

July 2016

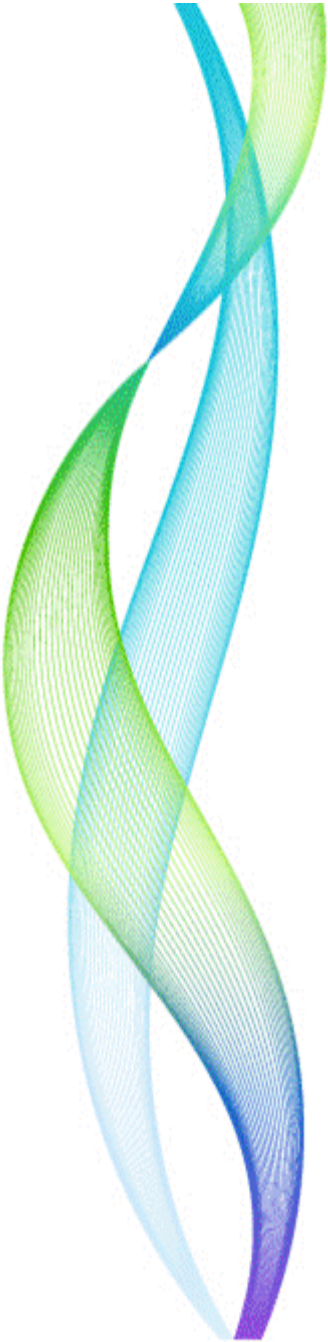
**Focus:** Self-Imposed Deadlines

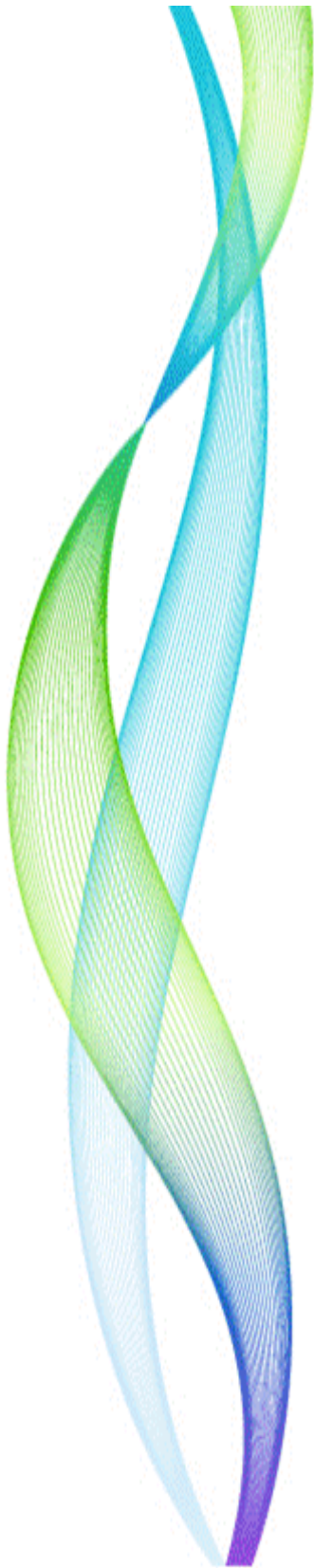
*Dreams don't have deadlines. I'm thinking of doing bigger and better things and having more fun with it. - LL Cool J*

In business and in life, deadlines can be both helpful and crucial: Handing over a big project on time to an expectant client; registering your child in time for the new school year; filing your taxes by April 15. These kinds of deadlines are important. But sometimes we can create deadlines that are self-imposed, unnecessary and unrealistic. The original purpose of a deadline (to motivate you to take timely action) can instead become an anxiety-provoker and a worry-producer if the deadline is self-imposed, unnecessary and unrealistic.

Some examples of self-imposed, unnecessary and unrealistic deadlines include: Insisting you *must* own a four-bedroom house by the time you're thirty, or that you *will* have 2.5 children by age thirty-five, or that you just *have* to retire by fifty. Deadlines are one thing; they help us stay on track. They can even be broken down into manageable sub-deadlines. But if we create an unrealistic deadline, it is a set-up for procrastination or even a sense a failure and diminished self-esteem. That's partly because they are unrealistic and partly because they don't take into account your real feelings.

Maybe you feel peer pressure to own a house or have kids just because that's what all your friends are doing, or your parents expect it, but you'd actually prefer renting an apartment and spending your money on travel. Perhaps you aren't ready to settle down, and aren't sure yet about parenthood. So, whose deadlines are they, anyway? Why create false, unrealistic ones?





Another set of problems surrounding self-imposed deadlines is that don't take into account events and circumstances that are beyond our control (the economy, the real estate market, a family member's health, etc.) When personal deadlines aren't met, they can leave you with the feeling that you'll never measure up to your own expectations. This can be especially detrimental if the deadline is self-imposed, unnecessary and unrealistic.

