

## **Time Management Tips from a Professional**

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I absolutely love the topic of time! And I mean I love it. I have had over 30 years to practice and hone my time management skills, and quite frankly the reason that I am so enthusiastic about it is because I know firsthand the benefits that being skilled in time management can bring to your life. When people visit my website and read my biography as well as other documents on my website, they often think that I must survive on very little sleep because of how many activities I am involved with outside of my business. The truth is that I get, on average, between 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night, a fact that shocks many people and leaves them with the question of – how do you get so much done? I get so much done because I am very productive and have outstanding time management skills.

Anyone can improve his or her time management skills. It is a skill set of practices that can be improved over time. The following are tips to get you started on increasing your ability to do more with the time that you have. We all only have 24 hours in a day. Some people just get more done in their 24 hours. You can make dramatic improvements in your time management ability if you are willing to practice. Given how much I love this topic, I could certainly write a book on it. For now, here are the best tips to get you going. As long as credit is given as listed above, the contents of this document may be freely shared on websites, blogs, and in publications. Credit constitutes the copyright symbol along with the author's name, title and website address as listed above.

### **1. Make a commitment**

The first step in developing new muscles in any area of life is to make a firm commitment to that area. Commitment drives action. Lack of commitment typically produces no actions. Make a decision that you will improve your time management skills and then take actions that are consistent with that decision. If you combine a solid commitment to improving your time management skills with a specific set of actions, then over time you absolutely will improve in your ability to manage your time.

### **2. Explore and then identify**

Explore your relationship to time. Do you have a positive or negative relationship to time? Or are you oblivious to time for the most part? Is time your friend or your enemy? What are the things that you say about time? Explore how you use or waste time. Identify any negative thoughts you have about time. Identify areas that you could make better use of your time.

### **3. Create a positive relationship to time**

It is very important that you create a positive relationship with time for yourself. If you hate going to the gym, how likely is it that you will go to the gym five times a week? We typically avoid what we either don't like or that which we are not

comfortable with. Thinking thoughts like: 'time is my friend', 'I have plenty of time', and 'I love time' will do more to forward how you feel about time and how you think about time.

#### **4. Make a weekly list**

While this is a no brainer, most people don't make a weekly list of their to do's. Each week type up a list of the things you are planning to do that week. Use the list each day to monitor and track your progress. Cross things off as you complete them. If you have not been making weekly lists of 'to do's', try this for six weeks and then take note of how life occurs and what you have accomplished. You will probably be surprised.

#### **5. Use a calendar, planner or PDA**

This seems like another obvious tip, however you would probably be surprised at the number of people who don't have a real calendar, planner, PDA (personal digital assistant) or other device for managing their time. Or in some cases they have one, but they don't use it or use it to the fullest. If you have a system for managing your calendar or time, but it is not functional for your life, get a different system. If you are short on funds and can't afford to purchase a planner or calendar or other device, a 3-ring binder will work just as well. Simply print out a blank calendar and fill it in. If you have a semi-functional system, use it now to it's fullest and put on your birthday list a new planner or system.

#### **6. Have a clear list of goals driving your weekly list**

The way to maximize your time is to have a very clear list of goals that drives your weekly 'to do' list. What are your life goals, business goals and personal goals? Use these goals to drive the actions on your weekly list. If you don't have any goals, this would be the perfect time to create some delicious goals for yourself. Where would you like to be in five years? In ten years? What are your dreams? If you could do anything, what would you do? When you die, you probably won't regret much of what you did do, but you are more likely to regret the things that you did not do.

#### **7. If self-discipline is lacking, play a game**

If you are lacking in the area of self-discipline, then play a game with yourself and/or others to provide structure so that you will be successful. You can reward yourself with a little treat for doing a weekly 'to do' list for three or four weeks. You could create a game with family or friends to see who will receive the 'most improved' award in time management. Simply put, you could have a lot of fun while you are working on building a solid skill set in time management.

#### **8. Be organized**

Keep your 'to do' list in a location that is easy to access – perhaps with your clearly defined life, personal and business goals. The more organized you become, the more efficient you are. If it takes you 30 minutes to locate a document, bill or other item, that is 30 minutes that you could have used on completing another task. It

takes time to become organized if you are not, however any investment in becoming organized is an asset to managing your time.

**9. Practice, practice and practice**

The more often you make a weekly list (practice), the better you will become. No one becomes masterful in a given area without putting in the hours it takes to become a master. If you want to be very efficient with your time, then practice the activities that will give you the skills.

**10. Get plenty of sleep**

If you get plenty of sleep three things will be available to you, which will contribute to your ability to manage your time better. One you will feel good. Secondly, you will think more clearly and with more focus. Thirdly, you will be more productive and efficient.