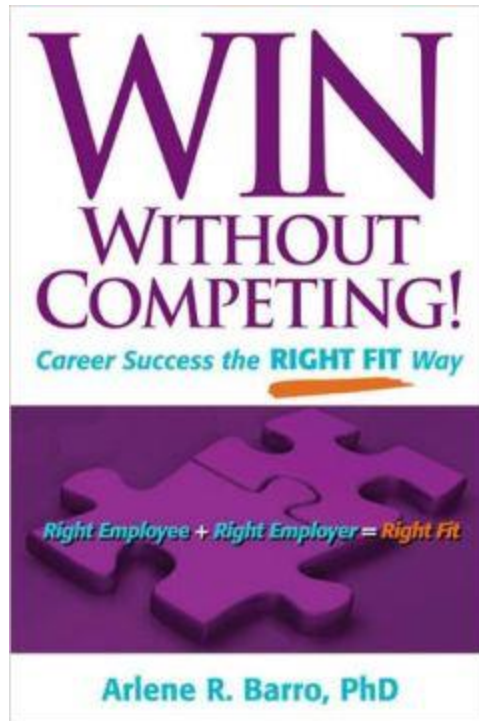


# Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene—Unfinished Business Causes Stress



Posted Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2018 – 6:50 PM

**By Dr. Arlene Barro**

Overwhelmed with thoughts of unfinished business and feel that your brain is like a cluttered closet? Sleepless nights, anxiety, and stress will dominant your life, preventing you from advancing forward.

## **Changing Your Behavior**

The Zeigarnik effect, created by Lithuanian Psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik in the 1920's, identifies the tendency to remember unfinished tasks first. Why? We keep thinking about them. On the other hand, finished tasks we forget quickly.

Author and founder of Psych Mechanics, Hanan Parvez, commenting on multi-tasking maintains that if you try to do a lot of tasks concurrently, you cannot concentrate on the task at hand.

What should you do about brain clutter? The answer is simple. First, think of your mind as the original computer. Delete the trash daily, that which you do not need to remember. If you do this, your brain will feel uncluttered. Then, you can think creatively. Second, eliminate unfinished tasks. Carefully plan your

daily activities to complete them. Create a task list. At the end of each day, list the finished business. No stress. Third, eliminate the frustration of multi-tasking. Prioritize your list of daily tasks. Each one that needs to be done cannot be the number one priority. Create criteria to determine priorities. Stick to the priority decisions you made. If you become indecisive, the task list will become a collision course, causing cognitive dissonance. Then, you will feel befuddled, anxious, and stressed. Manage your behavior.

One more thing, before you begin your daily routine. Look around the environment in which you will be working. Do you see physical clutter that could distract you? If so, get rid of it. Otherwise, you might add it to your unfinished business list unknowingly. Avoid doing that.

Remember the more unfinished business you have the more stress you will have. Start my program now.

### **Unresolved Bereavement Issues**

In 2015, the National Institutes of Health conducted a study to investigate unfinished business in bereavement. They focused on incomplete, unexpressed or unresolved relationship issues with the deceased. They found that the following issues are a risk factor for chronic and severe grief which include: missed opportunities to say goodbye, unresolved connections and disclosures, i.e., needing forgiveness and desire to apologize. Moreover, some of the participants in the study regretted not telling their loved ones the significant positive impact that they had on their lives. Others, failed to declare their love.

If unfinished business dominates your bereavement, you could spend the rest of your life suffering. To avoid chronic regret, anxiety, and stress speak up daily expressing how you feel. We never know when a loved one could die unexpectedly. If death is expected, we have time to plan. Do what needs to be done.

### **No Unfinished Business**

Senator John McCain, “lion” and “maverick” of the senate, conducted his life with a laser beam focus on achievements, side-stepping partisan politics. McCain had his own compass to guide him. He orchestrated his life with honor and grace, even his death. On Friday, August 24, 2018 he discontinued treatment for brain cancer. On Saturday, August 25 he died. Ironically, this is the same day his dear friend Ted Kennedy died nine years ago.

McCain, the statesman, left no unfinished business, including a successor. His daughter Meghan is a replica of himself. Watch her career continue to soar. Roberta McCain, his mother, now 106 years old talks just like her son. Not a surprise. Cindy McCain and their children will grieve. They will focus on their love, not on what they should have said to him. John McCain exemplified Frank Sinatra’s song *My Way*. He passed on his philosophy to his family.

Lead your life to the fullest without constant loose ends. Chauffeur yourself to heaven with no unfinished business.

**Questions about this column? Email [drbarro@barroglobal.com](mailto:drbarro@barroglobal.com)**

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