# **2.1 -** **FIGHTING FOR FIVE**

# Hi there everybody. Last week in module one, we talked about priorities and how everybody's to do list is riddled with items that are in some random state of completion. Well, that isn't just an issue with priorities. It's also an issue with interruptions. As any leader knows, "Do you have just a minute?" is almost never just a minute. That's fine. You're there to help people and to serve your team. That's a vital and important part of leadership. But I want to introduce you to the concept that servant leadership needs balance. I don't think that's talked about nearly enough in leadership circles today. A recent study found that in the financial services industry, interruptions can take up to six hours of a day. Researchers at the University of California in Irvine found that the typical office worker is interrupted or switched tasks on average three every three minutes and five seconds. Neither one of those studies gives the impression of a really successful environment where a lot of really important work is getting done. I know that most of you can actually really relate to those findings. But here's the thing, you have more flexibility over interruptions even being a servant leader, than you give yourself credit for and that you're taking advantage of. Nowhere does it say that you have to be available 24/7 to handle every single request that everybody has in real time. The open door policy is great as a general rule for approachability, but if that's how you're defining how approachable you are, then you have an issue. Heck, your team is already filtering the requests that they are giving you and exercising that flexibility of when they are asking you for information. Would they interrupt you when you are on a phone call? Would they interrupt you when you're at lunch? What about in a meeting? Would they pull you out of a meeting to ask whatever it is that they're asking? Today you're going to start using some of that flexibility that your team is already using, and that you're already forcing them to use to a certain extent to finish more of the things that are on your task list. I call it fighting for five. Because when you're just a few minutes away from completing a task and somebody walks into your office to interrupt you, that's when you're going to fight for some control over your day and help your productivity. You're going to say something along the lines of, "I'm right in the middle of something. Can I come grab you in five minutes?" Or, "I'm just finishing something up, can I give you a call in ten minutes?" Those two examples really polite and really key to gaining some control. All right. Now in most cases, the response is going to be, "Okay," because everybody understands this. Nobody likes interruptions. Those office workers in the UC Irvine study, three minutes and five seconds. They know all about interruptions and the impact that it can have. Now to put this in practice, you need to rely on four

# key principles. The first one is that you give them options. Notice that the fighting for five was optional in the two examples that I used right there. You are asking them. If it's not appropriate or if they really need you now, they have the ability to say, "No, I really need an answer now." You give them an option, that's the first key. The second key and probably the most important, is that you actually follow up. The issue that all of us have with us, and why the hairs on the back of your neck are probably standing up as I go through this, is we've all been there and somebody has said to us, our boss, a peer, whatever, "Hey, can I get back to you in five minutes?" Low and behold, the entire day goes by and they have not gotten back to you. All right, so you are actually going to follow up. When you follow up, then nobody has an issue with you asking for that time because you actually followed up in the timeline that you were looking for. The third principle in fighting for five, is that you are responsible for the action. You are not asking them to come back to you in five minutes, or you to come back to you in ten minutes, because again, we've all been there. The boss tells us to come back in half an hour, we show up half an hour later, and low and behold, they're still not ready to talk to us. All right? That's another second layer or rejection. It also just puts the responsibility on yourself. They don't have to do anything extra. They can go back to work, and you will come find them. The fourth principle is that you do not do it all of the time. Remember, you are a servant leader. You are trying to be approachable. All right. Throwing just a number up, it shouldn't be more than a quarter of the time that you're asking for a few extra minutes. That's probably still too high. But given the number of interruptions the typical leaders goes through over the course of the day, that's still a huge amount of items that you are actually finishing as opposed to leaving on that to do list. All right. Remember that there's already a lot of time that you're unavailable, where they aren't interrupting you because it's not that important. Leverage that flexibility. It's not rude to ask for a few minutes if you actually follow up with them. If you want to get more things finished, if you want to have more control over time and over your day, then you're going to have to put up a fight and you're going to have to go that little extra mile and get through some of that discomfort, because this isn't natural for most leaders. Most of you that have signed on for this course are the right type of leader. You want to be helping people, that's what you're there to do. All right? Let's get you past that hurdle, here and work through the exercises. The first step for you is to do it just once. Over the next 24 hours, I want you to focus on picking a moment where you can fight for a few extra minutes and finish a task. You can invite the person to sit down if it's just another couple of minutes. "Hey, I'm just finishing up in a couple of minutes. Why don't you have a seat and I'll get right to you?" That's another way to handle it. But do it once. To get some momentum going, you have to make that initial push of effort. All right?

# Now over the course of the next week, I want you to focus on doing it once a day. We are just establishing some momentum, we're trying to keep it simple and we're introducing to your team and to the culture the concept that you are not necessarily available in real time all the time. It takes a little while to get that culture shift in and it becomes easier the more you do it. In week two, you're going to do it twice a day every single day in the week. In the third week, you're going to practice on doing it three times a day. Again, just building. Then from there, you take it as you see fit. But this is a concept that can dramatically transform the work that you're able to get accomplished throughout the day. Push forward once over the next 24 hours. I want to hear about how you have fought for your five minutes, drop over to the Facebook group and let us know that you were successful on it. Thanks so much.