

## What's on Your Plate?

Have you ever watched people at a buffet restaurant? There are several different approaches to all that food. Some people make several small trips with small amounts on their plates. Others fill their plate to capacity. And then there are those who fill their plate so full that they can't make it back to their seat without food spilling over the edge onto the floor.

Life can be like that. We pile on the responsibilities until we get to the point that we can't cope with all of the obligations we have. Then, we tend to do a mediocre job of most of our responsibilities. Or, we completely abandon some of them in order to do a good job in other areas all the while knowing in our minds that we are still responsible for those things.

Let's take a look at exactly what is on your plate right now. On the following page you will find a plate.

**Step One:** On the plate, write each of the areas of your life or roles that you function in. (e.g. father, wife, property owner, employee, mentor, church member, friend, son/daughter, son-in-law, provider, church leader (include all the aspects of this role).

**Step Two:** Place a green mark beside those areas that are positive right now and not experienced as an energy drain in a negative way.

**Step Three:** Place a yellow mark beside the areas that you are cautious about because they have the real potential to become an energy drain if things don't change.

**Step Four:** Place a red mark beside the areas that are very stressful and presently an energy drain.



*When you have completed this activity, answer the following questions:*

1. What is the predominant colour on your plate? \_\_\_\_\_

You may have noticed that your plate is predominantly green with a smattering of red and yellow. Congratulations! This is a healthy place to be!

Some of you may notice a lot of yellow. This means that your balance can go either way – toward green and become healthier.....or toward red – exactly where you don't want to go.

And then there are those of you faced with a sea of red marks on your plate. You need to take some steps now to make your life more manageable.

Don't despair – there are some things you can do.

2. Is there a lot of yellow on your plate? List the yellow items and determine which colour these items are likely to move toward....green.....or red?

3. Look at the areas of your life where there is a lot of red? Put a 'T' beside those that are temporarily red and an '!' beside the ones where there is "no end in sight". This will help give you some longer term perspective.

### *Life Change Steps*

*It is time to take some first steps toward reducing your risk for burnout.*

1. Identify two or three roles or responsibilities that are either red or yellow and are things that you don't really need or want to be involved in. Spend some time thinking about what motivates you to continue to be involved?

2. Identify one of these that you will eliminate today. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Over the next several days identify two or three more items on your 'plate' that you can eliminate.

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Want to know more recovery or prevention of burnout? Try Symptoms of Burnout or How to Refuel your spiritual, emotional, relational and physical tanks?

