

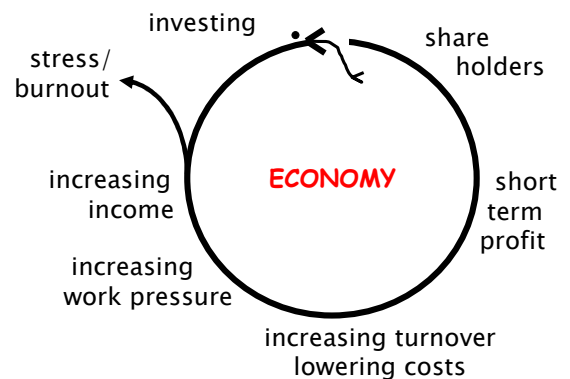
## Stay in Control

Problems are challenges, but if you have many challenges, you do have a problem... Most people wrestle with their time and their agenda. Not only at work, but also in their private life. What causes the sensation of ever increasing busy-ness and is there anything that one can do about it?

### What is actually the case?

In order to come to a clearer perception we use the picture of the snake that bites his own tail. In corporate life the direction is set by the share holders. The command the board and the CEO's to invest their money well and to make a profitable return. Usually in return for a good salary and bonus.

One does not need an MBA in Economics to know that profit is made by increasing sales and production and by lowering the costs. In the past 40 years a lot of effort is made to optimise the companies' processes. Programs to increase costs awareness, restructures, decreasing levels of management, outsourcing services and increasing the work pace are good examples.



Over the last 40 years the average productivity of employees has gone up from 3½ hrs. per day to 7 hrs. per day. Often by hardly noticeable adjustments. 40 years ago every company had a coffee break (i.i. from 10:45 till 11:00 o'clock) and a tea break (from 15:00 till 15:15 hrs). Today one can find coffee machines with a wide range of options, such as cappuccino or espresso, but the official breaks have disappeared. The show must go on!

As a result of this the pressures at work have increased and we see more and more cases of stress and burn-out. Employees still have to learn to cope with those pressures in a way that combines a high productivity with work pleasure and in good health.

This development has lead to a stronger economy, to all of our benefit. On average all employees, at least in the Western regions, are in a better financial position than 40 years ago. Larger houses, two cars, two or three times a year on vacation... And what do you do if you live well and have even got some Money spare? Right, you'll invest it, hoping to make more of it.

**And thus we tell ourselves that we should work even harder!?**

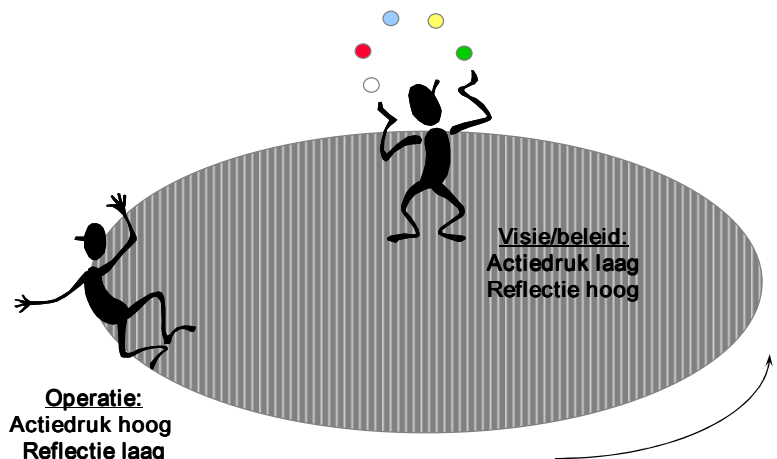
And don't say you don't invest, because you have a pension fund too.

## How does one cope with that?

The past wasn't better than today, but different. Each era has its own challenges and stress factors, so does our time. The art is to find the way to deal with it.

If you don't watch out you'll find yourself running after the facts because of all the problems that demand your attention continuously.

In this picture you see two persons on a rotating disk, as you can find in some kindergartens. The first person is located at the outside of the disk, where he/she is always busy, busy, busy... Telephone calls, meetings, e-mails, people that need you, problems to be solved, and so on. By the centrifugal force this person will be thrown off the disc, which can be translated by the feeling of having to keep ones head above the water. That you regularly go home feeling that the work is still not finished.



The second person locates himself in the middle of the disc, where things are more quiet, at least in his/her head. By sitting down regularly, to analyse your situation, to set goals and priorities and to work out structural solutions you'll get an overview and you'll stay in control of your own situation.

An ancient Chinese saying: "When I get busy I sit down for a moment, and when I get very busy I lay down for a while".

So, take a moment, sit down and ask your self some of the following questions:

- ◆ What things are racing through my head at this moment?
- ◆ Which of these things must really be done now and which can be done later or by someone else?
- ◆ Are there problems that occur regularly and why is that the case?
- ◆ What are the goals that determine my end-of-year assessment and are these the things I am doing at the moment?
- ◆ How do I function best and how can I create that situation?
- ◆ What is really important in my life and how is that reflected by my agenda?
- ◆ What are my goals for the coming week, what do I need to watch out for and what am I certainly not going to do anymore?

It helps to order your thoughts and agenda, it gives Peace in your mind, and makes you more productive in the end. Of course you cannot sit in the heart of the disc all day, but if you can manage to visit that place in you a bit more often you will increase the grip on your agenda and your work pressures.

Try it, you are worth it!