"It's Five O'Clock Somewhere" by Kathi Guiney GPHR, SPHR, SCP, President of **YES!**HRSolution.

We have a complicated relationship with Time. We waste it, kill it, save it, maximize it, run out of it, and work "over" it. Each workday, we greet Time with the best intentions, often to end the day with little accomplished. Time wounds our self-esteem, mocks our productivity, and defeats our best efforts to get along with it. Since we can't separate ourselves from Time and make a clean break, we'll have to uncomplicate the relationship by improving how we work together.

Take back your relationship with Time with these efficiency tips:

- **Set specific times to check email.** Check messages no more than three times a day in the morning, noon, and late afternoon. Immediately compose any responses that will take only a few minutes to write. Save anything more complicated for the next check-in, giving you time to think about the proper response.
- **Take breaks.** A short walk may be what you need to get the job done. Refresh mind and body to avoid the performance decline that comes from working too long.
- **Create a to-do list.** What do you want to accomplish by day's end? Leave wiggle room for surprises, but don't end up playing "firefighter" and only responding to incoming requests. Every few hours stop and regroup. Were the last few hours productive? If not, revisit your to-do list and refocus your effort for the next hour.
- **Do not disturb.** Up against a critical deadline? Let people know. Give them a time you will get back to them tomorrow.
- **Play to your personal clock.** Are you chipper first thing in the morning, or do you get rolling after lunch? Organize your routine around your personal clock, tackling tough tasks during energy peaks and routine missions during slumps.

Voila!—a productive workday, and all Time needed was some structure. Now you can change your relationship status from "It's Complicated," to "In a Relationship," giving you time to daydream about "Five O'Clock Somewhere" and Margaritaville.