



**This Is Your Life Podcast**

Season 8, Episode 6

Published: July 25, 2016

Michael Hyatt

**Michele Cushatt:** Welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to help you win at work and succeed at life. My name is Michele Cushatt. I'm your cohost today, and joining me in our conversation is Michael Hyatt. Hey there, Michael.

**Michael Hyatt:** Hey, Michele. Good to hear your voice.

**Michele:** Same to you.

**Michael:** Thank you.

**Michele:** As you know, Michael, we've been friends for a long time, and when my third son Jacob was in high school, he was a cross country runner, so he was running long distances every single day, and I can't even tell you how many races I went to. However, at one particular event, I remember very, very clearly, my son Jacob went to the race determined to run his fastest race ever.

I've just never seen him so determined. He ate the right breakfast. He got the right sleep. He showed up early. He stretched out. He did everything right. However, when the gun went off, he took off running so quickly, and as strong and fast as he took off, that ended up being more of a problem than he realized. What happened was he burned out very quickly. He ran so hard and fast right when the gun went off, but by the time he was a mile or two from the finish, he ran out of steam.

Here he started off determined to get his best time ever, and the end result was that he actually lost ground. He didn't get a terrible time, but it was not one of his best times. I remember thinking that day how true that is for so many of us. We end up setting out to be successful, and we think that running fast and hard is the means to success. Actually, the exact opposite is what ends up happening. Have you ever been in that situation?

**Michael:** Oh my gosh. You know, so many times. In fact, it seems like I have to relearn this lesson every couple of years. A couple of years ago, I was in a very, very busy season in my life. I ended up having three surgeries in one month, one on each of my eyes, and then I had a hernia surgery. None of them were really major, but they take their toll on you.

One of the things I was recently told by a doctor is that for every hour you're out with anesthesia, it takes about a week to recover. During that same time, I launched my new course, *5 Days to Your Best Year Ever*. It was new at that time, and it was a much bigger launch than we had anticipated, and it just took a lot more out of us.

I also had a speaking engagement that same month, just a lot of things. For days on end, I was working 10-12 hours a day, which is something I loath to do. I just realized the very same thing your son realized, and that is, "This isn't sustainable. I'm going to burn out." I think a lot of people go through that kind of experience or a similar kind of experience.

Sometimes it happens around the holidays. Sometimes it happens when we start a new job or bring home a new baby. It could be any number of things, transitional times. It's times when we get really worn out, and it's just crazy. We know we need to slow down, and it's tough.

**Michele:** It is so tough. We forget that finishing the race, whether it's an actual race or whether it's our careers or whatever it may be, is really more about pace than speed.

**Michael:** Yes, totally. If you're committed to being in it for the long haul and, as we say, winning at work but really winning at life, you have to have a long-term pace so you can make it through this marathon we call life.

**Michele:** There is an excellent book on margin. I know you've read it. I've read it as well. It's by Richard Swinson. He described margin like this. "Margin is the space between our loath and our limits. It is the amount allowed beyond that which is needed. It is something held in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations. Margin is the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating." I'm guessing right now, Michael, that there are more than a few people listening right now who feel like they're suffocating.

**Michael:** Yeah, no doubt. You know, it's interesting. That word *margin* is kind of a metaphor, right? It's a simile or whatever. In the book publishing world, as you know, one of the things they try to do is allow margins in books. The type doesn't run to the end of the page. You try to have what is called letting, the space between lines of text, so that it breathes, so people don't feel like... It can feel claustrophobic almost.

The same thing is true in our lives. There has to be space in our lives where we can just breathe. Otherwise, we start to shut down. Margin is not only important in publishing, but it's really important in life as well. That's what I think most people who are listening to this feel like. "If I could just get some more margin, some more breathing room..."

**Michele:** I wonder too. We'll get into content here in just a second, but I wonder too if, especially currently in our current culture, that we really have eliminated all white space. Even

when we have white space, we fill it up with our iPhones and social media and everything else. It's very rare for any of us to just sit and not be doing something at the same time.

