

Marginal Error

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What is a marginal error? It's when you make a mistake that isn't a fatal error. It's like going over the white line on the road while driving but not hitting the ditch. So how does one make mistakes in life that won't ruin us? There are a couple of ways to do this.

The first is not to do anything risky. Stay safe. Stick with your job instead of doubling down on your side hustle. Eat the same thing you've always eaten; don't try the sushi. Dream about becoming a marathon runner, then turning the channel on TV. Many live this way. There's only one thing wrong with this plan. Without taking risks, you never exceed or experience anything GREAT.

Here's another way to approach life. Take calculated risks and create a margin in your life that keeps your schedule from exploding. By doing so, you can achieve the next level in life. The key is to create a cushion of time, money, and energy. I know this seems easier said than done but hang with me here. In the past, I did not rely on schedule and loved it. I was on my own time, dealing with all the fires that arose at any given time. I ate when I was hungry; I rode my horse when I had time; I worked out when I could fit it in. But, I'll be honest, I ate like crap, I didn't spend enough time in the saddle, and I was getting soft because I was too busy to work out. I wasn't doing anything for myself. It seemed that I was always tired, busy, and overwhelmed. Have you been there? Because I lived there for a long time.

So, what can you do to create margin in your life? First, carry a calendar or schedule. I know you have one on your phone, but does anyone consistently use it? Doubtful. Put every birthday, vacation, and appointment in there from here on out. Put the non-negotiables in pen and all the rest in pencil. Sometimes, schedules need to change, and this is where you keep flexibility. Second, carry a notebook. Every time you remember the things you need to do, write them down in your notebook. When you get it all out of your head, from grocery lists to birthday cards to send out and practices for the kids, you'll find yourself a little less distracted. And every little bit of space in our heads helps us sleep better at night and allows us to be present.

These rules about being present stuck with me:

- Be wherever your feet are.
- If you're at a kid's game, be there.
- If you're at a restaurant with friends, keep your phone in your purse or pocket. If you're in the barn cleaning stalls, enjoy the sounds and smells of the horses munching—one more thing: schedule a vacation.

I should not have to tell you this, but when was the last time you and your family took a vacation that didn't coincide with a work trip or something else? For me, it was a very long time. Even if it's a camping trip, a hiking trip, going to the beach. Do it, write it in pen, and book the plane tickets.

This next part is the hardest. Be flexible about some things but protect your top 5. What are your top 5? They are the things that keep your life within the boundaries. For me, It's getting a good night's sleep, eating healthy food, reading my bible, and being present with my husband and son. And finally, make sure the top 5 work goals made for the day were met. There will be days that don't go as planned and days you want to give up. There will be moments where you're late, and dinner is coming from a drive-thru, and you're in a massive argument with your spouse. These are momentary things. They will pass. Keep your head in the game, and keep rebuilding the margin in your life.

Margin is where you find peace and your internal batteries recharge. It is what makes this life worth living. Talk to any person over the age of 80; they will tell you their biggest regret is not doing what they wanted to do and being too busy. None of us are guaranteed another day on this Earth. Every time you open your eyes in the morning, you should be thankful that you have this moment. Feel it. Revel in it. Enjoy this day. Spend some time recognizing that you are breathing and feeling the dog cuddled up at your feet and the fact that you are alive—one more day. Create the margin, and the rest of life will fall into place. Then you can get to that next level.