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Sometimes, when I'm frantically running from one job/gig/appointment/event to the next, I look around, watching people around me doing the same running. I know it's standard procedure this time of year to resolve to do more of some things, less of others. Every January I look longingly at the cushy canvas chair I bought in 2001 and envision myself enveloped in it, reading. But in order to get to that poor chair I'd have to change my entire life structure. I'm simply too busy.

Maybe I need a new perspective.

Let's say I have a bagel. And I have a dollop of cream cheese, the tasty flavored kind. Let's go with honey walnut. Mmmm.

And let's say I have two choices: to spread that cream cheese very thin and cover the whole bagel with a little bit of flavor, or to slather that dollop onto one bite-sized part of the bagel. I could eat the entire bagel and wish I had more cream cheese with every bite ... or I could enjoy one quality, memorable bite.

Now let's say the bagel is my life, and the cream cheese is me. I could find an endless number of activities (bagel) in which to participate (spread myself thin). Or I could focus my energies on a few worthwhile endeavors, giving more of myself in a concentrated effort and probably making a greater impact.

I confess that I marveled at the nomination letters for the five women on the cover of this issue. It's tempting to think that they have superpowers.

But read closer. Because these women direct their talents and energies into one or two areas, their influence is greater.

One spends her time volunteering with a youth group. Another teaches refugees. A third cares round the clock for her convalescent husband. A fourth inspires her church community through music. The fifth is a CEO whose emphasis is on her employees and customers.

They have focus—they have impact. They're not running off to the next appointment. The people they serve can count on them to be there. The people they've touched are changed for the better.

So this year, maybe I should say yes only to the people and things that mean the most to me—the organizations and events where I can make a difference. Maybe if I focus my energy I can still reap the rewards of an active, giving life without wishing there was more cream cheese and less bagel. There will always be more bagel.

Perhaps next year at this time, I'll know what that cushy chair feels like.

Ellington

Send comments, suggestions, ideas or original recipes to: editor@RWmagazine.com.

Corrections:

In the November/December 2011 issue, on p. 6, Mike Hardwick took the photo of the cover women, while Jason Underferth took the Commonweal Theatre building photo.

Personal Training with KT, featured in the November/December 2011 issue, is a business separate from the Rochester Area Family YMCA.