**Michael:** Yeah, I think part of that is because there is a biochemical response in our brains. There is almost this subtle dopamine reward when we check in on Facebook or check our email, and we have another message. It's a lot easier than actually doing work. It's a kind of entertainment, but I think we're the first generation in history that has had that temptation.

I remember when I first started my career, we didn't have computers. We didn't have phones. I just think, "What did we fill our time with?" I'll tell you one thing. I spend a lot of time reading. I spend a lot of time in conversations, and I fight for that stuff now. It's much more difficult to come by.

**Michele:** It is. Absolutely. Well, today, we're going to talk about six ways you can build more margin into your life and reclaim your free time. That's what we want for you. If you're at that place that I'm certain probably the vast majority of you listening are... You feel like you're suffocating. You're just overwhelmed with constant tasks and to-do's and so many things filling up the white space of your life.

We want to help you identify six ways you can reclaim that white space for yourself. Before we get started, I would just like to say it's critical. This is not really optional. If you want to make it to the end of your race and run it well, you're going to have to pace yourself. I've learned the hard way. Michael, I know you've learned the hard way. Let's try to be intentional today about doing something different. Let's get started. What is the first way to reclaim your free time?

**Michael:** I think the first way is just a big dose of reality, *to recognize that your current workload, your current load period is just unsustainable.* You know, breakthroughs rarely happen without a breakdown. You can either play the victim and just kind of drift along, acting like you don't have any agency, you can't really change it, you're just a hapless victim of your schedule and your calendar and all the rest and then wait for a breakdown; or you can be proactive and declare that you have to break down and admit this isn't sustainable.

I think that's a much easier way to do it. This period a couple of years ago, when I was in the situation where I was so overwhelmed and so busy, I finally just had to come to grips with the fact that, "This is not sustainable. I have to declare it." I told my assistant at the time, "Look, this is not sustainable. We have to do something. We cannot keep filling my calendar up with stuff like this for me to have any semblance of a healthy lifestyle or time for my family or time for my friends and the people who matter most."

The truth is, Michele, all of us are given 168 hours in a week. That's how much time we're given in a week, and it's no different for the president of the United States or the prime minister of someone else's country or for us. It is a zero-sum game. When we spend those

hours, they're gone. I think sometimes we keep saying yes to things without saying no, and they just keep stacking up. I don't know what we think we're going to do or where we think we're going to put those hours. There is always a cost. There's always a tradeoff.

**Michele:** Yeah, I heard somebody recently say to sleep one less hour a night. That has its own cost, right?

**Michael:** Totally. Yeah, absolutely. In fact, I have a friend right now, a very dear friend who just went through a big cancer scare. He did have cancer, and it was pancreatic. You know what that is like. It's really challenging.

One of the things the doctor said was, "If you have any hope of recovering from this, you have to find time to rest. You have to start sleeping more. You have to start sleeping better. You have to find margin in your life." Maybe for some of us, it's an annoyance or a frustration, but for some people, it's life and death. There will be consequences if we don't recognize that our pace is unsustainable.

**Michele:** Such an important truth because we tend to think we are capable of far more than what our bodies are really able to do. Having that reality check, like you said, to recognize that your current load is unsustainable is really the first step or the first way to reclaim your free time. What is the second way?

**Michael:** The second way is tough. It's *to acknowledge that the real problem is you.*

**Michele:** Now you're getting personal. Now I'm ticked off.

**Michael:** I know. Well, I think it's easy to think that the problem is out there. "It's the fault of all of the people who are trying to eat up my time," or, "It's my boss's fault," or, "It's my spouse's fault," or, "It's just the demands of my profession," or, "It's just this season of life," or whatever it is.

The truth is nobody is really holding a gun to your head and saying, "You have to commit to this thing." It may be that you have a fear of missing an important opportunity. It may be that you have a fear of disappointing other people. It may be that you have some other kind of fear that keeps you stuck in this area, but the real problem is us.

We're the ones who ultimately say yes. Even if it's an overbearing boss who is demanding more hours than we're really willing to give, it's very easy to play the victim and just say, "Look. This job just demands that." Let me tell you something. You can get out of that job.

