

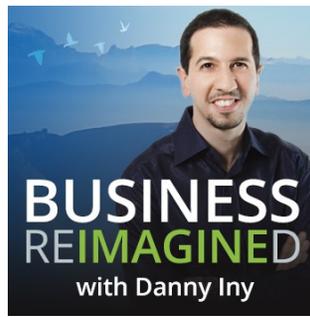


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Craig Ballantyne

Craig Ballantyne, author of *Perfect Day*, has been the Editor of *Early to Rise* since 2011. He's also a Strength & Conditioning coach in Toronto, author of *Turbulence Training*, a contributing author to *Men's Health* magazine, and a member of the Training Advisory Board for *Maximum Fitness* and *Oxygen* magazines. Craig also has an advanced research background, completing a Master of Science Degree in Exercise Physiology from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He continues to study the latest training, supplementation, and nutrition research to help clients improve health and wellness, as well as their physical and mental performance.



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Voiceover *This is Business Reimagined.*

Audra Casino *Every week, we talk with thought leaders and revolutionaries who are bringing innovations to their industries, like today's guest, Craig Ballantyne.*

Craig

I took this phrase from Epictetus, this great philosopher, who said, "Control what you can, cope with what you can't and concentrate on what counts," and then I thought, "You know, that works really for the three parts of the day, the morning, the afternoon and the evening."

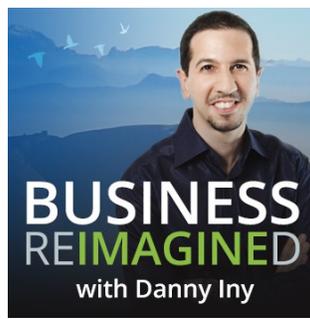
Voiceover *This is Business Reimagined with Danny.*

Danny

If I were to look at your library of time management and productivity books, how many would I find? If I were to look at your typical day, would I see the results? Today's guest, Craig Ballantyne, is the CEO of Early to Rise and author of The Perfect Day Formula. This is a different kind of time management book and it all started when he had his own perfect day.

Craig

I had that day where it was like, "Oh my goodness. I wish I could replicate this day over and over and over again." I didn't wake up that day but I suddenly ended one day thinking, "I've got to share this message."



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Danny

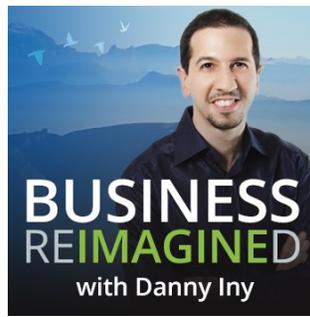
Craig's road to the perfect day was paved by a lot of imperfect ones. In his youth, he set out to become a strength trainer for the National Hockey League, which morphed into a successful career building businesses around health and strength training. What he learned through those experiences is that success isn't just a matter of being productive and getting a lot done. It's also a matter of working on the right things.

Craig

One thing I'll say is most time management books will make you more productive but because they're not really taking a look at what matters in your life, they often make you really good at doing the wrong thing so you actually become more productive at stuff that doesn't really matter or more productive at stuff that takes you further away from your big goals and dreams.

Danny

Craig was very cognizant of what his dreams were and was always on the lookout for things that would take him in the right direction. For example, one of his goals was to own Early to Rise or a business like it. Because he was so specific and vocal about it when talking to his peers and colleagues, when the founder of the site was ready to move on, Craig got word and was there to snatch it up. That's where he really honed his message of productivity and time management for



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entrepreneurs.

Craig

It really gets you separating work life and home life, which is very difficult for a lot of entrepreneurs to do. Everything blends in and the next thing you know, you feel like you've been working for sixteen hours and some days that's fine if you're really energized and the progress is going great, maybe you're having a launch or something. IF you feel like that every single day that you're grinding it out for sixteen hours, even though you're not, you're home for a couple hours and then you're working again for a couple hours and then you're free for an hour, that's okay, but it really does grind you down, especially when you get a family so you want to have that separation between work and home and that's what our book allows you to do.

Danny

That can be easier said than done because let's face it, it can be challenging to balance your work, your loved ones, caring for your children, a busy travel schedule, and all the other complexities and uncertainties that are just par for the course for so many entrepreneurs. Craig has a solution though, to get you moving in the right direction.

