

CREATING SPACE & TIME

How to Have More Time for the Things that REALLY Matter to You!

Brought to you by
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at Incline Coaching

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Would you answer “Yes” to any of the following statements?

- *“I have too much to do and not enough time to do it in!”*
- *“I feel like I don’t have enough time for myself and my family!”*
- *“I work long hours and STILL don’t get everything done!”*
- *“My to-do list just keeps getting longer and longer!”*
- *“I haven’t had a vacation in a long time; there’s just SO much to do!”*

If so, you are in good company. Being overworked and overwhelmed are common complaints for today’s busy professionals. These feelings of desperation have many people looking at time management solutions. They feel that if they could just find a way to manage their time better, they could get everything done and have more time for themselves, their loved ones and the things that really matter to them.

I believe that the term “time management” is really a misnomer. We can’t really manage time – we all have the same number of hours in a day, week, or month. And time passes regardless of what we do or how we feel about it. So, what we want to manage is actually not time, but our lives. So, in my opinion, time management is really life management.

There is a story which has often been told by Stephen Covey, the author of “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” In his seminars, he would bring out a large glass jar, along with some fist-sized rocks. He’d place all of the rocks into the jar and then ask the seminar participants if the jar was full. After some of them said yes, he’d take out a container full of pebbles and pour them on top of the big rocks. Again, he’d ask if the jar was full and more students would affirm that it was. So he’d then pour a container full of sand into the jar containing the big rocks and the pebbles. After asking once again if the jar were full and hearing a unanimous yes, he would pour a large glass of water over all of the other items in the jar, without spilling any of it. Upon completion of the exercise, he would ask for the moral of what had just happened. The most common answer he’d hear would be, “If you really work at it, you can always fit more into your life.” Stephen would then reply, “No, that’s not it. The moral is that if I didn’t put the big rocks in first, I wouldn’t have been able to get them in.”

We can learn a lot about life management from that simple illustration. Often, when we feel that we don’t have time for certain things in our lives, such as exercise, reading, or spending time with our friends and families, it is because we try to include those activities as an “afterthought.” We rationalize that only **AFTER** we get the items on our to-do list done, we can engage in what we consider to be leisure activities. And, as could be imagined, the to-do list just keeps getting longer and longer and the “free” time keeps getting put off again and again and again.

Where have we gone wrong? Much like if Covey had put the pebbles and the sand in the jar **BEFORE** including the large rocks, we’ve failed to place the “big rocks” in the jar of our lives before including the constant demands of our days. So, we need to heed Covey’s advice and put the “big rocks” in first. So what **ARE** the “big rocks” of our lives? Many people today are turning to life coaches to help them with this question and the answer varies from person to person. For most of us, the “big rocks” include our families, our friends, taking care of our bodies and our spirits, and growing our minds.

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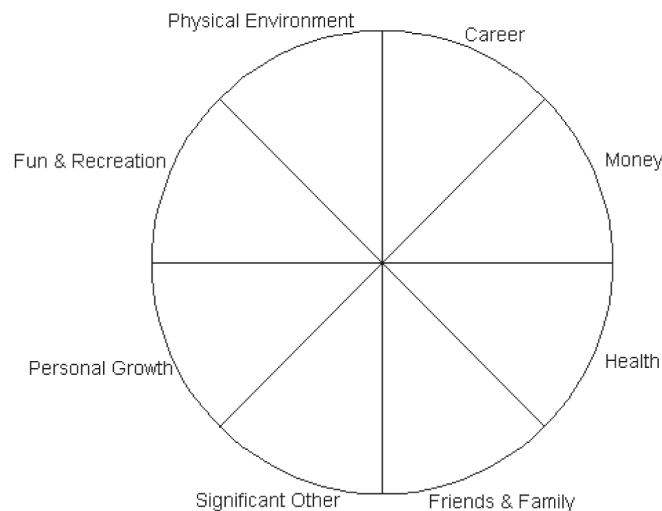
Before we move on to discuss the “big rocks” in greater depth, I’d like to back up a bit and ask you an important question. Obviously, you were interested in this special report for a reason. The title “Creating Space and Time” was compelling for you in some way. Like many people, you likely wish that you had more “free time.” So, my question for you is:

WHY do you wish you had more time? What would you like to do with the extra time?

