



## *The Issue Of Multipotentiality*

*From Jones Loflin-The Speaker With TWO Last Names*



Listening to a lecture about one of the challenges facing gifted children, I unexpectedly discovered a similar challenge facing most of us as we seek to get the right work done. It seems that as these high achievers head off to college and then eventually make career decisions, they are literally overwhelmed by the number of options available to them. The condition has recently been defined as multipotentiality.

*Throughout the day there are any number of tasks we could undertake at which we would be "good at." This condition would seem to be desirable, right? Read on...*

[Wikipedia](#) defines multipotentiality as "the ability of a person, particularly one of artistic or intellectual curiosity, to excel in two or more different fields." More simply put, it refers to individuals who are good at more than one thing. While the term is most commonly used about certain gifted children, I think it could also be used to describe all of us to some degree. Throughout the day there are any number of tasks we could undertake at which we would be "good at." This condition would seem to be desirable, right? Read on.

Again according to Wikipedia, the condition of multipotentiality can "lead to overscheduling, high stress levels, confusion, paralysis by analysis, and impulsive or conformist choices in gifted children, and to feelings of social alienation, purposelessness, apathy and depression in the brightest of adults." You are now shaking your head and saying, "Those are exactly the same symptoms I frequently face when trying to get clarity about what to undertake next at work."

*If you routinely practice multipotentiality, you are referred to as a multipotentialite.*

If you suffer from elements of multipotentiality, a simple prescription may be to first stop for a moment. Next, ask yourself questions like:

- What task could I undertake next that would be most important in accomplishing my purpose?
- Based on my desired outcomes for today, what tasks and activities should be a priority?
- What is the BEST use of my time instead of just being busy?
- What am I willing to fail at? (Note: You can't do everything well.)



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- Am I clear about the expectations my supervisor has for me?
- What tasks have the smallest windows of opportunity to be completed?
- Which tasks have the highest degrees of urgency AND importance?
- Which tasks are most critical in enabling others to move forward with their work?

Ultimately, once you have spent a few moments reflecting, it's time to take action. If not, the toxic combination of multipotentiality and procrastination, perfectionism, or other poor work habits may totally sabotage your ability to get anything done of lasting value.

*Instead of trying to be good at everything today, why not choose a smaller number of tasks and complete them really well?*

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Jones Loflin is an internationally-recognized speaker and trainer. His messages focus on change, motivation, time management and work/life blend. He is the author of three books: *Juggling Elephants*, *Getting the Blue Ribbon*, and *Getting to It*. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression.

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