

ACTION PLAN

ADVICE FROM JEFF DAVIDSON, AT YOUR BEST
ADVISOR AND AUTHOR OF BREATHING SPACE

Creative Alternatives

For each of us, the time pressures increase with each passing year. We all want to do more with our time. And the best way to do more while experiencing less stress is to take control of your time. Here's how:

▲ **1. Have somebody waiting for your project.** You usually meet or come close to most of the deadlines you face at work. It's human nature that when someone is waiting for your work, the probability increases that you will deliver it in a timely manner.

Without creating any extra pressure on yourself, you can create a situation like that in every arena of your life, from personal and social to professional. All you have to do is appoint a prod who lets you know that you're not the only one seeking completion.

▲ **2. Create an open-ended time span.** The completion time for new activities cannot always be accurately estimated (unless you have a deadline!). When possible, leave an open-ended time span. Adopt the attitude, "I'm going to start at X o'clock and continue until finished."

By operating this way, your mission becomes successful completion of your task—not battling the clock. And you'll be surprised to find that you often finish sooner when approaching tasks this way—with energy to spare.

▲ **3. Hide the clock.** Hiding the clock is one way of ensuring an open-ended time span. When something is important but not urgent, hiding the clock enables you to harness your own internal rhythms and energy flow. You can engage fully in the task, and gain mastery of time.

▲ **4. Use total immersion.** When you have an urgent or important task, resolve that no disturbances in completing it will be tolerated. You could barricade yourself in a room and post a "Do Not Disturb" sign; take the far cubbyhole on the top floor of the library; or find any other remote location without distractions.

Use total immersion for pleasurable activities, too. During a day's outing, leave your watch at home, don't bring a newspaper or book, and refuse to talk shop with anyone.

At Your BEST

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PURPOSE: To provide authoritative, useful, easy-to-understand information that will help our readers reduce stress, be more energetic and balance the demands of home and work.

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