What if, instead, you spent more time making the most of your current situation? What if you mindfully enjoyed each day just a little bit more? What if you put your energy toward the things that bring you joy *today*? Go ahead and dream, wish and hope, and take the next right steps. Set a deadline if you need to, but make it realistic and *flexible*. Remember, life usually requires no deadline at all. It just happens. And it's wonderful.

### **Reconnect:** Figuring Out the Holidays

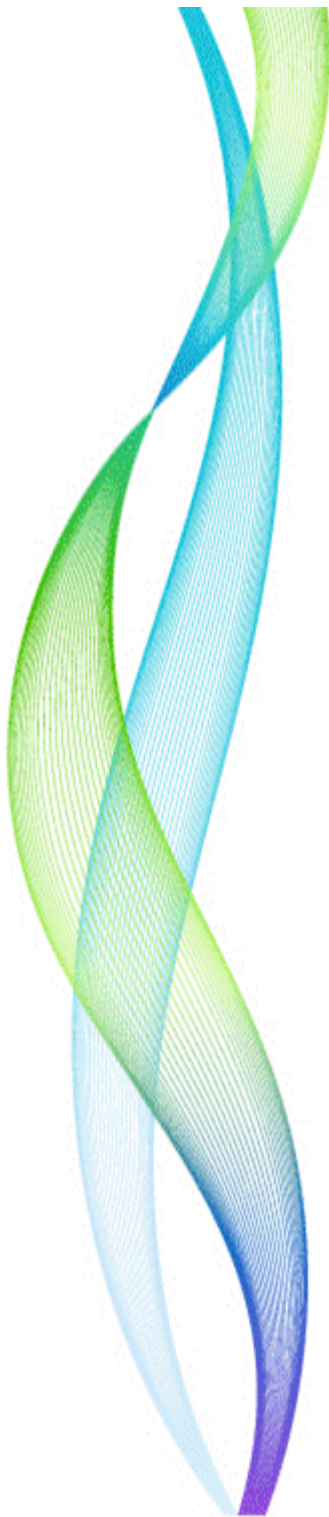
One of the biggest challenges for couples with two sets of families is deciding how you'll spend the holidays. Will it be his parents' house for Thanksgiving, yours for Christmas or Hanukah? These seemingly minor decisions can easily blow up into something much bigger, turning what should be a joyous time into a familial tug-of-war. It's not uncommon for couples who've been together for many years to still quibble about them. *Now* is actually the perfect time to communicate your needs about the fall/winter holidays with your partner in a kind, calm way—before the stress of the season sets in. How can each of you compromise a bit this year? Is there something that can be taken off your schedule so that you can spend more time just as a couple? Or, maybe it's time to start a new tradition in your own home...

### **Bibliotherapy:** *Sweetbitter: A Novel* by Stephanie Danler

If you enjoy juicy kitchen tell-alls like Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential*, this one's for you: "Twenty-two, and knowing no one, Tess leaves home to begin her adult life in New York City. Thus begins a year that is both enchanting and punishing, in a low-level job at 'the best restaurant in New York City...As her appetites sharpen—for food and wine, but also for knowledge, experience, and belonging—Tess is drawn into a darkly alluring love triangle that will prove to be her most exhilarating and painful lesson of all.'" (Source: [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com))

### **Time-Out:** Setting a Good Technology Example

Ask just about any parent these days what their kids' vices are and



you'll probably hear the same thing: technology overuse. But look around: What are parents often doing at the dinner table, with their children sitting next to them? Or while they're pushing their children in a shopping cart at Target? Yep—grown-ups are glued to their smart phones, too. Researchers have found that parents who are the heaviest consumers of electronic media are more likely to have children who are also heavy consumers. So, if you don't want your kid to be constantly using their phone, TV, iPad, PlayStation, etc., show them that you, too, can go off-the-technology-grid for a few hours each day.

**Self Care Strategies:** Curling Up with a Really Good (Real) Book

Speaking of technology, while many of us now prefer reading via an electronic reading device, give your eyes and brain a little break now and then by reading a (real) book. While e-books are both convenient and environmentally friendly, several small studies have shown that paper books are better for memory retention and focus. Plus, real books typically smell and feel good, and who doesn't appreciate a little nostalgia?

**Take Two:** Lemon Tree

Released in 2009, this Israeli drama centers on a Palestinian widow's efforts to stop the Israeli Defense Minister (her next-door neighbor) from destroying her beloved lemon trees in her family orchard. Interestingly, the writer/director Eran Riklis chose to design the film to be apolitical, focusing on character development rather than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lovely acting and complex characters, too.

**Our Time is Up:** Stayed tuned for our August issue...