You may not be able to do it this week. You may not be able to do it this year, but if you don't have an intention to change things, you're going to drift along, and it's going to get worse, not better. These things do not correct themselves on their own. You have to take a good long look

in the mirror and say, “I’m responsible. I’m the one who is saying yes. This can’t happen without my cooperation.”

**Michele:** Yeah, we forget sometimes that we have a choice. We end up feeling trapped by our situation or our decisions. We may feel... I mean, I can feel some of the objections because I’ve used them. “Well, I have to make money. I can’t afford not to do this. I can’t afford to lose my job.” We feel so trapped like the choice isn’t ours. The truth is we always have a choice.

**Michael:** We always have a choice. When those requests come to us, I think one of the most important things we can do... We learned this from Dr. Stephen Covey, and Greg McKeown reminds us of this in his book *Essentialism*. To put a pause between the request or the stimulus and our response so we’re not just answering off the cuff and saying yes when we would really like to say no or know we need to say no.

To create a pause there and take control and just say, “Wait a second. I’m going to make a decision here that is for my long-term success and for the good of my family and what matters most and reject those requests because they do stack up.” They will overwhelm us if we don’t do that.

**Michele:** All right. The first way to reclaim some of your free time if you’re crazy busy is to recognize that your current load is unsustainable. No matter how strong you think you are, you’re not Superman. You’re not able to sustain the current pace. The second way is to acknowledge that the real problem is you. This is tough because sometimes we want to be a victim of our circumstances, but we really have to own the fact that we’re the ones making these choices.

**Michael:** Well, here’s the good news about it too. Once we take responsibility, suddenly we feel the potential for freedom again. As long as the problem is out there and we can’t affect it and it’s somebody else doing this to us, then we’re just victims. Once we say, “Wait a second. I’m the one responsible. I’m the one who’s making these decisions. Guess what. I can make different decisions.”

Michele, I really want to emphasize this because I do think there are some people right now who are listening to this who are rolling their eyes and saying, “Well, you don’t know my situation.” Let me tell you something. I do know your situation. I’ve lived your situation, maybe not your exact situation, but I’ve been in a situation where I’ve had five small children, more mouths to feed than I had money, and working two jobs, doing my best, trying to feed everybody and keep a roof over our heads.

I understand what that’s like, but that doesn’t mean that has to be your destiny forever. The most important thing is to create a different intention, to say, “Okay, look. I’m in this situation because I’ve made these decisions.” Fine. There is no shame in that. I’m not trying to shame anybody by saying that. I’m just saying to own it and realize that from this point forward, you

can begin slowly. It may take a while, but you can begin to work yourself out of that situation. It's not any different than debt.

It would be real easy for those people who are in debt... Dave Ramsey has helped gazillions of people do this. It would be real easy to just kind of throw up your hands and say, "I'm doomed to paying off debt for the rest of my life, to always being in debt," or you could take a different tact and say, "No, I'm going to do something different. I want a different outcome," and start to make small, incremental changes that over time help you buy back or get back your freedom.

**Michele:** Absolutely. Without a doubt. It's so important. So far, we've talked about recognizing that your current load is unsustainable. The second way is to acknowledge that the real problem is you. This is not to bring you change but actually to bring you a sense of hope and freedom.

If the problem is external to you, that's kind of a hopeless situation, but when you realize that you are central to the problem here, that also means you can fix it. I'm hoping that as you're listening, you're feeling all kinds of freedom and hope at this point. What's the third way to reclaim your free time?

**Michael:** The third one (and we've talked about this on this show before) is *to develop an abundance mindset*. This is really the antidote to scarcity. This does more to combat fear than any other single thing you can do. It's really the key because different strategies, different productivity tools are not going to help you if your mindset doesn't change.

If you're still stuck struggling with fear, it doesn't really matter what strategies you have. You're still going to use them to lead to a bad consequence. Again, we've done episodes on this, but I think when that opportunity comes to you, it's real easy. For you and me, we live in this world where somebody wants us to speak or write, and we think, "Oh my gosh. If I don't say yes, that might go away."