Craig

There's going to be certain times where we have our greatest energy and in the book I described that is something called



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magic time. Magic time is something I believe everybody has. It's not at the same time of day for everybody, but everybody has it. It's a time of day where it's maybe an hour or two hours where you can get three times as much work done as you can at any other time of day. For me, it's very early in the morning. I can write 1,500 words first thing in the morning whereas if I tried to right 1,500 words at 2:00 in the afternoon, it would take me three hours versus an hour in the morning. What we need to do first of all is identify that and then do the absolute best that we can to protect that. When we know that our job does have an emergency or we do have the family stuff, we're still going to try and protect that.

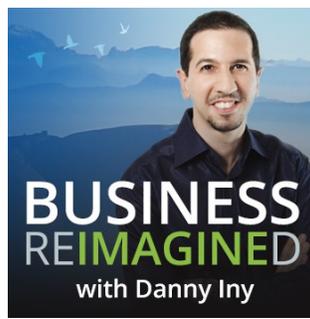
That's our number one goal and our second biggest priority is that when we wake up, this is going to be our best time of day, all day to get time to ourselves. If that means waking up fifteen minutes before the spouse or partner and even if you have to sacrifice a little bit of sleep, then that's what you need to do because being able just to have fifteen minutes of clear thinking to yourself is something that's not afforded to most people and so that is the proactive way of taking on the day because if you do that, you get up and you have that fifteen minutes or even five minutes, you can get a lot of good thinking done even in five minutes, and just gives you that victory to start the day. No matter what happens, if your daughter gets sick or if you have



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to go and make sure that the launch is not breaking because the server is crashing or whatever it is, you still have had that one little victory first thing in the morning and so it is like those people who say, "I get up and meditate first thing in the morning and nothing gets in my way." It's just what they do. You set the world aside for five to fifteen minutes, you get up and you work on it. You've made that progress and again, even if the rest of the day goes downhill, so be it.

Now I will have to call you out on the traveling thing because I travel quite a bit. I spent about 120 days on the road last year and really, once you have enough practice, like I unfortunately have had, then it becomes something that is just another day. I don't actually let anything get off track. I do stay up a little bit later obviously for work events when I go and travel but other than that, I try and stick to my normal wake-up time, even when I cross time zones, and I quickly get on the other time zone as quickly as possible. I stick to my meditation. I started meditating about three and a half years ago and I haven't missed a day since of at least five minutes. Airplanes are a great place to meditate, so when you're taking off. If you miss your morning meditation, try and get your meditation in as you take off. There are work-arounds for everything and I stick to my routine as much as possible, even when I travel and I don't feel like I can get out of it too much.



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I will say for sure, when you have a young child, that's priority number one and you simply can't put yourself first. It's a time to be very unselfish and then eventually over time you build up those routines back into your system where you slowly figure out your calendar again and then I'm sure you'll probably go and have another child and throw it all to helter-skelter one more time, Danny.

Danny

I have about half a dozen questions, but let's start with magic time. You said it's different for everyone. How do you know when it is for you?

Craig

Yeah, it's a great question. One of the things that I recommend everybody does, not just for magic time purposes but also for identifying those OCD loops is to simply take a piece of scrap lined paper, carry it with you for a couple days, and just write down every fifteen to twenty minutes what you're doing. I actually learned this from George Ross, who is Donald Trump's lawyer on The Apprentice. He was speaking at a Dan Kennedy event and he said this is what he has people do just to get better with your time and how to use it and just write down what you're doing every fifteen minutes over the course of the day and eventually within one or two days you'll identify, "Okay, at 9:30 for some reason, every day I start looking for



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somebody to gossip with or screwing around on the Internet and I need to put some type of boundary up so that I don't waste my time here," because as I like to say to people with children, every moment that you waste at work, whether you're checking another email or signing up for another newsletter or watching a YouTube video or being in a fantasy sports pool, you're stealing from your children at home because you're getting home late, you have to work overtime, you're taking work home.