The answer to that question is critical, so please take a few minutes to consider it and write your answers down. Be as specific as possible about **WHAT** you would like to do with any “extra” time you could possibly attain:

Okay, you should now have a clearer picture of what compels you to wish for more time and what you would like to do with any “found” time you acquire as a result of this workbook. So, let’s go back to the “big rocks.” I will tie everything back together at the end of the workbook, so please just play along with me for now...

Let’s look at Life Balance for a moment. To help illustrate this concept, think of your life as a big circle divided into eight sections. Each section represents one key area of your life, as shown in the diagram below:



This diagram, called the Wheel of Life, within the coaching profession, is used as an assessment of one’s level of fulfillment and balance. Although, we can only touch the tip of the iceberg in a workbook scenario, please complete this assessment for YOUR life using the following instructions:

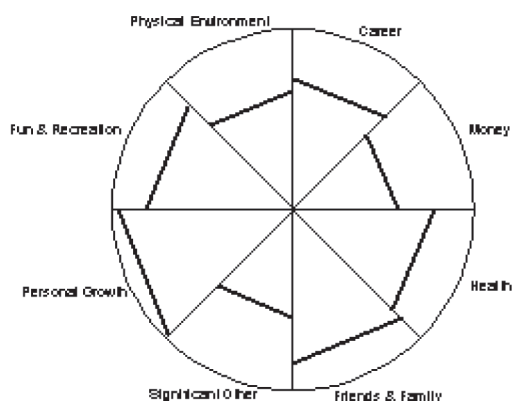
***Even if you’ve done this exercise before, it’s good to look at your life balance about every six months or so to see where you’re at and where you’re going.**

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For each section, rate your level of fulfillment in that area of your life between zero (0) and 10. A zero rating (represented by the center of the wheel) would mean that you are completely dissatisfied with that area of your life, while a 10 rating (represented by the outer edge of the circle) would mean that you are SO happy with that area of your life that you could hardly imagine it getting any better. Your finished wheel will look something like this:



If the wheel above were one of the wheels on your car, how bumpy would the ride be?

A person with roughly equivalent scores in each area would likely be experiencing what could be described as a "balanced life." However, most people find that they are more fulfilled in some areas than others and that, perhaps, some key areas of their lives have been overlooked during recent years. In any event, this assessment gives us a good idea of your current situation and a starting point for creating powerful change in your life.

Now that we have a better idea of how things ARE, the next place to look is how you WANT things to be. For each key area of your life, answer the following question:

"What would make me happy in this area of my life?"

Come up with 1-2 goals (**no more than two!**) for each area. These goals can be very specific (i.e. "I weigh 135 pounds and have less than 20% body fat") or more "high-level" or big picture goals (i.e. "I am in optimum health" or "I have a fulfilling career").

Physical Environment (your home and office):

Career:

Money:

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Health:

Friends and Family:

Significant Other / Romance:

Personal Growth / Spirituality:

Fun and Recreation:

To help get you started, here are a few examples of possible goals:

Career: *"I am running my own successful consulting business."*

Fun and Recreation: *"I take a 2-week trip to an exotic foreign location every year."*

Friends and Family: *"My relationships add to the quality of my life and do not drain me."*

Money: *"I earn over \$100,000 per year and save 15% toward my retirement."*

If you have trouble coming up with goals in one or more areas, you might want to try "fast-forwarding" ahead 5 or 10 years and asking yourself how you want that area of your life to be.

