

# It's OK to Put It on the Back Burner!

By Suzi Elton

Have you ever added a new project and found that you had actually taken on one thing too many? Have you ever found yourself being a “human doing” rather than a human being? Do you live with your schedule crammed with activity from early in the morning until late in the evening? Are you driven by commitments and can't figure out a way to get out from under some of them? Consider that it's OK to put some things on the “back burner”.

What's this mean and how do you do it? Putting things on the back burner means to deliberately and consciously choose some actions and activities to de-emphasize so that you can focus on the most important items. You will choose some items to stop taking action on now. In effect, you will be creating a timeline for projects, where some items will be handled in the future, and “put to bed” until that future time.

You might say, “But they are all equally important!” or, “There's nothing I can de-emphasize!” Here's some questions you can use to select things that could go to the back burner.

- Is there any area where you have interest, but due to other commitments, you've done no follow through in this area in a long time or never?
- Is there any area where you are collecting massive unread material that causes you pain, guilt and distress when it comes to your attention?
- Is there any area you have commitments to because you believe you “should” do something?
- Is there any area where you are afraid to let go for fear of “falling behind” while holding on to this is causing you to fall behind in really important areas?
- Is there any area where you feel only overwhelm when you consider it?
- Is there an area where you're doing something so someone else will like you?
- Is there an area where you're doing something to please others?
- Is there any area where you are simply “going through the motions”?
- Is there any area where you simply feel dread when you think of it.

Consider moving these items to the “back burner”. The important thing to remember about this concept is that items on the back burner become inactive. They are not completely taken off your list of actions. You simply don't spend time on them—now. They can be reactivated at some future time....or not, at your choice. After a period of deactivation, you will find yourself ready to totally decommit from some activities. Other activities you may choose to reactivate at a future time, perhaps with smaller time commitments.

Realize that you have the right to choose which activities receive your focus. In a way, you actually have a duty to yourself to do so. Doing so will allow you to spend your time on those things that mean the most to you, and contribute the most to a satisfying life. It's a form of respect for yourself to know when, and to decide how you will move things to the back burner.

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