

## ACTION PLAN

ADVICE FROM JEFF DAVIDSON, *At Your Best*  
ADVISOR AND AUTHOR OF *BREATHING SPACE*

### Let Yourself Have Some Breathing Space

How many of you feel perpetually overwhelmed? Then consider this: The biggest obstacle to getting some breathing space in your life is probably an unwillingness to *allow yourself* to have it. And that's too bad, because every shred of wisdom on the issue that I've ever encountered indicates that you'll be more effective each day if you simply pause for a few extra minutes—when back from the watercooler or restroom, before leaving for lunch, when returning from lunch. You get the idea.

Seven hours and 50 minutes of work, plus 10 one-minute rest breaks is a lot more productive than 8 solid hours of work. To insist on proceeding full-speed throughout the day without giving yourself time to clear your mind all but guarantees that you won't be as effective as those who do.

Some of the most productive and energetic people in history learned how to pace themselves effectively by taking time outs each day. Thomas Edison would rest for a few minutes any time of the day when he felt his energy level dropping. Buckminster Fuller worked in cycles of three or four hours, slept 30 minutes, then repeated the cycle.

So, if you can't take a flat-out nap, at least give yourself 10 strategic minutes a day to recharge. Be aware of your periods of low alertness—for most people that's between 2 and 4 p.m.—and time your breaks to meet those lows.

If you're already swamped by the challenges you face today, wait till tomorrow! Give yourself permission now to have breathing spaces throughout your day.

## 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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