**Michele:** "It's going to be the last opportunity I'm ever going to have." Yes, it does.

**Michael:** I know. That comes out of scarcity. "If I don't say yes to this..." I had an opportunity last week. A big magazine wanted to interview me. It had to be that one afternoon, and it was a terribly inopportune time, and I struggled with all of that same emotion of, "Gosh. I actually wanted to have a column in that magazine, and if I say no, that might blow that chance." I just had to take a long look in the mirror and say, "No, I can't do this."

I said to Suzie, "Nope. As much as I would love to do this, it's just not the right time, and I can't do it." Gail has this thing. We talked about this in abundance. Gail, my wife, has this thing she says whenever you pass on something like that. She said, "There's more where that came from." That's a mindset.

**Michele:** I'm so glad you said that because if you didn't mention Gail's words, I was going to. Over the last several weeks since we had this episode... We recorded an episode a month or two ago on this abundance mindset, I have thought of those words countless times. "There is more where that came from. There is more where that came from." Every time I think of those words, the pressure on my shoulders lifts. It's amazing.

**Michael:** Yes. And it's true. It's not like one of those affirmations that people use where they're making stuff up. You know, it's really true. Here's one of the affirmations I use when I think about just my life and about my workload. That's, "I currently have everything I need to be what God wants me to be and to do what he has given me to do today."

**Michele:** Today. Today. That is very true.

**Michael:** I may have to look for it. I may have to uncover it. I may have to go mining for it and excavate it. This is my faith journey, but I believe that what God has called me to he has equipped me for. When it comes to my schedule, I have everything I need. I can be thankful right now in the midst of it.

**Michele:** Right now. Develop an abundance mindset. That's the third way to reclaim your free time. We have three more to talk about. We've already talked about the first three, but before we get into the final three ways to reclaim margin and reclaim some of your sanity, we have an additional offering we wanted to mention right now, right, Michael? You have something for those who are interested in blogging, correct?

**Michael:** Yes, absolutely. My whole business has been built on blogging, as you know, but blogging is a powerful tool for any leader or for any business owner. A lot of folks just don't know how to get started. Either they never start a blog, or they don't start the most optimal way, so I created a resource to help solve that.

**Michele:** That resource I would like to mention is free. Tell us about it.

**Michael:** Yeah, absolutely. It's a set of easy-to-follow instructions and a screencast about how to self-host your blog, and it's a foundational tool for anyone who wants to start blogging or wants to take their blog to the next level by self-hosting it.

**Michele:** Let's talk about self-hosting a minute because I know there are some people listening who don't understand what a self-hosted blog is. Why don't you explain that.

**Michael:** Self-hosting allows you to tailor your website with a lot more freedom and efficiency. It also gives you true ownership of your site. Essentially, you're putting it on a server you rent. That sounds way more complicated than it is. It just means that the server is going to be out there in the cloud. You're going to have total control of it. You're going to have your own

domain name, which makes you really look like a pro, and the screencast makes all of that possible for you and explains it in detail.

**Michele:** It's not difficult to set up? Somebody like me could actually do it?

**Michael:** Not at all. It will only take 20 minutes. I take you through it click by click, keystroke by keystroke. All you need to do is go to [michaelhyatt.com/selfhost](http://michaelhyatt.com/selfhost) to learn how to do it, and when you sign up for the PDF instructions, you'll also get an email from me with a special discount on services with Bluehost, which is a great hosting provider for small and medium websites, and it's the top recommendation of WordPress itself.

**Michele:** I use Bluehost as well. Once again, you can get this free resource at [michaelhyatt.com/selfhost](http://michaelhyatt.com/selfhost), and we can sign up for that free screencast and the PDF instructions on self-hosting. We can get that special discount from Bluehost, which is your recommended hosting provider, correct?

**Michael:** Yes, absolutely.

**Michele:** Sounds like a great opportunity to start blogging right away.

**Michael:** Yeah. Again, it's just super easy. Anyone can get started. I've taken the work out of it. All you have to do is follow my instructions.

**Michele:** All right. Perfect. Well, I hope all of you take advantage of that. Now, let's get back to six ways to reclaim your free time. If you're crazy busy and completely overwhelmed, maybe feel like you're suffocating a little bit, Michael has six different ways today to help you kind of take ownership of your time and get back some of that free time that you're craving right now.

