

■ QUIET TIME

One discipline that all great entrepreneurs practice is taking time on a regular basis to rise above the everyday demands of their work to reflect and think at the thirty-thousand-foot level.

To stay sharp, confident, and at your best for your people, you must take Quiet Times. By definition, a Quiet Time is time you schedule away from the office, out of the daily grind of running the department, to think and to work on your business, department, or self.

Stepping back to think will create clarity for you and restore your confidence. This is important because the normal course of day-to-day business pulls you deeper and deeper into the ocean of your work. As a result, you sometimes can't see the forest for the trees. You start to feel overwhelmed and you become short with your people.

MAKE THE TIME TO SAVE TIME.

Therefore, at intervals, you must elevate yourself above the day-to-day activities "in" the business so you can work "on" the business. Schedule an appointment with yourself. Put it down on your calendar. If you don't schedule the time, it will never magically happen. At first you may be concerned about when you'll find the time. The irony is, you'll actually save time by taking Clarity Breaks. When you are clear about your bigger objectives, you gain the confidence to simplify procedures and create efficiencies.

MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS AND ALLOW YOURSELF TO JUST THINK

Use this scheduled break wisely, though. This is not time to catch up on email or complete a to-do list. It's time to think, to see things clearly and restore your confidence. Faced with a blank legal pad or journal, with no agenda, no interruptions or distractions, you'll be challenged at first to actually think. Use these Quiet Time questions to get started..

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS:

- Is the Vision and Plan for the business/department on track?
- What is the number one goal?
- Am I focusing on the most important things?
- Do I have the Right People in the Right Spot to grow?
- What is the one "strategic move" that I must make this quarter?
- Am I effective in my position?
- If I lose a key player, do I have someone ready to fill the seat?
- Are my systems working well?
- What seems overly complicated that must be simplified?
- Do I understand what my direct reports truly love to do and are great at doing?
- Am I leveraging their strengths?
- What can I delegate to others in order to use my time more effectively?
- What can we do to be more proactive versus being reactive?
- What can I do to improve communication?
- What's my top priority this week? This month?

