

# Just Say No to Interruptions, Distractions, and Other Hindrances

Mary Jo Tate

[www.HowDoYouDoItAll.com](http://www.HowDoYouDoItAll.com)

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## 3 Main Categories

- People
  - Yourself
  - Family
  - Everyone Else
- Stuff
- Activities

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# Just Say No.

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## OPPORTUNITY COST

Whenever you say YES  
to one thing  
(including an interruption),  
you are saying NO  
to everything else.

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Find a pace you can maintain  
for the long haul.

Don't live in crisis mode all the time.

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Find PEACE  
in the space between  
the IDEAL  
and  
REALITY.

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“Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.”

~ Teddy Roosevelt

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**STUFF**

- Stuff: all the physical things that get in our way
- A place for everything and everything in its place
- Paper (hanging files, two-pocket folders, project boxes)
- Replace piles with lists.
- Make children responsible for their own stuff.
- Edit your stuff:
  - Keep it (store it).
  - Get rid of it (sell it, give it away, throw it away).
  - Don Aslett, *Clutter's Last Stand*

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**ACTIVITIES**

- Edit your life.
  - Eliminate
  - Delegate
  - Outsource
- Prioritize.
- Facilitate individual passions.
- Opportunity does not equal obligation. Say NO to the good to say YES to the best.
- Schedule (specific time) vs. Routine (specific order)
- Do systems squash creativity? No!

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## People: Yourself: ATTITUDES

- Pride – thinking you're indispensable
- Getting distracted easily (need to focus)
- Whining
- Perfectionism - Don't let fear of mistakes keep you from trying.
- Fear (causes regret)
- Thinking small / comfort zone
- Ask "How can I?" instead of saying "I can't."

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## People: Yourself: GUILT

- True guilt: overindulgence, laziness, selfishness
- False guilt: for taking care of yourself (health, sleep); being all things to all people
- Don't be trapped in the martyr mother complex. Motherhood involves service & sacrifice, but not martyrdom.

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## People: Yourself: SELF-DISCIPLINE

- This is the way to avoid self-indulgence (true guilt).
- Don't abuse your freedom as an entrepreneur.
- Meet challenges with action, not avoidance.
- Efficiency

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## People: Yourself: HEALTH

- Nutrition, exercise, sleep
- Personal rest, renewal, relaxation, recreation
- Put on your own oxygen mask first.
- You're modeling for your children.
- Flourish like a well-tended plant; don't droop like a neglected plant that needs water.

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## People: Yourself: SPIRITUAL LIFE

- Daily Bible & prayer
- Sabbath
- Fellowship and worship with other believers

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## People: Yourself

- **Support Network**
- **Education**
- **Fun & Personal Fulfillment** (solitude & silence; hobbies)

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People: Family

Family is important . . .  
but not everything is an emergency.

Find balance between  
accessibility (which allows interruptions)  
and  
boundaries (which prevent interruptions).

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People: Family

**Accessibility** (allows interruptions)

- Include children in your work.
- Be really there during family time.

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People: Family

**BOUNDARIES OF TIME**

- Being accessible doesn't mean being available on demand all the time.
- Be sensitive to important interruptions.
- Work in designated chunks of time.
- Use kids' naptime, but don't sacrifice your sleep on a regular basis.

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People: Family

**BOUNDARIES OF SPACE**

- Have a separate office area with a door, if possible.
  - Keeps kids out
  - Creates psychological barrier so you can turn off work
  - More important for creative, thinking work

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People: Family

**BOUNDARIES OF SPACE**

- Sometimes we have to be separated from our children to have more time with them (ironic).
  - Children leave. (I don't recommend.)
  - You leave – work at library, café, restaurant, etc.
  - Hire a sitter while you're home – work in another part of house.
  - Provide activities to keep kids occupied – play outside, play in another room, play computer games or watch video (limited), chores, schoolwork, board games, draw, etc.
  - Teach them not to interrupt except for emergencies (cat's on fire).

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People: Family

**TEACH CHILDREN INDEPENDENCE**

- Seasons of life
- Inspect what you expect.
- Before you interrupt, think about what you would you do if I weren't here.
- Older kids can help teach younger kids.

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PEOPLE: FAMILY

**TEACH CHILDREN INITIATIVE**

- Micromanaging is inefficient .

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People: Family

**TEACH CHILDREN RESPONSIBILITY**

- Builds confidence & character (self-esteem)
- Delegate household chores - meaningful contribution - avoid perfectionism.
- Divide and rotate repetitive tasks.
- Assign work to youngest child capable.
- Make a chart or list. If it's not marked off, it's not finished. (accountability)

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People: Everyone Else

**INAPPROPRIATE SENSE OF OBLIGATION**

Comes from not wanting to let people down.

You are not indispensable!

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People: Everyone Else

**Perception of people who work at home**  
as being available, not busy

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People: Everyone Else

**TELEPHONE**

- Do you answer the phone in the shower?
- Office hours
- Caller ID
- Answering machine
- Call waiting (\*70 to turn off)
- Voice mail
- Reply by e-mail

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People: Everyone Else

**DOORBELL**

- Just ignore it.
- Put a note on the door.
- Answer with work in your hands.

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People: Everyone Else

**INTERNET**

- E-mail
  - Set up a "Reply Soon" folder.
  - Create rules to sort incoming messages.
  - Name folders AAA or A1 to bump to top.
- Social media - in moderation!

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People: Everyone Else

**CUSTOMERS**

- You can't please everybody.
- Post FAQs on your website.
- Consider the opportunity cost of the personal touch.
- Train customers how to work with you.
- Schedule calls by e-mail.
- It's OK to say no to a prospective client.
- It's OK to fire a problem client.

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Another Perspective

"Delight in seeing your plans upset by unexpected events. Take comfort that this is an assurance that God is watching over your stewardship and securing the accomplishment of His will and design. Whether traced to the prayer of a child, the imperfection of an individual, misunderstanding, or interference of outside agency, recognize the indication of God's ruling hand and allow yourself to be guided by it."

~ Elisabeth Elliot, *Keep a Quiet Heart*

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## SIGNS YOU NEED HELP

- Goals not met
- Things slipping through the cracks
- Mess/clutter
- Puttering around aimlessly
- Irritable, frustrated, overwhelmed
- Exhausted
- Burnout

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## WHAT TO DO

- Seek God's guidance.
- Get wise counsel.
- Use these tools.

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## SPECIAL OFFER

**\$20 off** complete course (for a limited time):  
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Family Life and Home Business in the Real World*

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