



## Creating a “No Excuse Zone” around you

### Professional Development Series

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Below is Part 3 of a 3-Part article designed to help IT and database professionals stay on top of their game in an ever-changing trade. Part 1 and 2 describes examples of how we inadvertently make excuses for our lack of progress in certain areas of our careers.

Part 3 offers several steps toward creating ‘No Excuse Zones’ in our home, office and thinking. For more examples that fit your specific work environment, please feel free to contact [LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info](mailto:LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info)

We all have ‘excuses’ as part of our normal, default speaking and thinking patterns. It’s normal. It’s human. We often entertain ourselves with stories of how we got to where we ‘don’t want to be’. We do not readily acknowledge these stories as ‘excuses’ or blaming something or someone external to ourselves for our predicament; we’re simply ‘explaining’ ourselves. But the longer we stay in the ‘explaining’ stage of the current situation; the longer we are stalled and not making forward progress.

As you can see in part 1 and part 2 of this article, there are endless ways to take control over your own calendar and time. Using external people and event as excuses for your lack of progress is very natural but not very beneficial. We won’t be able to totally avoid our very natural and human reactions to things. But we can continually improve upon our recognition of what is more beneficial in moving us forward faster.

#### Beginning steps toward NO EXCUSE ZONE thinking:

Step 1) Create several **NO EXCUSE ZONES** in your home, office and social environments.

These places will be designated as **“NO EXCUSE ZONES”**. These are places where you are deliberately on the lookout for excuses in your speech and in others. It will be in these places where “excuses” will no longer be acceptable.

You can place a **“NO EXCUSE ZONE”** sign to warn co-workers, friends and family that you have kicked-up your game. It will be at these places that you practice your new-found energy, focus, and purpose.

When you detect “defensive” speech from yourself and others, diplomatically challenge the thought as an assumption, a false premise or even an irrelevant truth. Just because something is factual doesn’t make it beneficial or useful. There are lots of truths that are simply immaterial to forward progress or solutions.

Step 2) Review your emails and reports in search of ‘excuses’ or anything that seems like blame or defensiveness.

If you feel you are explaining yourself, **STOP**. This is often an indication that you are feeling defensive about something. Simply accept the current situation, describe where you really want to be, and describe several options on how to achieve those goals. Remember, just because something happened just the way you described doesn’t make that information useful or beneficial.



Think about a GPS system. The GPS system doesn’t care how you got to your current position. The GPS system only focuses on where you want to go. Be the GPS for your IT organization. Wear your GPS badge proudly to remind yourself and others of your team purpose.

Step 3) Create your personal and professional Non-Negotiable list

If you desire a happy and prosperous life, then take time to outline your non-negotiable for a happy and prosperous life. Create a chart of things you need to include in your Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly life. Then recreate your Daily, Weekly, Quarterly and Yearly routine that includes your non-negotiables.

Below is an example. They are not necessarily detail or specific. They can be anything that you feel will create a happy existence for yourself.

<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>Yearly</b>
Daily think of ways to add value to my team, department and company. Daily think like the CEP or owner.	Create my weekly-accomplishment report of things I plan to accomplish NEXT WEEK. Identify what I plan to put in my accomplishment folder for the following week.	Plan out the list of mentors, executives, managers that I would like to meet and work with in the coming month. Create my networking strategy to include these people.	Conduct a lecture, presentation or speaking engagement at a local professional organization or user group meeting. Bring back sales leads to the marketing group.	Present a paper or lecture at a Conference or Trade Show. Bring back sales leads to the marketing group.
Continually update a folder of all my accomplishments, accommodations, and recognition (in preparation for performance review). If I don't have anything to place in there, I create a situation that will generate a worthy accomplishment. I request "thank you" notes from co-workers, etc.	Keep my team updated on my various projects and priorities	If I received an "average" rating last year, then I conduct informal performance reviews with my management chain to make sure I'm exceeding expectations	If I received an "above average" rating last year, then I conduct informal performance reviews quarterly with my management chain to make sure I'm exceeding expectations	
Some type of exercise/tone/strength	Socialize at least 3 times a week (Wed, Fri, Sunday)	Once or twice a month meet with Like-minded thinking (think-tank) discussions Could be one person or a professional organization.	Go out of town: Visit someone out of town Or a out of town seminar --Essence of getting away	Spend a special weekend associated with my favorite hobby
Some type of Yoga/Mediation or deliberate relaxation	Spend some time with my friend			Go to a retreat/cruise associated with

technique				Coaching Career
Keep my project stakeholders updated with any unexpected status on their product	Call/connect with family members			
	Twice a week – reading/self-improvement lunch - study time			
	1 afternoon with nothing to do			

If you are interested in more detail professional coaching or a professional coach to help you stay on target with those goals, please consider one-on-one coaching sessions to propel you forward faster.