It is CRITICAL that you write your goals down! Why? Those who write their goals down are MUCH more likely to achieve them. In a well-known study of the Yale graduating class of 1953, it was found that only 3% had written out their goals for the future. Twenty years later, that 3% had achieved more wealth than the remaining 97% combined! They also reported a much higher level of happiness and satisfaction in their lives. How did that happen? Well, the prevailing thought is that the group with written goals began to **ATTRACT** that which they needed to achieve their goals. I could write much more about this, but suffice it to say that it is very important to not only write your goals down but to review them frequently as well.

Now that you have come up with some positive and compelling goals for each key area of your life, **the next step is to come up with a few critical actions which you can take to move you closer to your goals. This is important because you don't DO a goal; you can only do an activity.**

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For each goal you have set for yourself above, ask:

“What are 1-2 actions I can take in the near future to help me achieve this goal?”

(If you have only set 1 goal in a given area, leave the space for Goal #2 blank)

Physical Environment

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Career

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Money

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Health

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Friends & Family

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

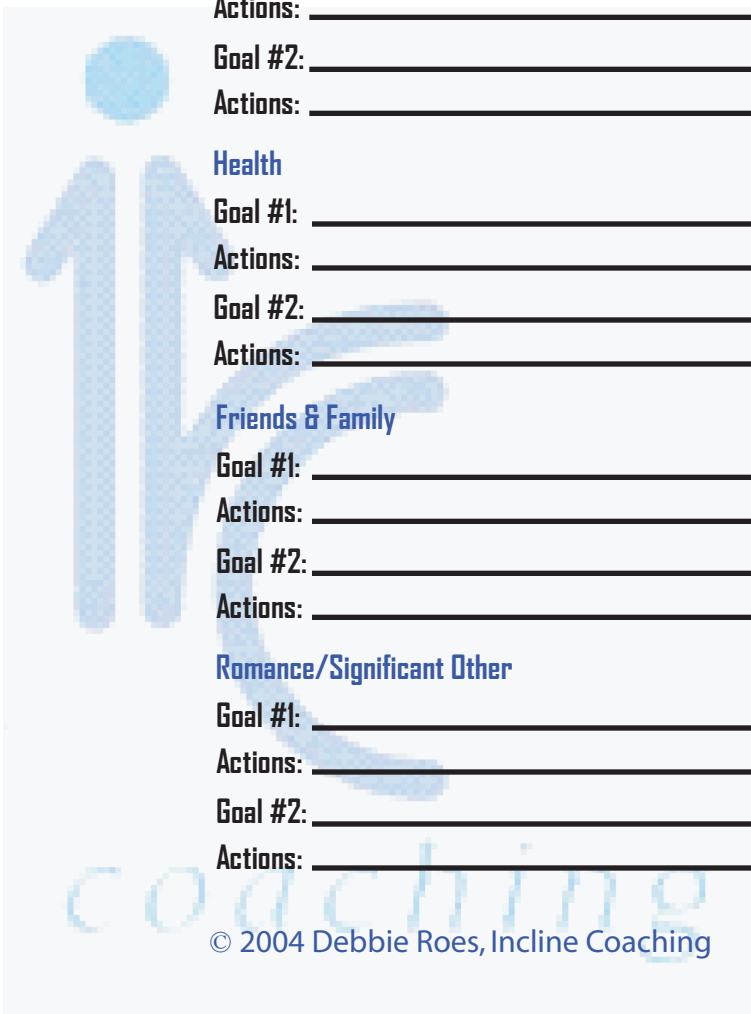
Romance/Significant Other

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____



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For each goal you have set for yourself above, ask:

“What are 1-2 actions I can take in the near future to help me achieve this goal?”

