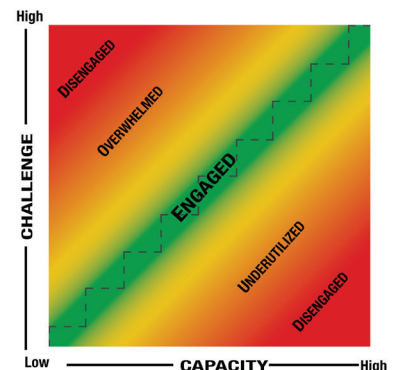


10 TIPS FOR OPTIMIZING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS LIFE ROLES



- 1. Get clear on all your roles.** From parent and child to worker and student, most people juggle multiple roles. Some roles will be more salient than others and some will be easier to set aside, even if just temporarily. Identify roles that are your top priority right now and others that could possibly be given a little less of your time.
- 2. Consider your overall sense of engagement.** Across life roles and contexts, are you *generally* feeling slightly “off”? Burned-out, anxious, and overwhelmed? Chronically bored and underutilized? Excited and energized or completely worn down? Periodically check in with yourself to catch the early warning signs of disengagement.
- 3. Recognize when there is too much, or too little, challenge.** Optimal engagement is achieved through the right mix of challenge and capacity – a dynamic interaction. Too much challenge will move you towards being overwhelmed or burned-out, too little towards being underutilized and bored. Adjust in the moment, if possible, to avoid moving too far into feeling overwhelmed or underutilized – it’s so much easier to make small changes quickly rather than trying to optimize engagement after becoming completely disengaged.
- 4. Know what’s in your capacity to give, and access external resources.** Each role you are juggling will require things from you . . . time, attention, specific tasks. Each of these draws upon both your individual capacity and the other resources you have access to, impacting your overall ability to face life’s challenges. Before you agree to an exciting new project at work, or to take on additional carpooling or eldercare responsibilities at home, be sure you have the capacity to be successful.
- 5. Take a holistic approach.** Individuals may be concurrently overwhelmed and underutilized, sometimes within a single life role but more typically across several life roles and responsibilities. It’s important to unpack the level of engagement in each role and/or activity to identify needed adjustments overall. It may be possible to reduce the challenge in one role to free up physical, emotional, or even financial capacity to take on more responsibility in another one.
- 6. Consider your long-term priorities.** Whether working hard for a promotion, applying to grad school, or saving for your child’s tuition, don’t lose sight of your hopes and dreams across all of your life roles – allocate time and resources to keep them moving forward.
- 7. Be specific.** With big picture priorities in mind, pinpoint changes in challenge and capacity that will help to optimize engagement. Considering each role, and all the associated tasks and activities, identify what could be set aside, delegated, better resourced, or reorganized to facilitate success in your life-enhancing priorities.
- 8. Remember, it’s not all “on you.”** Optimizing engagement takes a village! Once you’ve identified the changes you need to make, reach out to others to help you reduce challenge and build capacity to achieve your goals. Consider asking for support from family members, friends, mentors, coaches, supervisors, managers, community resources, financial advisors – the sources of support are endless.
- 9. Understand engagement as an individual experience.** The interplay between capacity and challenge is unique to each person within their specific context – it’s dynamic and ever-changing. Monitor your own level of engagement, based on current capacity and life challenges. Avoid unhelpful comparisons with others.
- 10. Be kind to yourself.** The stress of trying to be the best – the best parent, spouse, child, employee, community leader – can be overwhelming. Too often we are our own harshest critics, failing to celebrate accomplishments while focusing solely on what hasn’t yet been achieved. Recognize that “perfect isn’t possible” – accept being the best you can be, across your complex life roles.



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