

Irreducible Minimums.....or I.M.'s

Over the years I have grown into learned practices of simplicity ... which I quietly call my I.M.'s (Irreducible Minimums)! ~ PK

This is what keeps me centered in Christ – in calendar, in cash & at the core. These do not represent an average or the most, but rather a pattern of the *least* investment (even when under pressure).

They provide the *RULE of life* so to speak. Then, when there is an exception to the good; all the better. When there is a rare inability to even serve the I.M. – it is truly an *exception* to the rule – you have to have a proven rule in order to have an exception. Foundationally the I.M.'s serve as the minimum in order for me to *live healthy* in my faith, my marriage, my family, my career, my budget and my soul center.

The “Idea” of Irreducible Minimums can be a life changing model as a platform for doing life. The actual summary of my I.M.'s listed below cannot be a model in its entirety for anyone else. They are simply an illustration of one man's journey. Two should apply to everyone as they are drawn directly from scripture: “Sabbath rest – working 6 days and off one” and “honoring God with first fruits/tithe”. In these matters – it is universal truth as minimums.

Daily I.M.'s – Calendar, Cash, Core

- Wake up & Talk with (Dad) my Heavenly Father before I rise!
- Read the Word/Prayer – Minimum of 15-20 minutes
- Always kiss my wife (say I love you) before I leave!
- Emotionally connect with my kids (even if only 10-15 minutes)
- Emotionally connect with Marcia (a walk, run, sit, doing dishes, post dinner, before bed – it just has to happen. If I travel – then phone call to accomplish the same. A lesson from a mentor: “She's first to hear the good story! Keep her your best friend daily.”)
- Never disrespect Marcia before the kids or friends or another.
- Reflect every day (15 min.); never let a day end without “Be STILL & Be GRATEFUL.

Weekly I.M.'s – Calendar, Cash & Core:

- Worship Every 7 days with other believers (go to church)
- Community Connection every week – ex: Small Group
- Serve the “Kingdom Mission” practically once every week
- Work! 50 min and 60 max hours a week; 6 days a week and shut it down!
- Day off – (non-negotiable Sabbath – i.e. Thursday for me)
- Word/Prayer one 90 min. session every week (major on ‘reveal my sin to me’ – I want to be holy in heart as you are holy; & ‘warfare prayer’; & pray over my family by name. Journal 3 times a week).
- Work out 30 minutes 4-5 days per week
- Connect with Creation once a week (a walk; a visit; a motorcycle ride; bike ride – reflect on creation and 50% of the time I repeat Matt. 6 “do not worry”– been doing that for years!)
- First Fruits: return a minimum of 10% (tithe) of gross to the Lord through local church
- Spend based on budgeted and adjust with the margin weekly

- Date my wife weekly – non-negotiable, no kids – just us!
- Family night weekly – just family!
- Dinners as a Family at least 3 nights per week (all together – emotionally connecting)
- Parenting:
 - When in elementary school: one play date & put to bed 4 nights of the 7
 - When MS: one breakfast/bible a week and a hobby of their choice
 - When HS: one block of Daddy time (i.e. Friday from 3-5:30 p.m. Jake)
- One Personal Fun thing – even if it's 1-2 hours!
- Connect with a Friend(s)/socially

Monthly I.M.'s – Calendar, Cash & Core

- ½ day to Get Human – “An unexamined life is not worth living” – Socrates/ i.e. as in “Motorcycle or into Nature” connect w/ Jesus once Monthly!
- Give offerings (Unchained ... GiveLife ... Orphans ... to a 12Stoner or community in need)
- GiveLife: Witness to my faith in Jesus ... an invest/invite agenda
- Tap into someone else for learning (book, Leader, mentor, teacher)
- Pour into someone else (Mentor)

Yearly I.M.'s – Calendar, Cash & Core

- Annual Audit of our family finances/Re-do Family Budget – Sign Off as a couple!
- Family Vacation (saved for it all year- i.e. 7-10 days based on what we can afford)
- Motorcycle Trip with good friends (5-6 days)
- Getaway with my wife (no kids)
- Personal Spiritual Retreat – (refine one Major Personal Theme for my development for the year)
- One Major Leadership/Faith enrichment

Thought: This is hard to absorb in ONE session. It would be hard (if not impossible) to just make a list and assume you could live it. But this was not developed in a year. It was trained over time and adjusted with God's counsel through experience and the changes from family to ministry.

Illustration: I asked Jadon (just into 1st Grade); is it hard to tie your shoes? He said, “Yes!” Why did he say “yes”? Because he cannot tie his shoe at this moment! I asked Jadon, “Is it hard to write your name?” He replied, “No, that's easy!”

“Ah, but there was a day when it was hard to write your name. It's only easy now because you have practiced 'till you learned it. Tying your shoe will be easy some day – if you will practice. If however we keep buying shoes with no laces or you ask others to tie your shoe – it will always seem hard to you. But it's as easy as learning to write your name ... it just takes practice over time.”

12Stone – many things seem hard to us that will become second nature if practiced over time. Christian Simplicity is the practice of putting Firsts first and changing what you fret over so that in time it can be swirling around you and you can be calm at the core. We find

our peace, as we discover the divine pace that heaven has set for us. Enter into your own training of Irreducible Minimums in calendar, cash and core.

Note: It is with deep frustration that I cannot provide a verbal teaching nor take the time to author an appropriate written context for these Irreducible Minimums. Given my comments in Sunday's teaching and the speed of posting them, I will simply make them available. A time will come when I can actually add depth, richness and NEEDED clarity. – PK