(If you have only set 1 goal in a given area, leave the space for Goal #2 blank)

Personal Growth/Spirituality

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Fun & Recreation

Goal #1: _____

Actions: _____

Goal #2: _____

Actions: _____

Here are a few examples of actions you could include for the following goals:

Goal: Lose 15 pounds

Actions: Exercise 3 times per week, Eat 5 servings of vegetables per day

Goal: Fulfilling career

Actions: Investigate possible career options, take classes in areas of interest

Goal: Exciting and solid marriage

Actions: Weekly date night, quarterly weekends away

Although you will achieve your goals more rapidly with the simple, yet powerful, process of writing these actions down on paper, many people find that working with someone – a friend, family member or coach – helps to speed up the process because, in working with a “life-balance partner,” you become more accountable for following through on the actions you have outlined.

One major key in finding the right partner for these exercises is to look for the following qualities:

- A. They are willing and excited to help you achieve your dreams.
- B. They are unbiased in their opinions of your choices.
- C. They are not judgmental of your goals.

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Before we move on to incorporating the actions you have specified into your life, there is one more area which I would like to cover. Often, when people get busy, overworked and overwhelmed, they either forget what it is they love to do or they consider fun a luxury that they just don't have time for. This is both sad and unnecessary! So, one of the first things I work on with my clients is getting them in touch with the activities or pastimes that bring them pleasure and joy. Here are a couple of questions to get you thinking and hopefully increase your awareness about this issue:

1. What do you REALLY love to do? That is, what brings you LOTS of joy and pleasure in life?

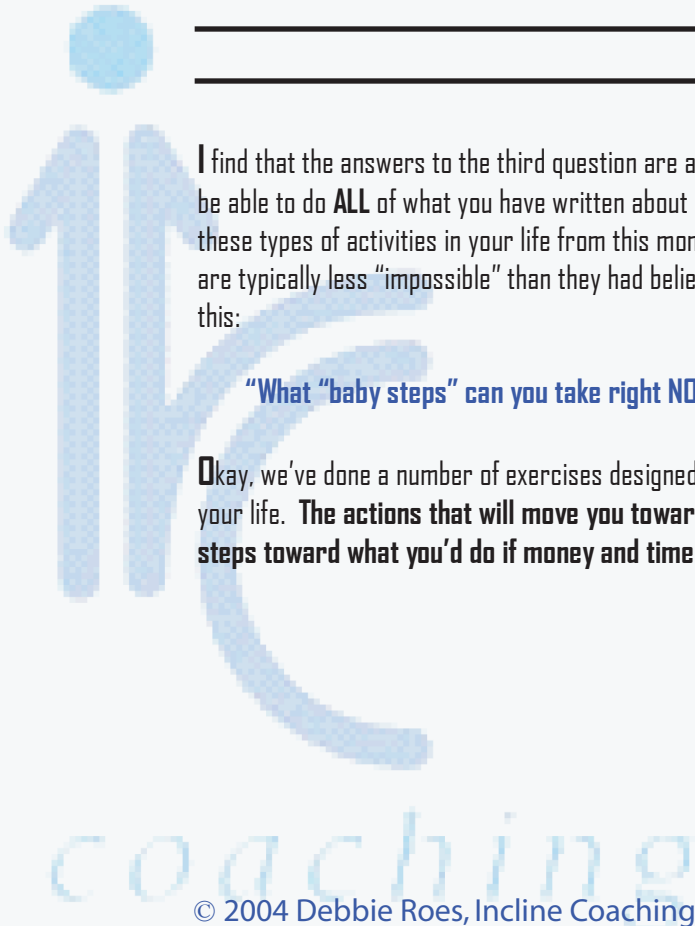
2. What have you always wanted to do or try but have never found time for?

3. If money or time were no object, what would you do?

I find that the answers to the third question are always very interesting and enlightening. Although you may not be able to do **ALL** of what you have written about **NOW**, it's possible to start taking "baby steps" toward including these types of activities in your life from this moment onward. What people often consider to be "pipe dreams" are typically less "impossible" than they had believed upon further investigation and introspection. So I ask you this:

"What "baby steps" can you take right NOW to start including the activities from above in your life?"

