



How to Appreciate Enough

By Dr. Kathleen Begley, Book Author and Professional Speaker

Note to Readers: Here's another offbeat e-update on business communication and current events from Write Company Plus, a corporate training firm located outside Philadelphia. In respect for your busy schedule, writers and editors have arranged seven at-a-glance ideas at the end of this article. Skip directly there if you lack the time to read the entire document.

Enough. What an alien concept. To be truthful, I have only a passing idea what the word means. All my life, I have struggled with a tendency to overstock, overwork, overstrive, overtalk, and overextend. Enough? Are you kidding me?

A mundane, yet telling, case in point: my home office outside Philadelphia. In a relatively compact space, I have backups of backups of backups of Staples bright white multi-use paper, Top Flight multi-color index cards, Scotch multi-purpose scissors, Post-It page markers, and Sanford Super Sharpie permanent markers. I suspect I may be the only entrepreneur in the United States with enough boxes of Swingline standard staples to clip together the pages of all the phone books still distributed by telecommunications companies such as Verizon.

Considering my confession, you can imagine my curiosity the other day when I saw a book called "Enough: True Measures of Money, Business, and Life" lying in a prominent place in an area bookstore. I was so intrigued by the foreign-ness of the title that I bought it. Written by John C. Bogle, founder of The Vanguard Group, the book delves into the negative impact of the never-say-die accumulation of material goods at the expense of everything and everybody else.

Bogle hammers away at the idea in chapter titles such as "Too Much Cost, Not Enough Value"; "Too Much Speculation, Not Enough Investment"; "Too Much Complexity, Not Enough Simplicity." The now retired octogenarian presents a compelling case that "over the long term, it is not things, not power, not money that forms the heart of a nation. Rather, it is the values, applied to our society, that I have described here for us as individuals: the persistence, resilience, moral standards, and virtue that have made this nation great."

By the time I finished Bogle's 276-page book, I figured that it was about time I got in touch with my inner enough-ness. Here are the steps I'm considering, which may strike your fancy as well:

Use logic. For whatever reason, I emotionally resist the enough concept out of fear that if I don't buy it, achieve it, or complete it right now, it will be too late. I constantly need to remind myself that no one in the history of the world ever died from having two few bars of Irish Spring soap in the bathroom closet.

Believe in abundance. The universe generally provides enough to go around, especially if you had the good fortune to be born in the United States. You -- and especially I -- don't need to constantly act as if the last roll of Charmin toilet paper is going to run out before we digest our lunch.

Walk the green talk. Enough is a wonderful tie-in with the current greening of America. I've never yet heard an environmentalist say that future generations would benefit from the extra Hewlett Packard printer cartridges stacked up in my office closet.



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Create a new mantra. “Enough, enough, enough.” When tempted to get into my scarcity mentality, I repeat the word in my head. It helps push out my usual mental command of “more, more, more.”

Enlist a buddy. While shopping in any store that provides carts, I subconsciously think my job is to fill them to the brim. I recently put a friend on speed dial so she can talk me down from brain and product overload whenever I’m in Genuardi’s, Home Depot, or Target.

Apply today’s lessons. You need to look no farther for education these days than Wall Street. If the people running Lehman Brothers and AIG had measured their worth in something other than multi-million-dollar bonuses, I dare say they would be happier today. I’d probably be more serene myself if I didn’t have to clear space for another giant tube of Total toothpaste.

Internalize the concept. Psychiatrists say that over doers like me, deep down, believe they’re not good enough. I’m unsure if clearing out my office and home will increase my self-esteem, but it may be worth the effort. I just need to try hard enough.