

Try Something New

During a recent coaching session with the Managing Partner of a professional services firm, my client expressed, with a sense of tiredness, "Pat, I am not feeling right lately. I still enjoy my work but it has gotten to some kind of routine that it just feels too routine. I know it is not burnout because I am operating well within my capacity and I am still doing my long runs on alternate days."

There were three things he decided to embark on with enthusiasm when we finished our conversation. I love it when I see sparkles in the eyes. The only one I can share is of him picking up a new sport that he had long wanted to.

It is not unusual to sometimes feel like we are hamsters running on a treadmill-somewhat enjoyable but yet missing something. One of the keys to breaking the feeling of routineness is examining what we do outside of our work - our hobbies.

According to Prof Karoline Strauss, Essec Business School in a 2020 paper - ***our hobbies go beyond killing time and having fun; they provide an opportunity to build up useful resources that can translate to maintaining a sustainable career.***

However, just like any strength that is taken to the extreme becomes a liability, the research suggests that we should not spend too much time engaging in a hobby that is too similar to our professional work. This means, for example, if you are a CFO and while you enjoy giving back to the community in serving and teaching, you will feel depleted when your weekends are spent teaching accounting and serving on the board of a charity as a Treasurer or as a Audit Committee member. We are basically drawing upon an expended tank when we do that.

Introducing some newness usually helps - in my client's situation, picking up a new sport and embarking on a couple of new initiatives in the workplace. I don't have the research to back me up but my hunch is, family business succession can be better steered when the senior-generation find and engage in meaningful hobbies. ***Try something new***, but like what I said to my client, "You can try a lot of new things, but looking for a new spouse isn't an option."

Coaching that helps individuals get unstuck from their professional situations and accelerate

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