

Add margins to your life



You need margin to think. You need margin to play. You need margin to laugh. You need margin to dream. You need margin to have impromptu conversations. You need margin to seize unanticipated opportunities. Mark Batterson

It's hard to walk on a narrow, straight line. There's little room for error so even trying is stressful. Walking between two parallel lines is easier, especially if the gap between the two lines is broad.

As you walk through life, give yourself some margin.

In his book *Fairness is Overrated*, Tim Stevens shares these thoughts about the benefits of having margin in your life.

- Margin makes you pleasant; no margin makes you grumpy.
- Margin allows you to be generous; no margin makes you Scrooge-like.
- Margin helps you listen. Without margin, you come across as someone who doesn't care.
- Margin gives you space to learn, grow, and dream. Without margin you become stale and empty.

We need to maintain margin in our schedule (free time), finances (discretionary funds), emotional energy (time away from high-maintenance people and situations), and expectations (of ourselves and others).

I recently asked members of my staff why we all struggle with creating margins in life. Here are some of their responses:

- Cell phones, social media - I'm always connected.
- I have difficulty saying "no."
- Margins must be proactively scheduled/planned; I just don't do that.
- Boundaries help create margins; I just don't create boundaries in my life.

- I have unrealistic expectations of what I should produce so I'm always in hyper-productivity mode.
- Some psychological baggage from my past makes it hard for me to slow down; in an unhealthy way, my sense of well-being is tied to my staying busy.

In a separate post, we'll talk about "tightening up your life." Some people have too much margin; they are unproductive and irresponsible. But this week, analyze your life in terms of margin.