The first way he discussed was to recognize that your current load is unsustainable. The second way is that the real problem is you. That's hard to admit, but it's a great, freeing step here. The third way is to develop an abundance mindset. Just learn to say the words, "There's more where that came from." What's the fourth way to reclaim your free time?

**Michael:** The fourth way is *to create your ideal week*. Now, I want to start getting really practical here with some strategies you can use. This is something that has been the most helpful productivity tip, the best tip I've ever found for getting margin, and that's to create your ideal week.

What this means is that you're going to map out how you want to spend your time in your ideal week as if you had 100 percent control of your time. Now, I know and you know that that rarely happens, but when we have a template, so to speak, and we have it mapped out (I'm going to give an example here in a second), then all of a sudden, we can begin to approximate that ideal week and take back control of our lives and build in margin.

For example... I have a resource I'm going to lead people to here in just a minute. I do this in an Excel spreadsheet. Basically what I do is I map out day by day. I batch things together. For example, on Monday, that's my day for internal meetings. All of the meetings I have with my team, with my staff, Megan, my oldest daughter who is the CEO of the company. We just had lunch. That's our Monday activity because it's internal meetings.

I batch all of that together. Then on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, those are my days for either creating content or for delivering content. Insofar as we possibly can, we don't accept meetings on those days because my ideal week says that those are days dedicated to doing what is my unique ability and what is my primary role within my company, which for me is creating content and delivering it. It will be something different for everybody.

Then for me, Fridays are my days for external meetings. Anybody who wants to chat with me, have coffee, have lunch with me, whatever, those all get pushed to Friday. Again, this is the ideal week. We can't always do it, but we probably have it where it's about 90 percent of that. It used to be... Think about this, the alternative. Somebody would call, and they would say, "Hey, could we get together Wednesday afternoon?"

I would look at my calendar, and there was nothing there, so I would say, "Sure." Then I have all of these appointments spread throughout the week, and what that means is I lose focus. The distractions cause me to lose focus. One of the secrets to doing deep and important work that really has staying power is to be able to stay focused without interruption. I've created an ideal week that allows me to do that.

Another thing about my week... When I quit at 6:00 p.m., I'm done for the day. The evening is free time. My weekends are free time. My basic rule on the weekends... Again, occasionally, there is an exception, but my rule on the weekends is I don't talk about work. I don't read business related books. I don't think about work. Now, occasionally I think about work, but insofar as I can, I really try to occupy that time with relationships, with hobbies, with things that give me an opportunity to kind of reboot and refresh and rejuvenate myself.

That's the ideal week. The fun part about this is that you start with a blank slate. You start with a blank week, and you say, "Okay. Let's just imagine for a moment (as impossible as this may sound) that there is not a single commitment on this week. Let's imagine that I have 100 percent control. Where am I going to put stuff?" Then it becomes really fun to try to do that. Now, when I first did this, I said to my assistant...

At the time, this was back when I was at Thomas Nelson. I said, "Look. I don't want you to fall over here, but this is what I want us to move toward. I know we probably can't do this in the near term because I made a bunch of dumb commitments that don't have any rhyme or reason to them, but let's push out maybe several months, and let's start forcing all the requests that come in into this model if we possibly can. We may not always be able to do it." At that time, I had a boss. He didn't really care about my ideal week.

**Michele:** He didn't care that Friday was your only day to have meetings and lunches, right?

**Michael:** Yeah. And at the time, I liked my job, so I complied with him. In a minute, we'll get to what you can do about that. It was huge. It cleared up tons of the chaos in my life and made it so much easier.

For example, now, I'm actually speaking this weekend as a favor to one of my daughters, but I never take speaking engagements on the weekend anymore because I want to be free on my weekend. I don't want to be working on the weekend. Again, not everyone can do that, but I've really tried to design my life like I want it. It has been a multiyear project. That's an ideal week.

**Michele:** It kind of goes back to the second way we talked about where you really have to own the fact that you're kind of in charge of this. You're not the victim of your schedule; you own your schedule. Not to be black and white, like you said. It's not going to be 100 percent, but you're certainly not going to have the kind of schedule that helps you thrive if you're not intentional about it.