Okay, we've done a number of exercises designed to help you understand what you **REALLY** want in all aspects of your life. **The actions that will move you toward your goals, the activities that bring you joy and the baby steps toward what you'd do if money and time were no object are the BIG ROCKS of your life!**



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Now that you know what your **BIG ROCKS** are, let's look at **HOW** to incorporate them into your busy life.

Yes, you need to **SCHEDULE** them! Now you may be thinking "I don't have a **MOMENT** to spare in my busy schedule." So here are some ways to clear some time:

1. **Let go of what does not serve you:** Write down all of the activities that command your time. Include all club/association meetings, work-related activities, and personal chores/responsibilities. Then ask yourself the following questions:
 - What feels like a **CHOICE** and what feels like a **SHOULD** (something that you **HAVE** to do, but don't necessary **WANT** to do)?
 - If all of my activities and responsibilities were taken off my plate, which would I **WILLINGLY** add back? Assume that there would be no repercussions for **NOT** adding them back and no one would be upset with you.

If something feels like a "should" or you would not willingly choose it again, consider letting it go, especially if it does not serve you or your "higher purpose" (what you feel you were put on this earth to do). It may be not be easy to let things go, but the rewards from doing so can be well worth it! However, if there is something that you feel you cannot or don't want to let go of (certain relationships, such as a marriage or parenthood, could fit into this category), try to find a way to change your perspective around it so that it feels like less of a burden. Perhaps what you need to let go of is your attachment to what certain people say or do to you (as Don Miguel Ruiz says in "The Four Agreements," don't take anything personally – easier said than done, but achievable over time). Or, in certain cases, limiting your interactions with a person could help in having the relationship feel like less of a "should" and a downer for you.

There are some situations to which the above does not apply. It is true that there are some things that **MUST** be done, but do they have to be done by **YOU**? See below for more on this...

2. **Outsource or delegate:** For those items that feel like "shoulds" but still **MUST** get done, look at the possibility of either delegating them to others or outsourcing these activities. **Many of us think that there is no one to delegate to, but this is often not the case. Even those of us who are self-employed or on strict budgets can outsource certain tasks to experts or other often overlooked professionals, such as virtual assistants or student interns** (I, myself, recently hired a college intern to help me one day per week). And it often costs much less than we would have thought! **Stop spending time to save money**, especially when someone else could complete the task in much less time than it would take for you to do it (and possibly do a much better job on it, too)! **Instead, spend money to save time and increase your abundance!**

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- 3. Distinguish between Important and Urgent:** In "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Stephen Covey writes about putting "first things first." This basically means to organize and execute around your priorities. In order to do this, it is important to be aware of how you use your time. To increase time awareness, Covey introduces the distinction between **urgency** and **importance**. **Urgency pertains to that which requires immediate action or attention, while importance relates to results - that which contributes to fulfilling your highest goals.** Many of us spend the majority of our time engaged in urgent activities. While some of these activities are also important (such as crises and problem-solving), a large proportion of them are **NOT** (such as interruptions, many calls and meetings, and the "pressing matters" of others). The latter are the types of activities which can and should be avoided in order to make time for what is really important to you.

To help increase your awareness, ask yourself the following questions before mindlessly attending to what seems to be a necessary item: Is it urgent? Is it important? Even if the answer to the first question is yes, avoid the activity if you answer no to the critical second question! A weekly meeting with your life-balance partner to discuss the events of the past week can help you to become more aware of the choices you are making and to change these choices as you move forward on your path.

Hopefully the strategies above have not only helped you to clear some extra time and space in your life, but have also served to lessen your feelings of overwhelm and burden. Now it's time to schedule the BIG ROCKS in your life! When I say "schedule the "big rocks," I mean just that! Add them to your planner (you do use a planner - either a paper-based or online version - don't you?) and honor them as you would honor appointments with your boss or your best customer. After all, what more important commitment is there than one you make to the **MOST** important person in your life - **YOURSELF!**

It's best to plan your activities on a weekly, rather than daily, basis. Weekly planning provides more of a context in terms of scheduling your priorities and providing balance in your life over time. **The key, according to Stephen Covey, is NOT to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.** And your priorities are the "big rocks" which you have determined through the exercises in this workbook.

