

A MATTER OF PRIORITIES

I wonder what you would change in your schedule if you found out you could spend personal, 1on1 time with Richard Branson for the next four weeks.

What would you decide you could afford to 'let go' for a while?

- The weekly lunch or breakfast appointment? *Perhaps you would arrange to meet with them monthly instead.*
- A block of time set aside for reading books or magazines? *You can always read those; not like they're going anywhere.*
- Your daily workout routine at the gym? *You may cut the time shorter or just take the stairs every time you can. You may even decide to take a hiatus for a couple of weeks.*
- An upcoming special event that you know will heavily tax you this month? *Perhaps you will cancel it or delegate it to others.*



Wow. You just freed up 2-4 hours every week for several weeks in a row! That's what I call **'margin'**. It's 'flex' time that is specifically set aside to focus on the things that are Important, but not necessarily or urgent. What if you knew you had at least 2-3 hours every single week that was solely dedicated to thinking and planning? What if you had time to think and focus on the various problems that you generally ignore each week, but wish you didn't have to?

Here's the problem: Most of us don't prioritise 'margin'. We read books, watch seminars and go to conferences that remind us that we should set time aside in our weekly schedule to dream, plan and problem-solve, but rarely do we actually set that time aside. The 'Tyranny of the Urgent' keeps us off balance. Our lives stay unfocused. We have become semi-comfortable with being overwhelmed and overworked.

Margin isn't something that shows up in our calendars all by itself. It's planned. It's prioritised. It's meticulously protected; but you DO HAVE WHAT IT TAKES to build margin into your life. You just need one key ingredient and it's yours for the taking: ***You need to change your priorities.***

Somehow, you've convinced yourself that everything you're doing this week and next week and the weeks after are more important than several hours of strategic planning. I know they aren't more important. *Note: I didn't say the things you do aren't important, I said they aren't AS important.*

Don't believe me? *Let's participate in a short exercise to find out. Let's pretend for a moment that a great and respected businessman or leader called you out of the blue this week and told you that he or she would be willing to meet with you, privately, once a week for the next month for a few hours. Perhaps it would be someone like Richard Branson or Nelson Mandela. Think of the person you would absolutely love to spend time with for a while. You know where this is going . . . would you be able to reorganise your life and schedule to accommodate them?*

If you answered 'yes' then you just proved my point. The fact is that you may actually get MORE out of a few hours of focused planning and prioritisation each week for the specifics of your work/career than you would in meeting with these highly respected and seasoned leaders!

Steal 15 minutes from your schedule RIGHT NOW to build margin into your schedule. Cancel, reschedule, shift and reorganise whatever you need to. I know you won't regret it.

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<http://www.transformingleader.org/2011/09/time-management-101-margin-matter-of.html>