



MAY SCOPE PRACTICING PREVENTION TIP
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I have been enjoying writing these monthly Practicing Prevention Tips for SCOPE colleagues. It has been an opportunity to share shorter, reflective thoughts about the work we do and how it fits within our lives more generally. As a professor, I am usually working on much longer pieces of writing, such as articles, book projects or syllabus revisions. When I sat down to write this piece, it was after I had been metaphorically kicking myself for not doing it sooner. I said to myself, "What's your problem? It's a couple of pages...get on with it!"

Well, I figured out the problem. I'm tired! I'm not tired from the deadline to write this piece. I'm not tired from the pile of student papers waiting for my review and grades. I'm not tired from the various assessment matrices expected by the State to demonstrate our department's compliance with professional standards. I could list about a dozen other projects, papers and obligations, and tell you in all honesty that none of them in particular is making me tired, which I think might be how I tricked myself into agreeing to all of them.

When I was thinking about what to share this month, it occurred to me that the ones I have written so far focused on lovely contemplative ideas in warm relational tones. Those were authentic in voice and timing, but they might have had the unintended consequence of making readers feel guilty for not being as kind to themselves as I had suggested. How ironic!

So, in the spirit of balance and honesty, I am saying here and now that I am seriously tired! It's not any one thing, but rather it's the cumulative effect that's making me tired. I look at and think about the pile (it's actually a combination of literal piles and metaphorical ones, in the form of to-do lists, reminders in my calendar and email inbox). I think about the many times over this academic year when I said yes to more commitments, assuring myself that I'd deal with them in the Spring or Summer. And where did that get me? It got me here, on a beautiful, sunny and warm spring day, typing inside rather than being out in the breezy sunshine. Now, is that any way to treat someone you love?

It's May, and I have committed myself to every little flattering request, pursuing every potentially interesting or impressive opportunity, hesitating or declining to delegate or ask for help, limiting my time with friends and family and cutting into my sleep and vacuous television watching time. This is definitely not a nice thing to do to anyone, especially oneself. I have been reading some items on various social media that suggest many of you have been doing the same, piling on to yourselves as well. Don't we have better things to be doing, such as turning off the computer and phone and going outside, or perhaps pouring ourselves a refreshing beverage and watching the latest guilty pleasure?

Folks, here's my May Practicing Prevention Tip...Stop reading this and go outside. Take someone you like with you, and leave the ones you don't inside. I'll check in with you next month...I have a swimming pool with my name on it.

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For more information about Dr. Laker and his role as Visiting Scholar with SCOPE, please visit <http://wearescope.org/resources/visiting-scholar/>.

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