

# STOP – Make Rules That Help Your Well-being

The default move for getting more done is to do more. That can work and it can also waste a lot of time, energy and attention doing stuff that just doesn't really matter. We also need to know when to stop doing things. This week, create some stopping rules so you'll know when to stop doing something.

Here are 8 situations you might like to consider setting some rules that you should abide by. Inspired by Donald Sull and Kathleen Eisenhardt's book, *Simple Rules*.

**Email** – When have you spent enough time on email?

*If you are checking school email at night, set a time limit. You'll be amazed at how much gets done in 15 minutes if we set a timer!*

**Meetings** – What's your rule for knowing when to end a meeting?

*The PODS acronym is useful in ensuring meetings are effective.*

*PURPOSE – What are we trying to achieve at the meeting?*

*OUTCOME – What outcomes should we expect by the end of the meeting?*

*DECISION – What decisions need to be made at the meeting?*

*STRUCTURE – Use the right meeting structure to achieve the intended outcomes eg presentation, forum, workshop, brainstorm, consultative process.*

*Meetings often fill whatever time we allocate to them. Once you have achieved your purpose, delivered the outcomes and made the necessary decisions the meeting should end. PS They should ALWAYS start on time and never run over time.*

**Projects** - What are your red flags to end projects?

*Often in schools we add more things to our agenda and rarely cut or drop initiatives. What projects can we STOP doing?*

**Learn from yesterday,  
live for today,  
hope for tomorrow.  
The important thing is  
not to stop questioning.**

Albert Einstein

**Decisions** - When should you stop seeking input from others and make a decision?

*In making a good decision it is vital that we identify all of the important factors that influence our decision. We often then consult a range of people and seek their inputs. At times we can over think and over consult. Eventually a decision has to be made. Weigh up the key factors, consider the likely consequences and make the best decision you can with the information that is available.*

**Day** - At what time will you stop working and call it a day?

*The time that you finish work each day will depend on your circumstances. Putting boundaries or limitations on ourselves can help us to utilise our time well.*

**Home** - Are you getting all of your work done at school or do you take work home?

*Is what you are currently doing working for you? Do you need to change your approach?*

**Break** – Are you able to disconnect from work and switch off?

*Do you work at night? On weekends? On the holidays? Whilst at times there are some things that need to get done. However, many staff spoil their whole weekend worrying about the work they have to do over the weekend. It is important to put limits or boundaries in place. If you do have to do some school work over the weekend, allocate a specific time and get it done then, rather than mess up the whole weekend.*

**Help** – How stressed do you need to be before you ask for help?

*Working in schools is demanding. Our work is important. We work with people all day, every day and people can be unpredictable. What are the signs, symptoms or red flags that you should respond to and seek help? How does your body respond to stress?*

## Key points

Create some stopping rules to avoid doing things that don't matter.

Consider the questions in each of the areas.

Reflect on what is currently working for you and what isn't.

Set boundaries or limits to support your well-being.

Become aware of your body's responses to stress and respond.



**Steve Francis** MScM, BEd, DipT

Steve is an expert in school leadership and work-life satisfaction. Steve was a Principal for 20 years and is the author of four books, 'Time Management For Teachers', 'A Gr8 Life...Live it Now!', 'First Semester Can Make or Break You!' and 'Attitude is Everything'. Steve lives in Brisbane with his wife and family but works with school leaders and staff in schools across Australia and internationally.

[www.SteveFrancis.net.au](http://www.SteveFrancis.net.au)