

## The Dynamic Bargain

What happens when the boss comes in and hands you a 5-inch stack at 3:45 P.M.? Or when you get a FAX, an e-mail message, or a notice that upsets your plans for leaving work on time?

Rather than treat a project that gets dumped in your lap late in the day as an intrusion, view it as something else. Consider: You got the project because you were trusted, accomplished, or, in some cases, simply there. Unless you work for Attila the Hun, though, no one realistically expects you to pick up the ball at 3:45 and have it all wrapped up by 5 P.M.

So how do you set new boundaries under these circumstances—and how can you anticipate unexpected events? The answer: Strike a dynamic bargain with yourself. Throughout each day, assess what you've accomplished and what more you want to accomplish. Then strike a bargain. Suppose it's 2:15, and there are three more items you'd like to finish before the day ends. Ask this magic question: "What would it take for me to feel good about ending work on time today?" This phrase gives you the freedom to feel good about leaving on time, because you've stated exactly what you need to accomplish to feel good about leaving on time.

Now, suppose you have three items yet to do when the boss drops a bomb on your desk. You automatically get to strike a new dynamic bargain with yourself. Your new bargain may include making sufficient headway on the new project, or accomplishing two of your previous tasks and X percent of this new project. Whatever drops on your lap, continually strike a dynamic bargain with yourself so that you can leave the workplace on time—feeling good about what you've accomplished.

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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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