Every minute you screw around at work, you are stealing that minute from your child at home. If somebody doesn't get it before I say that, then that kind of registers with people and they say, "Okay. You're right. I don't like not being able to teach my kid multiplication tables or to read to them at night. I'm going to get serious about my structure during the course of the day." You do that time journal and you'll also notice, "Wow, every morning at 11:00, all these ideas come to me," or, "While everybody else is out at lunch, I love just to stay back and write all these essays or emails or do my phone preparations for my meetings for the rest of the afternoon. I just love this time. I'm just so energized and creative."

If you're an artist, you'll have that time of day, and so it's identifying that, then going, "Aha. There's a pattern here and I



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can't ignore it." I need to do everything that I possibly can within the confines of your job and your other work that you have to do and your other responsibilities to people, and figure out a way to protect that time and to foster it so that you go into that time really prepared to work on your highest level competency when you are most focused. For me, back when I was a personal trainer, I realized in the morning when I was riding the bus or the subway downtown Toronto to go to my first client at 6 or 7 in the morning, I had all these ideas rushing through my head and I was trying to scribble them down or write them on my Blackberry and I realized I need to do whatever I can to get this time freed up for me.

Eventually I just passed some of my clients on to another trainer or if the client moved out of town, I didn't fill up that time spot in my schedule again. I just opened it up so that I can work on my online business. That was easy for me as an entrepreneur and it allowed me to make that slow leap over to full time entrepreneur. If somebody is in a position where they are able to manage their schedule during the day and they're trying to switch into an entrepreneurial position, then they'll have a better time with it. Now of course if you're 9 to 5 and you realize that your magic time is at 10:00 in the morning, you're not going to be able to work on your business at that time, but you have to use that time for whatever your job is to



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make sure that you're spending it on your highest competency, most valuable skill, so that you can move ahead faster at work, or move ahead faster in your business.

Again, everybody has it. It could be at night. It could be in the morning. You just need to take a look. It's almost like your biological clock. What type of person am I? When should I exercise? When I do have lots of energy? When do I need a pick me up? Get to know yourself as much as possible and when you do that, when you establish cause and effect between your energy levels and your success, then you're able to move ahead faster.

Danny

What happens in the scenario where the people around you are definitely in a position to impinge on your time and so the only way that you can protect that time is if they buy in to this idea and they're not receptive. If 10 to 11 is your productive time at work and your boss is not receptive to the idea of you not being in meetings during those times or for that matter, 6 to 7 PM is your productive time and you need to lock yourself in your office and you can work but your spouse is not receptive to that idea. How do you navigate that? Is it a matter of ... I don't know. What do you do in that scenario?

Craig

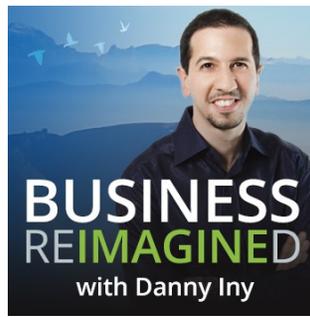
Those are very difficult scenarios to work through. There's a



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couple of ... For the morning solution, you're obviously not going to get it every day but maybe you can get it a couple times per week. Again, this is not a popular piece of advice but I think that everybody that wants to succeed in life, everybody that really wants to get ahead in life should work Saturday mornings. I think Saturday mornings are one of the most efficient and productive times for work, even if it's two hours before your family gets up, because you're not expecting a lot of emails, you're not expecting a lot of phone calls, and it's really just this free and quiet time. There's fewer cars on the road. It's almost like there's more energy for you to draw from for me to get all woowoo on people there. I've just had some of my best ideas on Saturdays and when I am politically incorrect enough to share this with people, I get a lot of other people saying, "You know, I feel the same way." That's one day of the week that you can at least hack that one.

If you have a scheduled meeting every day at 10:00 and that's your magic time and you want to hang on to that job, then unfortunately, you have to work around that. Maybe you try and move it a little bit earlier but you can get a lot done when you are prepared as well and you have a deadline. You can encroach on that magic time by working really, really hard between 9:30 and 10 and being able to ... If you're prepared, then you can get a lot done in that short bit of time. You do the



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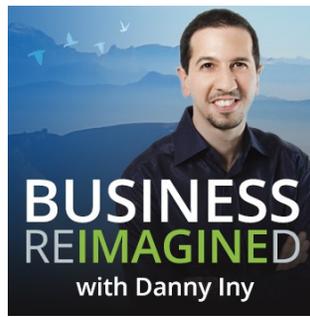
best you can. Obviously, there's not going to be a perfect solution unless you totally control your time.

