

Each issue features a quick tool for improving your productivity and effectiveness. This time it's the STOP tool, one of many great ideas in Tim Gallwey's book *The Inner Game of Work*. And we also bring you...

The E-Coach

This is a challenging time for many people. With the launch of this e-newsletter, we offer you the opportunity to **ask the coach** questions about career strategy and other topics. We're a diverse group of business coaches who have coached professionals for over 9 years. We are happy to personally and confidentially answer any question you have on:



- Career strategy
- Leadership skills
- Coaching your team members
- Communicating well
- Planning skills
- Decision Making and Problem Solving
- Getting Things Done
- And, keeping life in balance

To Contact Catherine O'Donnell & Associates,
[E-mail us](#)
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Getting Things Done: STOP

Some days are hectic; there's too much to do and you're racing the clock. Working faster, skipping lunch, and working late will help you get it done. Adrenaline flows and you push and push. It's the right thing to do, right? Wrong. If you are feeling pressure - or are stuck, distracted, or worn out - **STOP**.

S - Step Back
T - Think
O - Organize
P - Proceed

The goal of the **STOP** is to return you to a conscious and productive state of being. A **STOP** will give you time to clarify, reenergize, and refocus. A **STOP** will help you go forward:

Step back. Put physical distance between you and the work, down-shift by physically moving, change your view in some way.

Think. Ask: What is needed? What is the purpose of this? What is the real problem? What is the most important thing to do right now? Am I doing the right thing?

Organize. Re-prioritize, remove clutter, make a plan, get the tools you need, prepare, and refocus.

Proceed. Re-start at a comfortable pace, regain momentum, keeping going as long as you have energy, clarity and focus.

How long to STOP?

A **short STOP** might do it. Even a few minutes, like a sports timeout, may be enough to step away, calm down, and take a fresh look at things. You may need just a little break, a few quiet moments to yourself, or time to confirm the purpose of what you're doing.

A **long STOP** may be needed. A totally work-free weekend, a strategic thinking retreat, or a vacation. You know what you need, and we all need time to relax, re-energize, and expand our perspectives so that we can take in new information.

When to STOP?

An Emergency STOP is needed when you are rushing; making mistakes; or feeling stressed, fatigued, or like the victim. Call a time out no matter where you are, what you are doing, or who else is involved.

Three a day **Scheduled STOPs** will help avoid the emergency STOP.

1. **At the start of your day** to evaluate, prioritize, and commit to what you want for this day.
2. **Midday** to check your progress, take a break to reenergize, and refocus on priorities.
3. **At the end of the workday** for closure with a clear end to separate work from the rest of your life. De-clutter, organize, reflect on the day, make reminder notes for tomorrow, and acknowledge your accomplishments. Tomorrow is a brand new day and you will be ready for it.

Practice **STOP** and you will find that the payoff is huge. You will get more done will feel better about yourself, your work, and your life.

For more information about Catherine O'Donnell and Associates, please see www.catherineodonnellandassociates.com.