

## Let's Quit Going into Debt with Our Families: Time Management for Leaders



Time, like money, isn't infinite yet we treat the management of both very differently.

If I mismanage my money, and my monthly expenses are greater than my income, I must borrow from a financial lender to make up the deficit. Overtime, I run the risk of incurring serious debt, and not only is my credit score adversely effected, but the military may ask me to find employment elsewhere.

On the contrary, if I mismanage my time and constantly work 14-16 hours days, I'm applauded for being a hard worker and possibly even rewarded through continuous promotions.

Here's the problem: Just like money, mismanagement of time requires us to borrow from somewhere else, and unfortunately the lender in this case is our families. Serious debt in this area of our lives may lead to a multitude of problems which are much harder to fix than

a lousy credit score.

As our units spend a greater length of time training at home station, it's important that we learn to bring our personal lives and our profession into balance. For those of us who've been on the deployment merry-go-round for the last several years, balance has been easy because it wasn't an option. We were gone. Now that the ride has slowed down a bit, we should develop the necessary skills to accomplish everything we need to **within the constraints of the duty day**.

How do we avoid going into financial debt? We learn to budget.

How do we avoid going into debt with our families? We also learn to budget.

Why Budget our time?

- Allows us to see what we actually have to spend
- Enables us to accomplish all of those things we must, while prioritizing everything else.
- Enables us to cut wasteful spending.
- Helps us avoid working long nights.
- Helps us avoid saying yes to everything and running ourselves or our Soldiers into the ground.

Tips for success that I've actually seen work:

1.) **Develop a Battle Rhythm**- Create a single slide with your daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly requirements, meetings, etc. As a commander, I always included counseling subordinates on this list. Using [Stephen Covey's analogy](#), this allows you to start out with the big rocks in the bucket.

2.) **Be Disciplined**- Hold yourself and your subordinates to a 1700 cut-off on everything (training is always the exception). If you are a commander and are working past the duty day, your staff or subordinates will not only mimic your behavior, but some may amplify it. If everyone in the organization knows they only have a certain amount of time to accomplish tasks, they will be forced work more efficiently.

3.) **Every Meeting has a Purpose and an Output.** If meetings cost \$60 instead of 60 minutes, I guarantee you would want to get every cent out of them. By ensuring that every meeting has a purpose and an output, we avoid having useless meetings, and maintain focus during ones that are useful.

As our level of responsibility increases, the number of people affected by our time management skills also increases. A commander's ability to manage time directly impacts the families of staff and subordinate level leaders. **Learning effective time management skills are critical to leading effective organizations.**

If your organization (you included) is home with your families each day at a consistent time, when those unforeseen events do arise, you will have enough credit built up at home to make the occasional withdrawal.

Finally, if you don't agree with anything I've said in this post, let this shape your perspective: Our families are our legacy, not our OERs/NCOERs.

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