

BEING HAPPY IN YOUR WORK

by Kevin McChesney

We all know that one of the keys to being happy in our work is to get the opportunity to do what we love to do. Someone once told me that another key to being happy in our work is NOT to do what we DON'T want to do. I've given that statement a lot of thought over the years and have come to realize how powerful this idea really is.

Burnout runs rampant among music directors and indeed church and school leaders of all kinds. There are many reasons for this which I won't go into here; I'll focus on one that I think is probably universal among leaders who are getting burned out – they are doing too many tasks that they don't want to be doing.

It's one of the primary symptoms of overwork. Not only do you have to do all the things you like to do, you also have a host of other things to do that you are either lukewarm about or that you actually really hate doing.

Every job comes at a price, and there's no question that in order to do the directing and music-making that you love to do you will have to do a few logistical and organizational things that you aren't as passionate about. For most, many of these tasks aren't really terrible and we don't mind doing some of these things as long as we get to make the music we love.

It's when the list of uninteresting tasks gets long that you find yourself doing things that you frankly don't enjoy. And that is wearing; in fact, if it continues for a long time or if there is really a large stack of these types of tasks, it can be soul-killing. Burnout!

One of our functions as leaders – actually, it's an important part of our job – is to delegate. There is probably some truth to the old adage that if you want something done right you've got to do it yourself :), but you are one person and in a world that gets busier and busier every year, every month, every day, there are limits to how much you can accomplish and feel good about doing. So if what you are doing seems like drudgery to you, it's time to delegate – one of the keys to being happy in your work is NOT to have to do the things you DON'T want to do!

One of the great advantages to delegating is that you have ringers who do like to do a lot of these tasks. For instance, I don't like dealing with lists or with equipment like chimes and duplicate bells.

Fortunately, I have ringers in Pikes Peak Ringers who do enjoy lists and who do enjoy organizing the equipment. I don't like dealing with archiving and pictures and keeping programs and so on, but fortunately I have ringers who thrive on these kinds of things (in fact, they have created scrapbooks and photo albums for Pikes Peak Ringers that I would classify as true works of art). **So it's likely that for many of the tasks that you don't enjoy there is someone around who does enjoy doing them.**

Of course, there will always be a few tasks that no one is especially keen on. We have a LOT of equipment and logistics and things to organize in a bell choir, more than a great many other musical organizations. These tasks have to get done, too, and it pays to spread them out among a number of people. That way no one person is stuck doing a bunch of things that they don't want to do – including you!

There have been times, even after a lot of years with Pikes Peak Ringers, that I have felt guilty delegating tasks. After all, I don't like doing them, so I figure other people won't like doing them either. Fortunately, it's a rich and varied world :) and there has always been someone who has stepped up who has either genuinely enjoyed doing what I didn't like doing, or at least feels willing to take that on for the good of the team.

And that's really the main point. Handbell choirs are a team, maybe more than any other musical endeavor. So it only makes sense to be sure that everyone gets the chance to do the things they like to do, that no one has to do the things they don't like to do, and that everyone does their part to get the neutral tasks done.

Getting to do the things you like to do AND not having to do the things you don't like to do – THAT'S happy work!