The View from 80
Gordon MacDonald

1. Place the most significant people in your world (spouse, family, close friends and mentors) in the calendar first. Then build your work plans around them.

2. Never (ever!) stop growing. Stay responsive to fresh ways and ideas that sustain your physical and mental health...improve your working skills...increase your knowledge...and enrich your wisdom and spiritual life.

3. Be more a priest and less a speaker or preacher. Bless people; don’t bully them. Relieve them of the burden of their sins; become known as a master of searching questions. Be mindful of the weaker brother or sister, the child and the older person. Let people (in and beyond the church) hear you pray for them.

4. Remind yourself that the time will come when you will have to relinquish titles and privileges and slip into obscurity...ultimately the obscurity of death.

5. Anticipate those occasions when you, like most people, may suffer, fail, fall into doubt, face conflict, experience loss.

6. Be trustworthy and reliable, a person who keeps his/her word. Don’t make promises you can’t keep.

7. Be a spiritual father/mother to teachable people who may some day, inherit your responsibilities.

8. Live modestly...stay free of debt...be generous...develop a financial plan for your future...be wary of those who try to “buy” your favor.

9. Expect to reorganize your interior life every 7-10 years.

10. Receive compliments, criticism and counsel with humility and appreciation. Avoid whining, complaining, self-pity. Assume that there is at least a grain of truth in the things critics say about you and your work. As much as is possible, resist making excuses.

11. Stay alert for the evils and confusions imbedded in organizational life.

12. Be quick to say (with sincerity) thank you, well-done, I’m sorry, I forgive you, and how can I help? (Whenever possible, put your words into writing).

13. As you prepare a sermon or a teaching, always ask yourself, “what difference will this presentation make to those who will hear you?”

14. Be alert for the sensual “triggers” that sometimes follow intense spiritual ministry.

15. Return to the cross regularly: express your gratitude, name your sins and resentments, pray for the world, listen for God’s calls to do mighty things.

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