8 Keys to Emotional & Spiritual Freedom

THE RAPHAEL Remedy

...Real Solutions for Real Life Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Life in the 21st century sure happens at a fast clip. How many times when you ask a friend "How are you?" is the response "busy" or "really busy"? How many times do you find yourself replying that way? But all of this busyness really militates against peace. By nature human beings need some down time, some time to rest and reflect. Just think about how God designed us...that fully one third of our life is devoted to sleep- or should be.

Remember the old days when Sundays were different? Before the malls were open and you actually rested? Many families visited each other and the main meal was in the middle of the day. How far we've gotten from that!

Stores are even open on Thanksgiving and Easter now. We need to get some control over our lives and to live with more purpose so we can experience emotional and spiritual freedom.

BELOW ARE 8 TIPS TO HELP YOU.

1 BE PRESENT FOR YOUR LIFE

There are miracles and blessings all around us constantly. Learn to be aware of all that is good, beautiful and true in your surroundings and among others. Take the time to feel your feelings and acknowledge them- both your physical feelings and your emotions. If you don't feel well, try to figure out why not and do something about it. Some of the best advice I ever heard was on an Opus Dei day of recollection: "Do what you must and be in what you're doing."

How many things do you do while thinking of something else, waiting for it to be over? How often do we think we'll start being happy when x, y or z happens or is done or is over? Life is happening right now! Why not try that great advice? Do what you must...we all have obligations and God works through those for our good...so be in what you're doing...be present. Look for the beauty, feel the feelings and see what happens. You may be surprised at how much happier you'll be with this new awareness.

2 SET GOALS AND PRIORITIES WELL

Too often we let life drag us around and never get to where we want to go. Usually it's because we never take the time to truly decide where that is. Imagine setting out in your car with no destination? Sure that can be fun as a Sunday afternoon adventure to just explore, but most of the time we need to know the destination

ahead of time and plan our route. Our life goals are no different. Where would you like to be 5 years from now? How about next week? What kind of friends would you like to have in your life? What kind of marriage do you want to have? What kind of work would you like to do? What do you need in order to do that work? How much money would you like to make? Where would you like to go on vacation? What virtues would you like to develop?

All of these are important questions and the more specifically you answer them, the more likely you will be to get where you want to go. A coach can be invaluable in helping you set and attain your cherished goals and dreams.

And don't gloss over that last question as it is truly be the most important one of all. After all, ***virtue is the foundation for a happy life and the key to heaven***. We all have rough edges due to original sin and unless we're making a concerted effort to change, the law of attrition ensures that we usually will get worse. Get a grip on those bad habits now and replace them with the corresponding virtues. Use the confessional to make a searching inner inventory of these faults and tap into the power of this sacrament for the strength to overcome them.

That's the best news of all - you're not alone. With God's grace, anything and everything is possible IF it's according to His will. Now since Jesus came to conquer sin and death you can be very sure that helping us to develop virtue and conquer sin IS His will. If He went so

far as to die on a cross for us, won't He gladly give us the graces we need to be saints?

SEPARATE THE URGENT FROM THE IMPORTANT

By setting goals you determine what is really important in your life. But the biggest obstacle to reaching these goals is not being able to say no to things that *seem* urgent but may not be that important.

For instance, many of us are programmed to answer the phone as soon as it rings and whenever it rings. It seems urgent as it persistently rings demanding your attention. But what if after a busy day your goal is to spend some quality time with your kids? How many nights are ruined because a phone call comes in and takes over your evening? Especially with caller id today and text messaging and a myriad of other communication tools, you can more easily manage such interruptions.

Simply don't pick up the phone. Let them leave a message. If you're concerned it might be an important business matter, text them and ask what the problem may be and then you can decide when and if to address it.

Now of course some things are urgent and important.... make a list of those things in your life that are important. Review it daily. Some of

them may be urgent. They need to be front and center in your mind daily. That will help you to more easily keep your priorities straight.

