance the importance of keeping your commitment with the need – based on other important things in your life – to keep it.

### **“HOW WILL MISSING THIS DEADLINE AFFECT MY LIFE OR THE LIVES OF OTHERS?”**

The answer to this question usually reveals how insignificant our deadlines are. Will scrapping a plan in some way injure, insult, weaken or impede you or someone you care about, and shouldn't that be the determining factor?

My wife and I are currently watching our newborn grandson one day a week. This allows mom and dad to save a little money on day-care (they both work) and us to take too many pictures of him and go, “Boo goo togoo boo boo!” trying to trigger a smile. Only wild horses would cause us to skip that commitment but we would skip many others to keep it.

### **“WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?”**

A friend of mine asks this question regularly. If you skip taking a medication it may result in a serious health issue. If you skip work you might get fired. But if you are wondering whether to engage someone in a difficult conversation, what's the worst that can happen?

My friend explains, “Usually the worst that could happen was that they would just say, ‘no I'm fine’, or ‘who the heck are you?’ or ‘no thanks,’ or maybe I'd be embarrassed.” You still have to decide how important the conversation might be, but the risk of having it or skipping it is pretty much nil.

Uncrazying your life means taking control of it and sometimes deciding to skip it.

## 8. MAKE A DECISION

### I'VE DISCOVERED OVER THE YEARS THAT IT'S NOT DECISIONS THAT BRING STRESS BUT INDECISION.

The first time I realized this was when we purchased our first home. The lead up to it was stressful (and fun at the same time!). We met with realtors, saw houses, reviewed our budget, talked and talked and talked. Not knowing what house we could afford or where exactly we would be living was stressful.

Then one day a little house within our price range and in the area we wanted to live came onto the market. It was priced so well that there were several interested buyers on the first day. I was one. After seeing it we made an offer and it was accepted. It all happened so fast that I went from indecision to a decision in about an hour. Then I broke into my happy dance, partly because we owned our first home and partly because the decision had been made.

The not knowing, the “should we or shouldn't we?” was now past.

Now good decisions, important decisions should take some time and reflection. But indecision often lags behind and weighs on our minds when we have all the information we need to say yes or no. It's important to recognize when it's time to "fish or cut bait." I'm not a fisherman but I get the idea. You can cut bait while the best fishing passes you by. Or you can fish!

The best decisions require what Stephen Covey calls "[Smart Trust](#)," a process that avoids both blind trust and distrust.

Smart Trust combines a tendency to trust with an analysis that helps us to arrive at a decision. Indecision ignores this balance by holding us hostage to over analysis or a lack of trust in others or ourselves.

Here's how to break that logjam:

### **LIMIT YOUR ANALYSIS**

Decide what two or three conditions must be met for a decision to be made. As I recall our first home needed to be in a 10-mile radius of the city in which we worked, in a price range we could afford and on at least an acre of land. Sure there were other considerations but these were the most important.

### **LIMIT YOUR OPTIONS**

Choosing between two or three options that meet your conditions is easier than sifting through dozens that you have allowed to camp out in your mind. My wife and I began the house hunt with a broad "wish list" that eventually narrowed to three or four that fit our analysis.

## **LIMIT YOUR TIME**

Set an artificial deadline. Sometimes a real one is set for you, but if not, be bold and say, "Tuesday is decision-day." That will do a couple of things. It will motivate you to do the necessary research and analysis by Tuesday and it will open the door to a decision. So long as that door is closed you will be on the outside looking in.

Decisions are made not born. They take considerable time and energy, but indecision is far more exhausting and less productive. So, relieve the stress and make the decision.

**DECISIONS ARE MADE,  
NOT BORN**

# 9. SPIRITIZE

## YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN YOUR BODY.

Too much time! It's easy to forget that we are spiritual beings with eternal souls and so it's no surprise that invisible things matter, a lot.

I am a Christian and my personal faith is rooted in the Bible and the person of Jesus, but yours may not. That doesn't mean you are less spiritual. A good friend of mine from high school lives in New York City. He is Jewish but he became a Buddhist and now teaches Mindfulness-Based Stress Relief (MBSR) to corporations. His understanding of the "spiritual" is very different from mine but we agree on the importance of getting in touch with our spiritual side.

When life gets crazy, remember that there is another side of you that may just be your refuge. Jesus said, **"I have come that you might have life and have it to the full."** Picture yourself in the middle of a box, occasionally drifting to one corner and getting stuck there. In my book [LifeDeck](#). I speak of the four corners of life: the spiritual, the physical, the financial and the relational. When you become preoccupied with one of these life can get crazy!

