

Welcome to the twentieth edition of Jennifer Selby Long's *Traveling Light*. Are you blessed with the talent and opportunity to lead? *Traveling Light* will skyrocket your impact and lighten the load inherent in your life. It's based on the work of executive coach and management consultant Jennifer Selby Long. Copyright 2008 Jennifer Selby Long. All rights reserved.

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The Hidden Secret to Manage Your Workload and Reduce Your Stress -- That Nobody Talks About

Is your career wearing you out? Are you too tired to enjoy your family and friends on the weekends, or what little part of the weekend you have? Well, I have a secret to share about the blind spot that just might have got you there. It certainly was mine. The secret is this: Your job is only part of your workload. You're not tired because of your career. You're tired because of everything else.

This is particularly true for women. Many of us hold ourselves up to mid-20th century ideals while working 21st century careers.

Two years ago, I was just exhausted. Between my business, the house, eldercare issues, and other responsibilities, there just wasn't any time to relax. Something had to go, but what?

I was sick and tired of hearing from the "experts" that the solution to my exhaustion was to just stop doing most of what I was doing. I wasn't doing anything that wasn't important. I had eliminated all that I could, including many things I enjoy, and there was still no time for a life. That's when I realized that I had to start hiring people to do things for me.

I think you should consider doing the same. It's your life you're talking about. You are in your peak years, both mentally and physically. If you're spending your time doing something you can pay someone \$15, \$20, or \$40 an hour to do, you're not spending that time with your kids, partner, family, or friends, or even a good book. To me this is a waste of all your education and hard work on the job if all it gets you is no time for the rest of your life. Will you really look back on your deathbed and feel satisfied that you personally pulled all of the weeds in your yard?

It wasn't easy. Like most entrepreneurs, I love control. I liked to pretend that I didn't, but the truth was that I did. All of my excuses, like "I can't afford it" really just came down to one thing: I was afraid to give up control.

For some tasks, I even had an added layer of rotten thinking: believing that if I didn't personally handle household responsibilities like menu planning and laundry, I must be a pretty lame wife. What was I thinking? Old messages still float around our heads, and once we surface them, we have to whack them on the head until they are dead. So I did.

My first baby step was the vet who makes house calls. Why traumatize Bill with a car ride to the vet's when there's a vet who will come to him? Not to mention that it saved me the time getting out his carrier, driving him to the vet, waiting, and driving him home.

Then came the bookkeeper. What a fool I was to wait so long. I meet with her every other week to hand off bills and receipts. She does the rest and keeps me informed. She handles bill paying and expense and income tracking and stays on top of all the accounts for my business, for my mother-in-law, and for us.

We actually have a household P&L now. I think it's a ton of fun. Others think it's just sick. Either way, I have more time, and I have better focus at work, since, "Oh, crap, I wonder if I transferred enough into the personal checking account to cover that Key Bank automatic payment" never floats across my brain while I'm at work. I know that Laurie is all over it. It was heavenly to come home from almost three weeks away and have NO bills stacked up waiting for me. None.

Finally, I took the biggest step of all: I hired a personal assistant. She handles the 1,000,000 little things like laundry, grocery shopping, making appointments with the plumber, meeting him at the house, and so on and so on. She saves me a full 40 hours a month. I was pretty shocked to realize that 10 hours out of every week had gone to managing the household, some of them during the workweek.

I get really worked up when I hear a reasonably successful professional say, "Oh, I can't afford a luxury like that. I don't make enough." I couldn't either, you could say. While it's true that I make more money now because these wonderful people have freed up time for me to be more focused and productive, for the first few months, I carried the expenses without a return (on my business line of credit, in case you're interested – real debt, real skin in the game, no fooling around). I was confident that the return would come, and would far exceed the investment. It has.

Even for employed professionals, the return will come if you (and your partner, if you have one) at least farm out your most hated tasks.

For the self-employed, it's absolutely essential to manage your business from where you want it to be, not from where it is now. Investment in resources that make you successful, whether on the personal or business side, is essential to having a profitable and sustainable business.

Jennifer's Book Corner

Many members of the *Traveling Light* community are voracious readers like me. The only thing I find really annoying anymore is being somewhere (like on a plane) with nothing to read. I carry a book with me nearly everywhere.

I especially appreciate getting book referrals from others, so now I'm returning the favor. I hope this feature helps you in your book selections as much as referrals have helped in mine.

I plan to include all types of books, not just management books. Let's have some fun with this!

In keeping with my theme of the importance of your time, this month I'm reviewing two time management books.

Dan Kennedy's *No B.S. Time Management for Entrepreneurs* gets an enthusiastic thumbs-up from this entrepreneur. If you want to make more money and wrangle your work hours back into a normal work week -- or less -- Dan is your guy. He is spot-on in his criticisms of entrepreneurs and quite specific about techniques and attitudes an entrepreneur can apply to be more effective and efficient.

As someone who suffers from "entrepreneurial ADD," I find him refreshingly direct about the nature of entrepreneurs and how to manage that double-edged sword for maximum gain. With chapters like, "How to Drive a Stake Through the Hearts of the Time Vampires Out to Suck You Dry" and "Fire Yourself, Replace Yourself, Make More Money, and Have More Fun," this guy knows how to make time management intriguing and exciting.

If you are in management, some of Dan's advice will be irrelevant or would require a real stretch to apply in your job. In that case, I would recommend Laura Stack's *Leave the Office Earlier: The Productivity Pro Shows You How to Do More in Less Time...and Feel Great About It*.

Laura is a fellow member of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting, which is where I learned about her work. She is a true expert on time management for people who work for a company, particularly those in management. Her tips are very specific. This is not a "philosophy of time management" book. She's all about the how-to's.

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