

Chaos and the Cosmos

By Dave Mikela

AS I PONDER THE UNIVERSAL CONUNDRUM of chaos, I'm struck by this simple perspective: we will get in it; Jesus will get us out.

Whether catalyzed by a season of life (marriage, baby, tax season, end of the year accounting) or our own character weakness (inability to say no, people pleasing, workaholism, hero complex), the only way to move through chaos into order is with a willingness to let God take our primordial matter and with his sovereign hand cause it to take harmonious, orderly form.

In an effort to provide the best tools on the subject, I turned to John Wharton, President of Business Professional Network, and board member and coach at Ministry Coaching International. His words spoke volumes to me, and my challenge to you in the course of the conversation that follows is this: Find yourself amidst the chaos, and let God in.

What does chaos "look like?"

An individual in chaos tends to spend long hours at his work. Conversely, he sleeps little, productivity lessens, and he tries even harder for effectiveness. He begins to lose basic disciplines; quiet time and exercise diminish, thus the little sleep he had worsens. Simple activities that provide joy begin to be "missed" – a conversation with a spouse, a daughter's soccer game or grandson's birthday. These are consequences of chaotic overload.

On an emotional front, discontentment sets in and a sense of dissatisfaction with how things are going or how a situation or person was handled grows. At a deeper and even more serious level, the individual becomes apprehensive about the quality of her decisions and how well she can manage.

The root cause of chaos is found in this deep discontentment. Because the individual remains unfulfilled, he attempts to convert that which he's already doing into something meaningful; by slapping on yet another activity or means for success. When the first thing is lacking, he only adds to the chaos.

Some people go on this way for years, adapting and barreling through at a subtle level of discontentment. The simple question remains: how do we get out?



For the rest of this article, go to CMAonline.org/mrc and click on "Christian Management Report." Then click on "June 2006" and you'll find Mikela's article.

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Simple Tools to Find (and Keep) Your Focus

■ **An objective, informed perspective.** Both *objective* AND *informed* are imperative to help you define what you are (and are not) all about. Ideally, this is provided by your boss or a coach, and not necessarily by a friend or family member.

■ **Insightful questions with a defined result.** A paradigm that comes out of ministry coaching encompasses the following three questions:

1. What are your high payback activities? (Leads to action)
2. What activities can you postpone? (Leads to healthy delayed action)
3. What activities can you drop? (Leads to no action)

Ask this question first thing in the morning: "What are the most valuable things I'll do today?" Then do those at the times when you're the freshest.

■ **Pray.** Pray specifically. Pray often.

1. Pray for wisdom
2. Pray for God's sovereignty – he can make things happen very quickly
3. Pray for courage of conviction. "I'm going to say no. I have to focus on my high payback activities."

■ **Communicate.** Connecting with others becomes difficult when already overwhelmed. It is, however, even more imperative when that's the case. Keep it simple and up-to-date: "Here's what seems to be developing." "This is what just came up." etc.

■ **Develop a Life Plan.** The first thing done in ministry coaching is to develop a Life Plan, which allows an individual to put into balance all the major areas/activities in his life as God has given them to him. Note that this is NOT a hierarchy model: "God comes first, then family, then church and then work, etc. Simply put, life just doesn't work that way. The wheel and spokes model better depicts the way in which God is the hub, and he touches and brings into balance every aspect of life.

The Life Plan asks us to look at major areas of life which we believe God has designed in us, and articulates a vision for those areas, giving clarity to what we are (and are not) to be doing.

■ **Trust Jesus.** "All things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17)

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