**Michael:** That's so true, absolutely true. Before I forget it, I want to give people the link. This will be in the show notes too. If you want the Excel spreadsheet I use, you can go to [michaelhyatt.com/myidealweek](http://michaelhyatt.com/myidealweek). If you don't have Excel or if that intimidates you, I also have a PDF at [michaelhyatt.com/myidealweekpdf](http://michaelhyatt.com/myidealweekpdf).

**Michele:** I know you would say this. There is no magic to the application you use, the software you use to make this happen. I use Google Calendar and Trello to really outline how I want to do it, and I communicate to my team so they know what days I do meetings and what days are creative days. It's not so much about the application, but if you need something to get started, that Excel spreadsheet is excellent. It's a great one to find.

**Michael:** You know, since you mentioned Google Calendar, that's how I actually did my most recent one. What I did was I created a separate Google Calendar, and I colored it gray. Then I did all of my idea appointments, so to speak, during that week, and I made them recurring appointments. Any time we want to switch that calendar on and compare reality to the calendar, we can do that.

**Michele:** Oh, that's a good idea.

**Michael:** Actually, I shouldn't say this, but I'm actually having a Google Calendar extension build that will allow you to display that ideal calendar under your appointments, and your appointments will be translucent, so you can see the ideal week under it.

**Michele:** Oh, that's so great. That would be great for a team approach too so your team can truly see how you want to spend your time as they're making appointments for you.

**Michael:** Definitely. It's like paint by numbers almost. You have the template there. All you have to do is fill in the blanks.

**Michele:** All right. The point of this fourth way to reclaim your free time is simply to create your ideal week. Let's be intentional. I like to sit down on Sunday nights or Monday mornings and really kind of outline what my week looks like. All you need to do is sit down once basically and figure out how you want your time to look. I would imagine that it's not so much about being nitty gritty about it but really setting blocks of time because the point is to be focused about how you're going to spend your time.

**Michael:** Yeah, that's exactly right. It's really important when it comes to free time because if you don't build that into your schedule, you're never going to have any. Your boss is not going to come in and just say, "Hey, you know what? I've noticed how hard you've worked. Why don't you just take some time off?"

**Michele:** That doesn't happen.

**Michael:** That just doesn't happen. If you own your own business, it really doesn't happen.

**Michele:** No because I never tell myself to take time off.

**Michael:** Yeah, exactly. There are always unfinished projects and more appointments and more business to do. The best way to do this is to actually build it in and block off time so that when somebody asks, you can say, "Oh, I have another commitment then." They don't have to know what it is, and most people won't ask. "I already have another commitment. What if we did it on Friday because that's my day for external meetings?"

**Michele:** Excellent. Well done. All right, so let's move on to the fifth way to reclaim your free time, which you've kind of hinted at, so it's a natural transition. Go ahead.

**Michael:** Okay, so you *have to enroll the people around you*. What I do is once I create the ideal week... I just revised mine last week and gave it to Suzie, my assistant, and I said, "Look, here is my ideal week now. I need your help." The reason I need Suzie's help is because she's much tougher about saying no than I am. I'm a total pushover. I shouldn't admit this in public, but if you get to me, I'll probably say yes.

**Michele:** I know. I'm the same way.

**Michael:** I just don't want to disappoint people. I truly want to be helpful, but Suzie is tougher, and she keeps perspective, and she doesn't care as much as I do about what people think of me. I mean that in the best possible way.

**Michele:** Yes, in the best way. Suzie is wonderful.

**Michael:** Yeah, and she's very gracious about it. But to enroll your assistant, even your boss... If you have a job or a board or a boss, to just say to them, "Look, I know you want me to be efficient and productive. Let me tell you what I'm going to try. I know this is not going to always be possible, so if there's an exception, by all means, call me, and we'll schedule it.

If it doesn't matter, would you mind if we met on Friday or if we had a phone conversation once a week rather than several during the week which just interrupts your day and keeps you from being productive?" One of the things I used to do back in the corporate world is I would have a one-on-one meeting with my direct reports so that I could consolidate all of the interruptions into a one-hour block.