4 DETERMINE AND DEFEND YOUR BOUNDARIES!

Where do you end and someone else begin? What are truly your responsibilities and what are the responsibilities of others? Especially as Christians we want to be available to help our friends and neighbors…but we can burn out pretty quickly if we're not careful. One helpful principle is to look at your state in life. If you are married you know your priority is your spouse. Yes you have to work, but do those demands put too much of a strain on your marriage? What comes first? Do you have children? Well, then they need and deserve your time and focus. Once you've taken care of all of those obligations well, then you can expand to help others.

5 DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN WANTS AND NEEDS

So often we feel we "need" certain things…a new computer, those pretty new shoes, a bigger house etc. Think about it…what determines a need? Something we must have for our survival or our betterment. I may need a new computer for work. I may also just want an updated computer that is fancier and faster. It may be a want more than a need. In order of priority we should take care of our needs and of those entrusted to us before we address our wants. This

also comes into play in determining urgent vs. important and boundaries. My neighbor "needs" a ride to the mall to do some Christmas shopping (in October- she likes to get done early)...but I want to clean out my closets to get in order before company comes for the holidays. What wins?

Now what if my neighbor (and also my good friend) has serious symptoms of a heart attack going on and needs me to come over and call an ambulance? In that case, her need trumps my want.

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN YOUR FEELINGS AND YOUR THOUGHTS

Often feelings get triggered that might be upsetting to us...we may feel sad or hurt or angry. In most cases in response to the feeling we form a thought or an idea...eg. "Margie didn't say hello to me at the mall...she doesn't like me any more." Or "she's mad at me because I couldn't go to the movies last week." Or "she is such a snob." These thoughts proliferate in our minds.

Stop and realize that those thoughts- in response to our feelings are often simply not grounded in truth or reality. We may think we have evidence to back us up because our feelings are so strong...we may even rush to discuss it with others who corroborate our ideas. Those thoughts now fuel our feelings and increase them and we're off to the races!

Next time something bothers you stop to define what you are actually feeling…if what you think you're feeling can be preceded by the words "I think" then they are not feelings but thoughts in your head. Eg. I may feel she is mad at me…but I can also say I think she is mad at me…that's more accurate than a thought. But I can't say I think sad or I think angry. Those are more accurately your feelings.

By clearly defining which are emotions and which are thoughts in response to those emotions, you can circumvent a lot of heartache and more effectively deal with your feeling. Our feelings by nature want to and need to be guided by reason. Like barometers they give us important information. If someone is violating your boundaries you may start feeling irritated.

By acknowledging your irritation, you can examine the situation and may realize that they are violating a boundary. For instance they are getting in your personal space or bringing up personal topics that are none of their business. In that case you can take action, perhaps by simply stating that you don't wish to discuss that or that you are feeling crowded, can they back up a little?

But our thoughts about a situation, when rooted in only our feelings and not in objective reality can also fuel our feelings and put us in a tizzy. So start by defining what you feel (I feel hurt and sad and angry that Marge didn't say hello to me). Then decide what you would like. (I would like to know why Marge didn't say hello and to know if she is upset with me or not). Then think about how you can find this out. (Call or text Marge and mention that you saw her at the mall…did she

see you?) A Catholic counselor can be help you to work out of long standing patterns and heal any inner wounds that can be influencing your thoughts and feelings.

IDENTIFY AND CONTAIN THE NEGATIVES IN YOUR LIFE

Let's face it...there are a lot of things that can bring us down. We tend to be influenced by our surroundings and the people in them. Be around nasty and negative people and it will eventually rub off on you or make you feel pretty rotten.

Identify those things that tend to be negative influences. The news reports things that are going on the in the world with a decidedly negative bent. Rarely do we hear about all the wonderful things that are happening or the many acts of self-sacrifice that go on day after day among some of the most ordinary people.

