How to Take Control of Your Life

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About the Presenter

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- Certified Professional Ergonomist CPE
- M.S. HFE, M.S. OT, San Jose State University
- Employs 20 - people
- Business for 18 years, SBA
- County of Santa Clara Ergonomic Support for 15 years
What takes control of your life?
How does it make you feel when you lose control of your life?
How does it affect you and those around you?
What do you do to regain your control of your life?
How to Take Control of Your Life
Consciousness and Chakra Sources
When you are in balance you feel better about yourself and life.

You have more focus and energy to engage with the people and activities that you enjoy resulting in overall personal fulfillment and joy.
How to Take Control of Your Life

Chakra Sources

- Crown - Cognition
- Third Eye - Intuition
- Throat - Expression
- Heart - Love
- Solar Plexus - Creativity
- Sacrum - Emotion
- Root - Life
How to Take Control of Your Life
Chakra Sources

- Work life balance is off set – Life center is off balance
- Non-elated mood – Emotion center is off balance
- Lack of personal fulfillment – Creativity is off balance
How to Take Control of Your Life
Chakra Sources

* Negative feelings for yourself or others – Heart is off balance
* Expressing negative thoughts - Throat is off balance
* Impulsive harmful actions – Third eye balance is off
* Lack of intelligent positive thought – Crown is off balance
How to Take Control of Your Life
Willpower
Psychological scientists

**Willpower** is the ability to delay gratification, resisting short-term temptations in order to meet long-term goals.

Studies show that when we successfully accomplish one task that requires determined focus, we become less persistent on a second unrelated task.
Willpower requires a relentless and seemingly endless stream of decision-making. This results in "decision fatigue," a phenomenon that works to diminish self-control.

e.g., Jam booths (32 versus 6 jam selections)
Each participant tasted 2 to 3 jams at either both but more participants bought jam at the 6 jam booth = less choices, more energy available for decision making
“The evidence is clear that we have one reservoir of willpower. It’s a highly limited resource, and it gets depleted by every act that requires its use.”

Roy Baumeister et. al
How to Take Control of Your Life
Sustaining Willpower and Focus on Eight
1. Make more of your behaviors automatic

“A ritual is a highly precise behavior that you perform over and over, at a specific time, so it becomes automatic and no longer requires much willpower to get it done.”

Alfred North Whitehead
How to Take Control of Your Life
Focus on Eight

2. Take yourself out of harm’s way
Selectively avoid temptations e.g.,
- Remove your favorite high-calorie foods
- Don’t ask for bread at the restaurant

Complete a challenging work Task e.g.,
- Turn off your email entirely for designated periods of time
- Remove your cell phone from your view
3. Whatever you feel compelled to do, don’t

* The more powerfully driven you are to take instant action, the more likely you shouldn’t
* When the pull is intense, it’s likely you’ve activated your fight-or-flight physiology
* In most life circumstances, it serves you better to reflect before you react
4. Sleep as much as you must to feel fully rested

* For nearly 98% of us, that means at least 7 hours a night

* “Fatigue,” said Vince Lombardi, “makes cowards of us all. It undermines our capacity for self-control, and we’re more likely to default to instant gratification”
4. Sleep as much as you must to feel fully rested (cont.)

* The best sleep ritual is to begin winding down at least 30 minutes before turning out the lights

* Refrain from looking at your TV, Tablet or Phone as the lighting on the screen reprograms your circadian rhythms to think it is actually still “light out”

* Refrain from eating sugary foods before bedtime
5. Do the most important thing first in the morning

* The vast majority of us have the most energy and the fewest distractions

* Our energy reservoir diminishes as the day wears on, which is why it’s so difficult to get to the hardest work late in the day

* Conversely, the more focused you are, the higher the quality of work you’ll do, and the more you’ll get done
6. Eat energy rich foods in small doses at frequent intervals

* Food – specifically glucose – literally fuels willpower
* The body can only make use of a limited amount at any given time
* We need to refuel at least every three hours
* Sugars and simple carbohydrates provide a surge of energy that doesn’t last
* Lean proteins and complex carbohydrates provide a steadier, more enduring source of energy and therefore willpower
7. Do one thing at a time

* Moving between tasks creates a phenomenon called “switching time”

* When you shift attention from one focus of attention to another, the average time it takes to finish the first task increases by at least 25%
8. Work in sprints

- Human beings aren’t meant to operate continuously
- We’re designed to pulse between spending and renewing energy
8. Work in sprints

* The ultradian rhythm refers to a 90-minute cycle inside us, during which we move from a state of higher physiological arousal progressively down towards fatigue.

* Focus ideally without interruption for no more than 90 minutes then take a real break, for at least a few minutes, to relax emotionally, give the mind a rest and physically recharge.
It’s critical to ground yourself in deeply held values.

Knowing what you stand for is a uniquely powerful fuel for behavior, especially when the going gets tough, and the temptation is to take the easy route.

Stay clear about who you want to be in any given situation.
How to Take Control of Your Life
Take Control of your Calendar
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Take Control of Your Calendar

Do you struggle with saying, “No”?

