



- [Home](#)
- [NonProfit Library](#)
- [TRAINING](#)
- [PRODUCTS](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Click [Here](#) to  
Subscribe to Our  
**FREE**  
**eNewsletter**

[Our Privacy Policy](#)



[CLICK](#) to  
See Our  
Latest

eNewsletter

Email this Article to  
a Friend - [CLICK](#)

## Paying Your Organization First

© ReSolve, Inc. 2007

[▶ RETURN TO ARCHIVE](#)

**Q:** Does your organization's culture include paying itself first?

**A:** Read any of the "get rich" books, and you will hear the advice to Pay Yourself First - as soon as you get your paycheck, take a small percentage off the top and put it into savings / investments. The advice is that you take care of what is most important FIRST.

Does your organization pay itself first? Are you taking care of what is most important before anything else? Or are the most important things playing second fiddle to what is urgent, what is on fire, what is piled up on your desk, what is past due?

### So Many Ways to Pay Our Organizations First

To get past the tendency to let the urgent drown out the important, what would happen if your organization paid itself first?

- If you are a board member, how might your meetings be different if the board were to spend just 5 minutes at the beginning of every meeting, reminding board members of the future you are there to create for your community? See what difference just 5 minutes can make, as you take the time to talk about the subject that is more important than anything else - the difference you are there to make in people's lives.
- And what might your board's ability to govern look like if you set aside just 1% of your organization's budget to provide ongoing education about governance? (1% is not too much to ask for the group who is accountable for every action the organization takes!)

How might your ability to create impact improve if you set aside another 1% - this time 1% of your personnel budget - for ongoing education for the staff as well?

- If you are an Executive Director or Program Manager, what if you took just 5 minutes every day, to reconnect with what is possible - the organization's very highest potential for effecting lasting change in the community? What if you asked yourself, at the start of every day, "What future will I be creating today? For whom?"
- If you are an Executive Director, how might your possibilities explode if first thing Monday morning, before doing anything else, you called just one person who is important to the work your organization is trying to do? That person might be the Mayor, or the head of a similar program to the one you run. It might be just someone who has done amazing work in the community, who might have ideas about the work you are doing. Or it might be one of your donors, whom you have never met. You might call to set up a meeting for coffee, or simply to

"sleuth" him or her.\* Imagine making that one call, first thing Monday morning - could there be a better way to start the week?

As you think about what is important, you realize that we can pay ourselves first in all sorts of ways - small ways that will not intrude on our day, but that will have a huge return.

And if you think that 5 minutes or 1% of the budget is not enough, we agree. But we also know that if you set your sights higher, it is more likely you will find a reason not to do it. So start small. Get into the habit first, then expand to bigger and better things.

### **The Logic**

The logic behind paying yourself first is not just that you set aside dollars and time for what is most important - creating impact, education, inspiration.

The real beauty of paying yourself first is something we know from our real lives: We will always find time for everything else.

As an example, consider your own income. If you are taking home a salary of \$4,000 per month, you know how to budget that \$4,000 - what percentage goes to the mortgage, what percentage to food, to car payments and etc.

If you were to suddenly only have \$3,800 per month, you would instantly know how to reapportion - you would pay a bit less here or there, but you would figure it out.

That is the logic behind paying yourself first. If you take that \$200 out of the equation from the beginning, the bills will still get paid, and you likely won't notice that \$200 is gone. But if you wait till the end of the month to put what's left into savings, you and I both know there will be nothing left to save. We spend what we allot.

We also spend what we allot when it comes to our time. If we take 10 minutes at the beginning of the day, and we commit to using that 10 minutes for something that will bring our efforts forward, we will have paid ourselves first - and we will figure out how to get the rest of the work done in those 8 hours minus 10 minutes.

But if we wait for the end of the day, we will have spent that 10 minutes - and suddenly the day will have run away from us.

### **And here is the bonus tip:**

One more thing: paying yourself first starts with you. Not "you the board member" or "you the Executive Director" but "you the person."

What might change in your life if you started each morning by taking 5 minutes - just 5 minutes - listing the many blessings you have, the things for which you are infinitely grateful? What might change if you took 5 minutes every morning - just 5 minutes - to envision the future you want to create, for those you love, for yourself, for the world around you?

And what might change if you commit to call one old friend per month - just one per month! Certainly you can do that - perhaps the first Sunday of the month, call someone you haven't spoken to in a while. How much richer might your life be?

Life is short. If we don't do the important things first, we will continue to let the urgent drown out the important. It is as true of life as it is for work. So let's get started!

*\* If you are not familiar with the term "sleuthing," check out [FriendRaising](#). Community Sleuthing is one of the most effective and simplest Community Engagement strategies you can use! [CLICK HERE](#)*

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INSTITUTE


**Was this Article Helpful?**  
**Subscribe to Our **FREE** eNewsletter**

First Name  Last Name  Organization  e-MAIL

Message

Preferred Format  
 Plain Text  HTML

 **SUBMIT**

 Email this Article to a Friend - [CLICK](#)

**TO DOWNLOAD A  
PRINTER  
FRIENDLY PDF OF  
THIS ARTICLE:**  
 [CLICK HERE](#)

[\[ Home \]](#) • [\[ NonProfit Library \]](#) • [\[ TRAINING \]](#) • [\[ PRODUCTS \]](#) • [\[ About Us \]](#) • [\[ Contact Us \]](#)

Website Design by Dimitri Petropolis  
Copyright © 2000-2007 ReSolve, Inc. All Rights Reserved