Juggling Elephants

Length: 90 minutes

Description:

**Juggling Elephants**

What do you do when your workload is growing while your staff and team sizes keep getting smaller and smaller? In this increasingly common situation, it’s more challenging than ever to manage your time and handle multiple priorities. This session is inspired by the book, *Juggling Elephants*, by Jones Loflin and Rodd Musig. Join us to get practical tips and techniques to help you “juggle elephants” without letting any of them fall.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to identify and apply tips for “juggling” all the demands of one’s

- Professional life
- Relationships
- Own physical and mental well-being

Facilitator notes: Throughout this session do several “blog” breaks. This is done by blowing a whistle and announcing, “time for a blog break. Ask someone to read one of these. Get quick reactions to them and invite them to add the tip to any of the sheets they are working on to come up with a number of tips for managing each of their 3 rings.

Bring this to life by getting a top hat and a whistle.

Let the participants know that the Juggling Elephants website has a blog that provides ongoing tips.

http://www.jugglingelephants.com

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>As they come in, ask participants to post their own “tips” for managing their professional and personal life on the sign “How good are you at “juggling elephants.” Welcome them and intro myself and co-facilitator (quickly state the objective) Segue to this topic by suggesting the current reality. Fewer resources and in less time, and while you’re at it juggle your professional and personal life. Fact. In a Health magazine, 2010, 42% or American workers believe they are overloaded with work &amp; 40% take no lunch hour.</td>
<td>Have the slide of the woman trying to juggle all her demands on the screen. On newsprint:“How good are you at “juggling elephants.” Post your tips on a post it here. Post-its on the table. Post the learning objective somewhere in the room. If you have them, lay 3 hula hoops on the floor, close together with a 3 different labels, professional , relationships, self</td>
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| 5 mins. | Invite someone to come to the front of the room. and put their arms out to “hold something.”

Put Horton on her arms first. Indicate this represents our family. Then add elephants one by one in a rapid fashion on this person’s extended arms, until the pile becomes unmanageable. As each one is placed on the arms, yell out projects or commitments that might be common to everyone. (See suggestions to the right and ask the group for additional suggestions of things that might be on their plate.

Quickly ask someone to comment on what is happening. Note. Horton is being covered and squeezed out. (family).

Then ask the person to juggle these elephants.

What happens???

Now ask the volunteer to juggle these. Ask. What happened.

Segue. We are going to consider what we might do to prevent this from happening. |
| Assortment of stuffed “elephants, including a large “Horton.”

Suggested “elephants” (Clara start stating Your “to do list……
* You need to -create a budget for a course
* Recruit and prep a person
* Map out a diet-gained 20 lbs over the winter.
* (Onboarding a new person
* Design a teambuilding workshop for the staff.
* Deliver the teambuilding workshop for the staff
* Prepare handouts
* Meet with conference team
* Schedule and plan SU meeting
* Design a short learning session to take to a volunteer meeting.
* Contact a home improvement company
* Clean out the basement
* Write the newsletter for the church |

| 5 mins. | **Introduce** “Juggling Elephants” book and that we are going to use their framework and then build on it.

**Introduce** the metaphor of the 3 rings and the circus & that we can be the “ring leader “ for these 3 rings. Professional, relationships, well-being/self. (Place hula hoops on the floor in a vertical line and throw some of the elephants in each one.

**State** - in the description for this workshop it was |
| Handout- 3 sheets of paper with a circle on each.

3 hula hoops on the floor to represent our 3 rings: professional life, relationships and health and well-being. Label each one. |
suggested we would look at tips and techniques for juggling all these elephants without letting any of them fall. So, what’s the first thing we need to do, in order for that to happen?

(If not response, suggest it is the following-)

- Decide what “acts’ to have in your ring.

(Share the story about the “act” I needed to take off my plate. I had volunteered to create a session on “How to Think Like Leonardo daVinci for our department. Then I had to go and suggest to my supervisor that we needed to take that off my plate due to other priorities and do it at a later date.)

**Table groups. Ask.** What helps you determine what acts to have in your rings?

So, today you get to be the ringmaster of your circus and get your “acts” together.

**State-** First, let’s look at some ringmaster basics of being a ringmaster, in order for you to be able to juggle.

- All acts need to fulfill a purpose
- You need to have the resources to make the acts successful
- Ringmaster cannot be in all 3 rings at once.
- Ringmaster always reviews the next act before bringing it into the ring.
- The key to successful juggling is having quality acts in all 3 rings.
- Figure out which ring you need to be in.
- Decide which acts to focus on.

Ask. Which one of these basics for ringmasters do you think is the most challenging?

**Place** a sheet of pre-titled newsprint on each table cluster.

**Explain** that we are now going to consider some tips and techniques for managing each one of these rings. Ex. Work- a daily to do list.

**Tell** them they will be given 3 minutes to discuss and jot down any tips that come to mind.

**Rotate** the groups so that they visit all 3 newsprint sheets. (this is a carousel brainstorm.)
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<th>15 mins.</th>
<th><strong>Ask</strong> for 3 volunteers to come up and orchestrate with the group’s input where the Post it tips that they jotted down when they arrived, should go. i.e. on which newsprint.</th>
<th>The Post-its they wrote on the newsprint when they arrived.</th>
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</table>
|  | **Debrief** the above activity  
Review the tips they came up with an if not mentioned talk about the importance of delegating and what that entails. Also, note the importance of getting the right person doing the right job. |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Intermission- How does this enter into the discussion on juggling elephants?  
**Ask** What does this suggest? What are ways to do this for yourself? For your team? |  |
| 5 mins. | **Juggling the 3 Rings**  
Show the slide of juggling and review directions.  
Have someone volunteer to come up, choose one elephant from each ring and try to juggle just those 3 | PowerPoint of how to juggle |
| 20 mins | **Individual juggling elephant commitments**  
Have them identify what they currently have in each of their 3 rings.  
Then, if they feel comfortable share these with someone or their table members and discuss the challenges with these.  
Based on what we have covered look at your own 3 Ring Circus.  
Identify the acts that should be in your rings. Is there an act that should not be in your ring? Can you eliminate it/ | Handout of 3 rings |
| 5 mins. | **Stand up, Hand up, Pair up**  
Ask them to do this and share with someone one thing they are taking from this workshop and the difference it will make in their own ability to juggle elephants. | Put quote on flipchart |
|  | Thank them for coming and close with an inspirational quote regarding time.  
“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.”  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson |  |