“Your time is your life; When you surrender control of your calendar to other people, you put them in control of your destiny.”
1. Say “no” early and often

The best way to have more time to work on projects that matter to you, is to spend less time doing everything else. This will require saying, “No,” early and often.
2. Balance structured and unstructured work

* Limit/balance yourself to a few of the activities that you enjoy (and don’t enjoy) per week

* Block out time on your own work calendar
3. Make progress, not deadlines

* Avoid placing deadlines on non-urgent work results with avoiding loads of avoidable pressure
* Control pacing of unstructured activities by blocking in time to do different elements of your work
3. Make progress, not deadlines

* Stop cornering yourself by giving precise completion times for requests
* Get it to them “soon” or “by next week not tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.
* Give progress reports on regular intervals
4. Take off the cape & lose the tights

- Recognizing the difference between “picking up one for the team” or doing other people’s work
- People begin to expect that you will pick up their slack
- Causes personal burnout, no reward, harbor resentments
You teach people how to treat you, so respect others and respect yourself enough to take back control of your schedule.
How to Take Control of Your Life
Setting Boundaries & Saying No... Nicely
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Setting Boundaries & Saying No... Nicely

* Do you have trouble saying NO?
* Want to just get it done?
* Fear of people not liking you?
* Unrealistic handle on your own personal time?

Elizabeth Grace Saunders
The 3 Secrets to Effective Time Investment: How to Achieve More Success With Less Stress
When you allow every request to divert your attention from your most important activities of the day, everyone ends up frustrated.
Detriments to Not saying “No”

* Turning in late or low-quality work
* Doing other people’s work for them instead of properly delegating
* Working extra hours so they can’t move forward on personal goals
* Sacrificing sleep, exercise, and time with people they enjoy
* Developing a reputation for being approachable but not reliable
* Having people nag them about when they will get things done
* Feeling overwhelmed, inadequate, guilty, frustrated, and resentful
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When you receive perpetual last-minute requests:

“I would love to help you out, but I already made commitments to other _________ (coworkers, clients, etc.) to complete their projects today. It wouldn’t be fair to them to not follow through on what I said I would do. I will be sure to fit this in as soon as possible. Thanks for your understanding”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When people ask you about everything instead of directly contacting the appropriate person:

“That’s not my area of expertise, but I would be happy to connect you with someone who could best help you solve this problem”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When you’re asked in the hallway or at a meeting for an estimated timeframe for a complex project:

“Could you email me the details of that request? Once I receive them, I’ll be able to give you a more definite response on when I can get that done for you”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When you’re given an exceptionally short deadline:

“I know this project is a high priority for you, and if it’s absolutely necessary for me to turn something in by that date, I can make it happen. But if I could have a few more _________ (days, weeks, etc.), I could really deliver something of higher quality. Would it be possible for me to have a bit more time?”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When someone starts talking about a problem that you could potentially help them with but you don’t have time to handle and is not your responsibility:

“Wow. I can really understand how that would be hard. (Then say nothing more—just nod, smile, and release the problem when you walk away)”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When asked to do something optional that you can’t commit to right now:

“I appreciate you thinking of me, and I’m honored by the request. But unfortunately, I don’t have the time to give this my best right now. I think you would benefit from finding someone who can devote more time and energy to this project”
Ways to Say “NO” Nicely:

When someone asks you to do something that your much-less-busy coworker could do:

“I would love to help you out, but given my schedule, I wouldn’t be able to get this back to you for a couple of weeks. If you would like to have this turned around sooner, I recommend that you reach out to __________. Does that sound good?”
How to Take Control of Your Life
 Truly Restful Micro Breaks
Step 1: Fully switch off

Studies show that brief work breaks are only genuinely rejuvenating when they give you the chance to fully switch off. By contrast, any kind of activity that involves willpower or concentration, even if it’s not in a work context, is only going to add to your fatigue levels.

Christian Jarrett
Step 2: Take short breaks early and often
Breaks taken in the morning were much more beneficial in terms of how the workers felt improvements both physically and mentally (Baylor University 2017)

If you deprive yourself of mini breaks you will need to take a longer break to obtain any benefit when you finally take a break.
Step 3: Get out of the office

Staff who did any work-related activities at lunch were rated as more fatigued by their colleagues at the end of the day.

John P. Trougakos University of Toronto
Step 3: Get out of the office

- Studies have shown how a green environment gives us a mental recharge.
- Only by taking frequent short breaks of a truly restful nature will you refill your mental and physical reserves.
- Pushing yourself all day causes mental burnout after work.
How to Take Control of Your Life
Technology - Loss of Balance
Does technology change our bodies and our brains?

“yes”

Technology affects our memory, our attention, what we focus on and our sleep cycles.
Sleep cycles are affected by bright light from screens tricking our brain into thinking it is still daylight causing sleep difficulties and that can affect our wellbeing
How to Take Control of Your Life Technology - Loss of Balance

Prefrontal cortex overload
  * Causing short term memory loss
  * Preventing long term memory upload from lack of habituation
How to Take Control of Your Life 
Technology - Loss of Balance

* Forgetfulness is a normal and necessary phenomenon
* We must keep pushing information out so it can deal with information coming in and if it gets overloaded we become forgetful

Professor Saling - University of Melbourne and Austin Health
A study using neuroimaging of frequent Internet users showed twice as much activity in the prefrontal cortex of the brain compared to sporadic users.
Children and TV:
Early intervention programs must elicit direct participation from the child, provide a strong language model, avoid overloading the child with distracting stimulation, and include a well-articulated narrative structure.

Delayed language development with children watching non interactive shows
While it affects adults too, it is particularly powerful for young people. Developing brains can become more easily habituated than adult brains to constantly switching tasks — and less able to sustain attention.
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Summary

To Take Control of Your Life

* Be Conscious of Yourself
* Protect Your Willpower Reserves
* Take Control of Your Calendar
* Learn to Say “No”
* Turn Off and Unplug
Thank you for being my guest

“Get Out there and Take Control of Your Life!”
How to Take Control of Your Life

Questions?

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How to Take Control of Your Life

The Negative Impacts of Technology on the Human