

I've always had to chuckle about the concept of personality types - you know, you're either "Type A" (driven, motivated, goal-oriented) or "Type B" (laid-back, relaxed). I laugh because I can remember a time when I would have been considered by many to be a textbook case of Type A (perhaps a small textbook, but a textbook nonetheless!). I would process and re-process, problem solve, perhaps even lose some sleep while doing so. I can remember many times when my mind was buzzing at bedtime and I was simply unable to turn it off and call it a day. I could lose sleep and energy simply focusing too much on any given thing.

I remember my first days at Queen's University. I went to university (no, it is NOT the same as college in Canada) with a high school average in the low 90s. I got into the best school in Canada, the "Harvard of the North" (note to McGill alumni - we'll let you be number 2 in the country) and into the only physiotherapy program in Canada that would accept students directly from high school.

In my first semester, my grades took a beating - as happens to most freshman suddenly exposed to the university life. But as I worked harder and spent more time studying, my grades really didn't budge. I remember being very frustrated at the end of first year, and vowed to work harder in my second year - which is typically the toughest year of the program.

I worked harder in semester one ... and actually found my grades slipping a little further.

Then I had an epiphany of sorts.

I would simply relax more ... effectively "do less" - in essence, I would work smarter, not harder. I limited my hours of study. I became more actively involved in other activities like music. I started working with the athletic injuries clinic - to use my skills in the appropriate realm without having to "study" as such.

As they say - "if you do what you've done, you'll get what you've gotten". It was time for a change in strategy.

Suddenly, my grades started creeping up. In third year, I made the conscious decision to do less ... and my grades went up again. By fourth year, I was being very efficient with my study time, spending less time in the books, balancing my life, stressing less ... and doing even better academically. I wish I'd had a few more years in the program - I might have squeaked an "A" average!

A life lesson learned - and not a moment too soon. You see, we're talking about mental inertia here. I could expend a lot of energy, stay up awake at night, worrying about this or that or being perturbed about not understanding something or maybe even a little worried about what the next day may bring. But by reading, learning about what makes me "tick", and simplifying my world as much as possible, I have grown to be better able to "let things go". As Newton has said in his first law, a body will continue in motion unless compelled to change by an external unbalanced force. In other words, life will go as it is unless there is a decision to change direction. But ... by pushing harder in any given direction, life pushes harder back on me. I think that is Newton's third law - for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Of course, the quantum physicists in the crowd might make note that we're all just one big cloud of energy anyways!

Now don't confuse this with "stagnation" or "lack of motivation" - far from it. It's not to say that I don't still like to ponder ... and come up with better understanding or find a way to do things better. Those things have been consistent through my life! But what I can say now is that I've learned that it all has its place ... and that most of it I can let go of now. In many ways, I am now a more balanced "Type A-B" personality - if that is possible!

"Letting go" is a conscious decision - as I always say, to let the universe provide. It will invariably take care of business. Sure, we are actively involved in making decisions on a moment to moment basis - and yes, I do like to maintain my internal locus of control (how's that for a fancy shmancy phrase?). But expending extra energy is oftentimes the last thing that needs to be done - because once decisions have been made and avenues have been selected, then it's a case of simply letting it breathe, letting it happen.

Yes, it comes down to "breathing". And now that I think more about that, my nights are far more restful and days are far more productive.

The universe will provide. The power is there - and the universe is a far bigger entity than I. Who am I to push the system? By letting go, I am in fact more powerful - more at peace within -

and more balanced with the laws of nature and the power of the universe.