The full life that Jesus came to bring you, what Buddhists call the “Middle Way,” means that we need to pay attention to the spiritual in the midst of bills, work stress, parenting and fatigue.

### **KEEP A JOURNAL**

Use a notebook or a laptop but take time each day to reflect on your life and the invisible qualities that are important but often missed in the rush of life.

### **READ THE BIBLE OR ANOTHER INSPIRATIONAL BOOK OF YOUR CHOICE**

I subscribe to [Bible Plan](#) and I receive a notification at 5:30am every day. It’s a helpful reminder to start my day well before it gets crazy.

### **WORSHIP**

Whatever your beliefs worship should go way beyond time and place. I attend church every Sunday, but worship is stepping outside of yourself and focusing on someone or something else. It can involve singing, meditation/prayer or service to others.

There is something built into us, deep inside, that separates us from other animals. We yearn for meaning and purpose in life. **“The things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”** To ignore this leaves us alone in a world of worry and stress.

Your spiritual side is real. Remember to go there.

# 10. TAKE A SELFIE

## SOMETIMES A PICTURE REALLY IS WORTH 1000 WORDS.

Too many of our words are wasted complaining about the way life is (just peruse your Facebook news feed!) and too few aimed at making it better. So you have a crazy life. Join the community! What are you going to do to uncrazy it? Maybe it's time that a picture replaces your words.

Seven years after we were married we made a decision to leave our jobs and start a new life together. We sold our home, used the proceeds to pay for schooling and started from scratch. Oh yes, and my wife became pregnant with our first child.

Can you say, "Crazy!?"

During that period of time I stumbled upon these words from the Book of Jeremiah: **"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."** (Jeremiah 29.11)

For us it was kind of a word picture of our future secure in God's hands. Whether you use a word picture or an actual picture, try this:

### **PICTURE THE PERSON YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE IN THE FUTURE**

This may take addition or subtraction or both. What qualities would you like to add or improve upon? What bad habits or traits would you like to eliminate from your life? Take the time to listen to those around you that you trust, your wife/husband or best friend. Give them permission to tell you what they think you should hear, not what you would like to hear – and just listen. Then compose a picture.

### **PICTURE YOUR FAMILY**

This falls into the category of putting “first things first.” My first boss wisely told me, “You will only ever be as strong as your family, so pay attention to it.” Your family portrait may include a child or more children, or it may reflect a growing commitment to loved ones or a spouse. Picture yourself being a better son or daughter, husband or wife or parent.

### **PICTURE YOUR CAREER**

What does it look like this time next year, five years from now, ten years. Of course you'll have to think about what will be necessary to get there but the picture will be a tangible goal that will draw you forward. Be open to new directions. It's not always possible to do what you love, but why shouldn't that be the first option? Financial obligations may require that this picture be delayed, but start forming a picture now and work toward it.

We have a big back yard and so I finally yielded to my wife's pleas to purchase a rider mower. To make sure my cuts are reasonably straight I fix my eyes on something at the other end of the lawn and drive toward it.

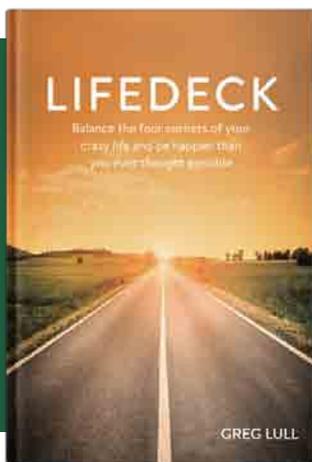
You can apply the same technique to your life. Fix your eyes on a picture that you create, and then live toward it.

**FIX YOUR EYES ON  
A PICTURE THAT YOU  
CREATE, AND THEN LIVE  
TOWARD IT.**

## UNCRAZING YOUR LIFE IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

What you want – what we all really want – is the life that Jesus promised, [“life to the full.”](#)

Our long-term goal should be to build a life that is secure, balanced and busy – but not crazy! I would love to have you share your story with me on my [Facebook page](#) or go deeper by ordering my book, [LIFEDECK](#)



Balance the four corners  
of your crazy life.

[GET THE BOOK >](#)

If you made it to the end of this ebook, **GOOD FOR YOU!** Now go further toward the life you really want.



FOR MORE RESOURCES, VISIT:  
**[GREGLULL.NET](http://GREGLULL.NET)**