



**Yeesh! It's 8:00 pm** and you're still in front of your computer answering emails...again. It seems like every day is spent digging out of an avalanche of email, phone messages, and urgent requests that doesn't leave any time for you-know-who (hint: YOU!) or the priorities that really matter. By the time Friday rolls around it's easy to feel your week went careening out of control like some bad movie of the week car chase.

## The Solution Isn't in Another Date-Planner System or Another Priority Check List.

Gaining control over your time is nothing short of gaining control of your *life*.

By now that voice inside is probably saying "Ya-but..." You know, "Ya-but my boss insists," or "Ya-but my client expects it." "Ya-buts" keep you caught in the loop of believing you have no choice in where your time goes.

The good news is, you do have a choice. From CEO to business owner to file clerk, reclaiming control over your time is a powerful act of self-mastery. So how do you get started?

## Remember The Last Time You Flew On An Airplane?

The flight attendant instructed parents to put their mask on first, before placing it on their children. At first that instruction may seem counter-intuitive. After all, most parents value their children's lives more than their own. But parents must take care of themselves in order to take care of a child.

## Imagine For A Moment You Are At Work

Only this time, you have no email or phone calls to respond to, no interruptions by co-workers or clients (I know, this seems like a fantasy but stay with me for a moment). Your day is entirely cleared of obligations. Any task you "should" "need" or "ought" to do is filed away out of sight for now. You can breathe a sigh of relief, knowing the design of your entire day is up to you. Feels pretty good, doesn't it?

[Continued...](#)



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#### *"Training and Coaching Since 1985"*

**MARK W. ZALKIN, M.Ed., MSW**, has been coaching and training professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, small business owners, government officials and non-profit staff members since 1985. He has been described as optimistic, conscientious, enthusiastic, insightful, honest, humorous, caring, and supportive.

When he is not coaching, Mark teaches a wide range of workshops and facilitates team building throughout the USA and in Asia. He has been an Adjunct Professor at the University of Denver where he taught a graduate course on team building.

He received his bachelors' degree (BME) and masters' degree (M.Ed.) in education from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. His second masters' degree is an MSW from Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work, New York, NY.

Before the establishment of Zalkin Training and Development, Mark spent over 13 years as a supervisor and executive with organizations in Los Angeles, Omaha, and Denver.

A more detailed listing of Mark's background and programs can be found at [zalkin-training.com](http://zalkin-training.com).

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Now imagine you have complete choice about what you do on this day. How would you spend your time? What projects would get your attention? What pace would you set for yourself? Take a moment to jot down the two or three items that you would choose to focus on for the day, asking yourself: "What really matters most?"

## Use Your Beliefs As Your Allies

**Many of us have adopted the belief that we have to be instantly available to everybody.** Faced with the inevitable stress this causes, men turn stoic and women become relentless pleasers. Our beliefs are strong. Rather than trying to change them, why not direct them to better serve our desire to respond to others, and our craving to gain control over our time?

For example, let's go back to your imaginary day where you call the shots. Remember the items you noted would receive your attention? Who ultimately benefits by focusing on even one of those items? By having that person (or people) benefit, who *e/se* benefits?

You see, by focusing on what matters most, you are doing more good than by allowing yourself to get caught in a storm of fire fighting. You are creating a chain of benefit that is larger than just one person.

## How Do You Choose What To Work On?

**Here's an easy tip. In business, go with what puts you "closest to the money."** In other words, what activities directly impact the bottom line of your business? Don't be tricked into thinking this only means choosing quick tasks. Being closest to the money can also mean choosing a project that has a positive long-term impact on your bottom line.

In your personal life, choose what puts you "closest to your heart." That means deepening your relationship with people you care about including yourself!

Remember that perfect, imaginary day? Here's my challenge to you -- why not make it your reality now, not later? This isn't just about gaining control of your time, it's about putting yourself in the driver's seat of your life!

## The #1 Radical Thing You Can Do To Gain Control Of Your Time

**Schedule time every week that excludes any interruptions, then guard that time with your life!**

Here is how to make it work:

1. Tell your staff no interruptions unless the building is on fire.
2. Turn off your cell phone and your desk phone.
3. Think of it as "tithing" your time.

**Sound impossible?** It won't be if you start with a small chunk of time. Even one hour will give you the benefit of greater focus, less stress, and higher productivity.

**Think of it as paying yourself first** -- in time -- before paying anyone else. You'll not only benefit, you'll also set an example of self-mastery that can positively impact the lives of everyone around you. Think "pay it forward" by paying yourself first.

## At A Glance...

**How do you handle the 101 interruptions, questions, and needs of others that come your way in a day?**

The solution requires boldness and personal leadership. Let someone else handle it or let it go. Period.

**If you're seen as the answer person, switch gears and start asking powerful questions.**

You'll feel like someone just lifted a ten-ton brick off your shoulders.

**Just because you can handle the problem - or answer the question - doesn't mean you need to.**

And the other person? They are likely to surprise both of you with their resourcefulness as they step up to the plate with their own solution. Questions are the key to empowering others, as well as freeing you from the tyranny of time.