That saved me from walking down the hall and constantly interrupting their workflow and pulling them out of deep work. But there were those occasions when I had to violate that, and that was fine, but I would always ask myself the question, "Can this wait until next week's one-on-one, or does it have to be now?"

**Michele:** Yeah, as you're talking, I was even thinking. As far as enrolling the people around you, what a reassurance it would even be to your family to see how you have blocked off time. They would know, "Dad is working extra hard Monday through Friday. He has blocked off this time for family," or Mom or whoever it is. Part of enrolling people is not just your coworkers or your boss or your assistant but also your family because this is the whole week, not just your work hours.

**Michael:** Yeah, absolutely. I find that I have to plan my time off as much or more than the time at work.

**Michele:** All right. Enroll the people around you. They can help you implement this. I think they can help you see ways that you are making decisions that aren't helping the overall goals. Sometimes we get stuck in our own mindset, and we need somebody outside. So enrolling people to help us is so important. What is the final way to reclaim our free time?

**Michael:** The final way is just *to put it into practice*. Just do it.

**Michele:** It sounds like common sense, but how many times do we come up with a plan and don't implement the plan?

**Michael:** Oh my gosh. This is where I think it does take a group. It does help if you have some accountability in your life. One of the things we've done in my company is we now have, believe it or not, 18 full-time employees. One of the things we've said is that one of our core values (we actually have this written down) is radical margin.

What that means is... Again, there are occasional exceptions, but we say we don't work on the weekends, and we don't work in the evenings. Don't send me messages unless it's an

emergency. We just had a brand new employee join us last week, and she said in Slack (we use Slack), “Really? Not on the weekends or not at night? We’re not going to communicate?”

We’re like, “Yeah. We’ve built in margin, and we’re in this for the long haul. We don’t want to burn people out.” You have to put it into practice. I think sometimes you have to establish those boundaries. Sometimes you just have to have, as we said, margin baked into your calendar so you take that time for the important things.

**Michele:** So important. All right. If you’re crazy busy and overwhelmed right now, we’ve given you six ways to reclaim your free time. These are not hard to do, but it does take intentionality. To begin, recognize that your current load is unsustainable. You cannot keep up this pace. Second, acknowledge that the real problem is you, but that also means you have the power and freedom to change it.

Third, develop an abundance mindset. Often, fear is the motivator that gets us in these tight situations when it comes to a lack of margin. Simply saying, “There’s more where that came from,” can set you free from that. Fourth, create your ideal week. Michael has given you a template you can download, an Excel spreadsheet that will help you to outline what your ideal week might look like.

Fifth, enroll the people around you. Sixth, most important, you have to actually put it into practice. If you and I are going to be effective over the long term, we have to create margin and pace ourselves. It’s that old saying that life is a marathon, not a sprint. It’s so important. We talk about this every day on the podcast, that your life is a gift.

If we’re going to make the most of that gift, we have to pace ourselves. Otherwise, we’ll burn out, and we’ll never finish our race. If you’ve enjoyed today’s episode, you can get the show notes and the full transcript at [michaelhyatt.com](http://michaelhyatt.com). Do us a favor before you go. I promise it will only take about 30 seconds.

Head over to iTunes and rate this podcast. It’s huge for us in terms of improving our rankings and keeping the show visible and getting the content to people who need it. Thank you ahead of time for helping us out in that way. Do you have any final thoughts today, Michael?

**Michael:** Yeah, I’m just thinking as we’re wrapping this up. I’m thinking of the person who feels overwhelmed, who is on the edge of burnout, who maybe has a really tough job or a really demanding family life. They’re kind of ready to throw in the towel. I just want to say to you that this too shall pass. It will pass a lot faster if you engage in the process.

You may not be able to change things tomorrow or this week, but little by little, you can work yourself into a much, much different situation. I want you to have hope. I don’t want you to give up. Margin is possible for everyone, no matter what your circumstances, and I promise it can be true for you.

**Michele:** That's wisdom. Thank you, Michael, and thank you, listener, for joining us today. We always enjoy spending time with you. Until next time, remember that your life, your one and only life is a gift. Now go make it count.