



## No Margin For Error

Wow! The responses to last week's Point show we're clearly onto something. Lots of people are feeling overworked and overstressed. And **many of you indicated that you're taking control of this situation by saying "no" more often.** (If you missed this Point about how the word "no" can have a positive impact on your life, go to [www.corsini.com](http://www.corsini.com) and click on "E-Newsletter" to access our archived Points.)

I guarantee you'll find saying "no" to be liberating. That's because in today's busy work environment, when you say "yes" to something extra, you'll have to say "later" or "I'm not finished" or "no" to something else. If you take on a last-minute assignment, you'll likely have to give up another commitment—be it your regular work routine, your kid's basketball game or your quiet time for religious reflection.

**Something's going to give.** There just aren't enough hours in our days.

Which brings us to today's topic of margin. One of the main reasons people are so stressed out today is **they don't have enough margin in their lives.** I'm talking about slack, or leeway or white space on your daily calendar. Whatever you call it—**you need more of it.**

**A margin-less life is a life of stress and chaos.** If you find that you're finishing things just in time, or rushing from one appointment to another, or trying to do too much in one day, or if your daytimer is totally full, your life lacks margin. Stress and exhaustion aren't the only repercussions of a margin-less life. It also leaves you vulnerable. When the unexpected occurs (your boss gives you another assignment you can't say "no" to or your child comes down with the flu), you'll be in a jam with few choices or options to help you out of it.

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"Today, be aware of how you are spending your 1,440 beautiful moments, and spend them wisely."*

— Author Unknown

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How do you get more margin? Learning to say “no” certainly helps. But ultimately, **it comes down to taking control of your day—and your life.** Here’s how:

- **Relax your schedule.** Allow time for delays during your commute. Leave time between appointments and meetings for lunch or for transition between tasks.
- **Make time for yourself.** Schedule appointments with yourself, and don’t skip those appointments.
- **Reduce your availability** with people. And delegate when possible.
- **Be more open to change.** Relax your mindset, and you’ll react to the unexpected more easily.
- **Get up earlier** so your morning routine isn’t so busy. Also, make sure you *have* a routine.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Don’t have unrealistic expectations for yourself. And set realistic goals. Instead of committing to exercise every day of the week, aim for four or five of the seven.
- **Set priorities.** Say “yes” only to those activities and commitments that really align with your values. Don’t commit yourself or your family to anything and everything that comes along.
- **Know and accept that you simply cannot be all things to all people.**

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Creating margin in your life is hard to do. But a stressed and harried life is even harder in the end. Bottom line: **A life lived with margin is a joyful; peaceful; and, ultimately, more productive life.**

If you want more information on the idea of margin (and how to get it) take a look at Dr. Richard Swenson’s book *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*. Read it during your margin time.

## CORSINI'S POINT

One of the best tools to take back control of your life—in and out of the office—is to create margin in your days. Margin is extra time in your schedule that will leave you less stressed, more productive, happier and better able to react positively to life’s unexpected “whams!” With margin, you have a chance to maintain that all-important

balance between work and life outside the office. Without it, you'll face increased stress, unhappiness and work overload. You can do it—all it takes is a little margin *one* day to begin creating margin *every* day.

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