Danny

When it comes to the idea of having a perfect day, I'm going to assume first of all the promise of your book is not that every day is always going to be perfect but rather you're moving in the direction of having more days that are closer to being perfect. Is that fair to say?

Craig

Yeah. Certainly there's a context of well, a perfect day is on the beach in the Maldives. Yeah, that is kind of a perfect day but that's not what we're talking about here. We're definitely talking about a perfect day in moving people towards their big vision and legacy for their life essentially. I'm a big fan of looking ahead and thinking, "How will you measure your life?" Clayton Christensen has a good way to describe my outlook on my life. It's like, "What do you really want to be remembered for being here for? How do you want to spend your time? What do you want to experience when you're here?" IF you're building your life around that, then the perfect day formula is great for you because it helps you build days where you're going to have great days, you're going to make progress on everything, as much as you possibly can given all the interference that the world is going to throw at you. Yeah, definitely, moving towards progress, not perfection as Dan



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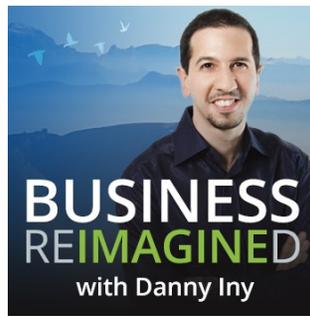
Sullivan says in his book *The Gap* which is a wonderful, wonderful book.

Danny

We've been dancing around the specifics of what is the perfect day formula. Can you just lay it out and not to shortchange the process of actually reading the book. If you read the summary, you're like, "Go get the book," if you like it, but how in a nutshell, what is the perfect day formula?

Craig

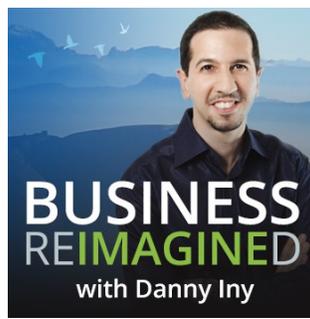
I'm totally happy to share everything here. We basically take this phrase. I'd like to give a little background. I took this phrase from Epictetus, this great philosopher who said, "Control what you can. Cope with what you can't and concentrate on what counts." I thought, "That works really well for the three parts of the day, the morning, the afternoon and the evening." We control the morning. You control what time you get up. You control what you eat. You control your morning, your breakfast better than you can control pretty much any other meal, especially after work ... Eat with other people. You control what you focus on for five to fifteen minutes first thing in the morning. The rest of the day, you have to cope with what you can't control, which means you cope with an angry boss or you cope with traffic or you cope with bad weather, you cope with all these emergencies, servers going down and all that type of stuff. Little kids getting sick.



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You have to put together some tools which I'll talk about in a second that help you cope with the day and then you concentrate on what counts at night, in the evening. Most people listening to this call probably have a life built around a workday and a free evening in theory. Of course most people end up having that workday bleed into the evening and it becomes a work evening too but what we're really trying to, going back to what we talked about at the start Danny, was separate the work day from the home life. In the morning, we use what I call rules or boundaries or personal philosophies, whatever you want to call it, but it's really a great description of a personal operating system. Here's the time that I get up every day, here's the number one priority every day that I work on first thing for this many minutes. Here's the general health rule for my life. I exercise or I meditate or I eat this type of nutrition, diet. Here's the type of person that I want to be. That's really, really where it gets important because if you want to be a certain type of person, for example, in my rules, I say that I want to be a British gentleman that's always polite and courteous and does not swear. That's the rule for how I behave.

When I share that with people, even when I share it with myself, I realize, "Okay, this is the ultimate version of me. As good as that is possible every day and so even if I'm in a bad



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mood, I got to live up to my standards. It's really an operating system and a set of standards that you set for your health, your productivity and your personal behaviors that help you really make better decisions all day long essentially and also eliminate the amount of discipline and willpower that you need to get through the day and make those right decisions because if the rule is already set that I don't drink alcohol Monday through Thursday, then it's going to be easy for you to go out for a work dinner and say, "No thank you," to the wine because that's the right decision because you have this 6:00 flight the next morning because that's your personal rule. You just go, "No, I have a rule that I don't drink on Tuesday nights. Thank you very much." It's just no stress on people. I believe that when they put these little operating systems into place, they will operate better.