Turn off the news or decide ahead of time to limit it to small doses. If you simply have to know the big events, ask someone. Generally when something big happens, people will be talking about it. Otherwise, the sum total of all the reports of murders and gang violence and tsunamis and the tough economy will only zap your energy.

Who are the negative people in your life? Are they family members? Neighbors? Friends? You don't have to drop them totally...or maybe you do. Keep a journal when you're around people. What do they

typically talk about? Do they build you up or do they bring you down? Is it all doom and gloom and "woe is me"? If so, head for the hills. If you do choose to see them (and often it may not be an option) decide ahead of time how much time you're willing to spend with them and let them know ahead of time your time constraints so you have an easy out.

For instance, "Sure, I can have lunch with you. Let's meet at Panera. I have from noon to 1:30 available." Note that your approach is positive, but you meet somewhere that is neutral territory so you can escape - not your home where they may overstay their welcome. You're also putting an end time on it so they know ahead of time you're not spending the whole afternoon.

When you do spend time with them try to direct the conversation to positive topics before they commandeer it to the negative side. And even if that doesn't work, you know you've got a predetermined leave time so you're not stuck there. If you're afraid you'll have trouble keeping to that time, then schedule something right afterwards that you must be at and you'll be more likely to stick to that time.

Lastly when discussing containing the negatives, we can't leave out your own self talk. Do you say things like "just my luck" when something goes wrong, or "it figures"? If so, you probably are programming yourself negatively and you need to work your way out of that habit...it's deadly. But stopping it is easier said than done. It will take diligence and effort. For many it can indicate some inner woundedness that needs resolution. You may find it helpful to talk to a

counselor for help in examining this negative self talk and identifying its roots so you can work toward healing and freedom. You may find it helpful to talk to a counselor for help in examining this negative self-talk and identifying its roots so you can work toward healing and freedom.

8 LEARN HOW TO APPLY YOUR FAITH IN YOUR DAY TO DAY SITUATIONS

So many people keep their faith in a neat little compartment on Sundays and don't realize how useful it is to them every day. And too many of us today were not really taught our faith very well as kids. And even if we did attend religious instruction, for most it stopped some time in junior high or high school. And let's face it, a lot of the issues we deal with as adults were just not relevant when we were kids learning our faith.

You may know some of the basic concepts (like you know, you shouldn't kill anybody) but may not understand many contemporary issues in light of your faith. And even for those who do know what the Church teaches, knowing it just isn't enough. You need to be able to apply it in all of life's circumstances. We need to update our knowledge base and learn dynamic ways of living and applying the faith in our adult lives. A Christian life coach can be very helpful in this situation.

In dealing with work issues, marital problems, raising children, deciding on finances, internet chatting and a myriad of other issues,

the Catholic faith offers us guidance. Pick up a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and give it a good look. In the back there is an index and most things you'll want to know about you'll find listed there. Not only will it explain what the Church teaches on a particular topic, but it will give you scripture references to back it up.

Most importantly, you need to learn how to pray in an adult way. There's nothing wrong with the prayer of petition- asking God for the things we need and want, but prayer is so much more than that. It's a two way conversation with God.

There's contemplative prayer and the prayer of praise. There's the rosary and communal prayer like the Mass. A Catholic spiritual coach can help you find new ways to pray and apply your faith so you can use it as the tool it's designed by God to be to live the abundant life of Christ. Consider also regular spiritual reading. If you want to grow and have a better life, spiritual reading is a must!

All of these ideas may sound great but where do you begin?! In this area, a Catholic coach can be a great advantage for you. If you're serious about turning your life around and living life with purpose and gusto, I'd encourage you to talk to a Catholic life coach and see how it can help you. It's focused, short term and affordable and is designed for those who want to move forward in their lives in the best way possible.

Visit our website at theraphaelremedy.com and call **(855) 4-A REMEDY** for a free consultation today.