

Robin's Bird's-Eye View

January 2020

Like any optimistic, but all-too-human minister, I believe in trial and error (and deep breathing!) when it comes to getting organized. Years ago at a Minister's meeting, a colleague recommended an approach called "the block system" and I thought, "I'm saved!" I even recommended it to my son, Sam, (a high schooler at the time) as a method for him to get organized, too.

Here's how the block system works. It's the antithesis of "multi-tasking" – that scourge of modern life. I read this definition of multi-tasking in an article: "Immerse yourself in your immediate task but put the many tasks that remain to be done in a queue in your head." They might as well say: "Multi-tasking leads to madness. Have a nice day."

In the vaunted block system, you divide your day into "blocks" of time and assign activities, chores, and such to each block and then you *focus*. What a concept. Lots of my colleagues use this system (or at least, they *say* they do; hmm, I wonder): mornings for administrative tasks, afternoons for pastoral visits, an entire day off, another solely for writing, and so on. Goodness, that sounds tidy. My heart palpitates.

So, I sat down to ponder how I would carve up my professional and personal schedule if I adopted this seemingly life-enhancing system. Here's what I came up with: the Universe pondering block, the sermon research block, the scribbling ideas on napkins block, the filling up the dog's water bowl block, the coffee drinking block, the returning emails block, the unexpected funeral block, the NYT or NPR news check-in block, the ever-popular run-to-the-store-for-whatever is needed block, the pastoral visit followed by a dash to a meeting block, the handout copying block, the "I really should go to yoga" block, the "multi-tasking might not be so evil after all" block, the break for dark chocolate block, the "why is the furnace making that jet-engine noise?" block, the "I wonder what my daughter is up to on Facebook" block, the preaching block, and the always-bracing "is it *really* time to write my newsletter column again??!" block.

As you might imagine, I'm keeping the block system on ice for now. I may be a bit of a blockhead, but I don't think it's my "thing." I'll just keep balancing structured time management and intuitive flow as best I can. I wholeheartedly recommend you do the same. But, right now, I've got to dash -- the furnace is making that noise again!"

Here's to blessing the blend in the New Year!

In faith,

Rev. Robin