That's the morning. Any questions on that before we hit the afternoon?

Danny

I have a question about that but I feel like it's about that and it possibly anticipates stuff about the afternoon. Because you know for example, the rule about not drinking wine during the week ... That's an evening thing potentially. The question is around how do you adopt this in a meaningful way? Here's what I mean by that. It sounds like there are going to be a



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number of rules, a number of routines, a number of processes, and the more of it that you have, it's not even just willpower, it's attention. It's like how can you remember to juggle all this stuff? On the spectrum from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence to conscious competence to unconscious competence, all this stuff works really well when you're unconsciously competent at it, but as you're getting good at it, as you're learning to apply it, you're all over the place and you're not focused and so if you try to integrate ten new things, nothing sticks. Where do people start and how do they stack these habits or patterns or behaviors or rules in a way that it's all going to stick and create leverage one after the other?

Craig

Yeah, it's a great question. In the book, we actually teach you to create the three most important rules which I believe ... One of the most important things that somebody can do for themselves is to establish a habitual bedtime and wake-up time which means seven days a week, go to bed and get up at the same time every day. If you can do this with very little variation, you'll notice within 14 to 21 days the greatest all-day energy that you've ever had in your life. I resisted this for seven years. Mark Ford was writing about it in 2001, 2002. It wasn't until 2009 or 2010 that I adopted this. What I did, it had the greatest overall impact on my energy, 2:00 in the afternoon, I



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wasn't tired. I wasn't tired on Monday and Tuesday morning because I slept in on the weekend. It was really, really fantastic. That's rule number one that I recommend people put into place because you build on, like you said, you stack on top of these basic rules into your specific rules that you want to achieve for your individual self.

The next one would be some type of health rule. It doesn't have to be really complex, doesn't have to say I eat this, this and this and I meditate at this time and I exercise this exact way. Just choose one thing that you really know you should be consistent with and then whether it's as simple as I walk for 30 minutes every night after dinner on the beach where I live, that's it. As long as you do that, that just keeps you in that mindset. The third thing is to have a rule that you know your number one activity that you're going to spend your time on for the first 5 to 15 minutes when you wake up, every morning. It could be you are a writer and you go and write, or it could be that that's your meditation time or it could be that's your spiritual Bible study time. Whatever it is that you find to be a real key priority that you want to make very consistent in your life, do it first thing in the morning, and make that your rule.

With those three rules in place, let's just start there. The great thing about the kid is, we actually encourage people to treat



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their rules like Zig Ziglar and Jim Rohn and those guys would tell you to treat your goals. They said, "Write down your goals, carry them with you," because if you write down five or six goals, you probably won't remember all of them when you first write them down, you go like, "Oh yeah, I forgot about that. That's a big goal for me. I got to act in accordance with that." If you create five or six rules for your life, you always have that little handy worksheet to pull out of your wallet and say, "Oh yeah. You know what? This is the way I behave in this all day long or in this situation and so this is a good reminder for me to check my rules all the time and keep them growing in competence in your mind." It is a really great question, it is a lot of things that you can overwhelm yourself with, so just start with the three and work your way up from there.

The one thing I'll say though Danny is that a lot of people already operate by rules in their life. A paleo dieter already has rules for how they eat. A Christian obviously has rules for the commandments they believe and they follow in their life. We already operate by many of these rules. We already have an operating system and most people, when they do this exercise, they realize they're able to list six or seven quite quickly because they've been living this way and it's really just great to write them down just like it's really great to write down your goals.



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Danny

This is awesome. I think there's a lot of power here and I want to tell everyone who's listening to this, if you like the ideas, there's a lot of practical implementation in *The Perfect Day Formula* book. It's not just a book, as I mentioned earlier, before we were scheduled to do this interview, Craig sent me ... I was like, "Send me a copy of the book." That happens a lot. I got a copy of the book in the mail and in this case I get this box. It's this orange treasure chest that you open up and there is a book and there's a journal and there's these handouts and these worksheets. There's all this stuff in it. Craig, do you want to just talk about that? Where did that come from? I took photos of that just like, "This is a cool idea."