Planning on a weekly basis does not mean that the unit of the DAY doesn't matter. It is helpful to review your schedule either first thing in the morning or the night before to make sure you are aware of your commitments and that you are on track in terms of executing around priorities. **One thing which I find helpful is to list 3 personal MUSTs and 3 business MUSTs each workday.** The MUSTs can be small, such as calling or emailing a friend, or they can be larger (but keep them to a manageable size so that they are achievable), but the key is that they are **IMPORTANT** - that is, they serve to advance your highest goals. The MUST lists are useful because, when accomplished, they lead to a feeling that one's day has been a success, regardless of whatever else happens that day.

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Here are some additional tips which you might find helpful in terms of creating more space and time in your life:

- **Schedule time, not tasks:** If you choose to adopt the MUST list concept mentioned above, it is a good idea to schedule a specified amount of time to work on a task, rather than to say that you will complete a given task. We are often unsure how long it will take to accomplish something and it is common to underestimate the time to completion. If you say you will work on a task for an hour, for example, you can definitely schedule this in and achieve your objective.
- **Follow you energy:** We all have certain times of the day when we are more alert and function at our peak. Notice when your energy is highest and schedule your key tasks during this time-frame if possible. Use the other times of the day to work on items which require less brain power or vigor, or get some rest or relaxation during low-energy periods.
- **Include fun in every day!** Make sure that you have something to look forward to every single day! This can be something small, such as watching a favorite TV program or reading to your child. But make sure that at least one element of fun is incorporated into every single day of your life!
- **Be gentle with yourself:** It takes at least 3 weeks to adopt a new habit, so don't be too hard on yourself if you don't see immediate changes as a result of this workbook. Review your commitments to increase awareness and make changes as needed to your goals or your schedule. Discuss this aspect with your life-balance partner and remind them that for the first three weeks, you will need them for support and even "cheerleading!"
- **Don't be a slave to technology!** Minimize time spent checking email, surfing the internet, talking on the phone, or watching television. These activities can be real "time sinks" and can get in the way of your accomplishing your highest goals. Use technology as the wonderful tool that it is, but don't let it run you!
- **Allow yourself plenty of breaks:** Don't book yourself so tightly that there's no room for error. Make sure to actually include "buffer time" in your schedule. Only book appointments for important activities and leave space in between for some down time.

If you are reading this paragraph, let me be your first cheerleader. Congratulations! You have taken a big step in creating a more joyful and rewarding life for yourself! Although this small task may seem too simple to have a real impact, start watching for the little changes that you have created. In the study of chaos theory, even one small, seemingly insignificant particle of dust can re-order the entire universe!

I hope that you have found this workbook helpful and that you are now feeling a renewed sense of freedom around your relationship with time. I also hope that you have an increased sense of awareness around what's **REALLY** important to you and that you are incorporating those priorities into your life on a regular basis, while eliminating or minimizing time spent on time wasters and unimportant activities.

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Dear Space & Time Traveler,

If you have any questions regarding the information in this workbook, please feel free to contact me. Also, if you would like a partner on your journey to having a balanced life, consider working with a life-balance coach geared toward helping people achieve both professional success AND personal happiness and fulfillment. I would be happy to schedule a free consultation with you to determine your needs, see if we are a good match for each other and discuss how you might start on the path toward creating a new paradigm of freedom, balance and joy in your life.

Check out my website at www.inclinecoaching.com for more **FREE RESOURCES**, including my **monthly electronic newsletter, "The Balancing Act."**

Best of luck to you!

In balance and joy,



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