Craig

Yeah, you know, it took me a long time to write the book as I mentioned. I got a lot of guidance from my business partner Matt Smith on this and we were just thinking, "How can we really make this really, really fantastic and help people dial things in?" He had actually run this business called Stansberry & Associates, he was the CEO up until December when he left the business after three years and what they had been doing is in a lot of their big product launches was sending out these kind of customer retention kits and so if someone was signing up for a trading program, they would send them the trader's favorite books and like an ounce of silver and a couple of other things and a welcome letter and maybe a video.



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Craig

He had the idea like, "Hey, maybe we can build a kit out of your book." My team and I, we sat down and we thought, "Okay, what are all the things that we can do here to walk people through and be successful and what are all the tools that you use on a regular basis Craig including your gratitude journal, the scripting pad. How you plan out your days." All that stuff. We put it together and then it's just like, "Wow. This is like an adult's version of Christmas when it shows up on your doorstep and people get to unbox it and look through all the cool stuff," but most importantly, I describe it as having me sitting across from them at their kitchen table walking them through building their rules, building their five pillars of success which is the afternoon part and then creating a vision for their life with the specificity that allowed me to achieve exactly what I wanted and doing the same for them. That's where it came from and we're just so happy with how it turned out and how many people we've been able to help with it and the feedback that we're getting.

Danny

Awesome. The only recurring question that's running through my head now is that a lot of the stuff you talked about as you acknowledged is not practical if you have small children. Is there a plan to create a special edition, The Perfect Day Formula for parents of small children?



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Craig

Comes with a babysitter in a box? We have clients, one of my best clients, Isabel De Los Rios, who's also in Joe Polish's 25K group, she's been one of my biggest success stories. I've been working with her since her kids were two years old and she's been implementing a lot of this. I think maybe from 0 to 2 or 3, it's tough, but a lot of people are able to really dial in their routines again once the kids are sleeping through the night and maybe are spending a little bit of time out of the house during the day. One of my greatest success stories that I just received an email from the other day was a woman who you would think has no time at all to implement any of this stuff. She's a pediatric anesthesiologist. She works ten hours a day in a hospital, Monday through Friday. Maybe twelve hours a day because she said she worked a 60 hour workweek because she has on-call stuff too.

She also wants to be a writer, so in addition to being an anesthesiologist, she's making time to write and to study courses and she still gets home on time for dinner and she still is able to read to her children before they go to bed. She does have help. It's the opposite of an old-school traditional household. Her husband stays home and obviously she has that that most people don't have but she's able to do all of that, very busy job, with the kids, with family, and she's actually said that the greatest thing that has really helped her is the vision and



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sharing the vision with her husband has actually strengthened their marriage and their relationship. I really appreciated hearing that feedback from her. We're getting more and more people giving feedback like that. We just had somebody write in the other day who has a 3-year-old and a newborn and she's the mom obviously. She said that it really helped her overcome the overwhelm in her life just to get a little bit more structure in it. That's what the whole structure equals freedom is all about. If you actually give somebody complete freedom, well then that's when you hear the horror stories about somebody wasting their life or spending all their money because they had complete freedom. We do need that structure so that we earn our freedom and then we really value it.

Audra Casino ***That was Craig Ballantyne reminding you to control what you can each morning, cope with what you can during the day, and concentrate on what counts in the evening. What would that look like for you? Your perfect day? What victory will get your day started off right? When is your magic time? Is checking Facebook worth stealing those minutes from your loved ones? Get more information about Craig at earlytorise.com. You can also get his book *The Perfect Day Formula* at Amazon and other booksellers and it's more than just a book. You can get the whole kit complete with***



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worksheets to help you design your perfect day.

Voiceover

This has been Business Reimagined with Danny. Join us next time as we talk with Tucker Max.

Tucker

Think about the greatest minds in Western history, the people that I went to school to study, Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Malcolm X, Winston Churchill, Marco Polo. Not one of them wrote anything down. Marco Polo was actually illiterate. How did we get their knowledge and wisdom? Obviously someone else wrote it down, scribes wrote it down, right? They were the thinkers and the sayers and someone else just recorded their wisdom and their ideas into a book.

Voiceover

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