

Time management needs to be an ‘integral’ part of your life

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The tips and idea-rich techniques we discussed in *‘Running TOO Fast’* or cover in more detail in our on-site interactive programs will be minimized without grafting a serious commitment and continuous action in time management into your life and work activities. They will work, but only if you apply them! We’ve excerpted a few tips for you.

“If time and priority management is not an ‘integral’, daily part of what you ‘are’ doing; all the technology/tools, as well as these idea-rich strategies and time management success systems will be wasted.”

Many of you are already ‘jamming’ too much into your hectic workweeks. The tendency for some of you will be to use these tools to crowd or load even more on your plate. This is counterproductive to the whole process. *As mentioned, too many people will seek to do just that. I did until I burned out. Then I started looking for ways to free up my time and leverage my abilities.*

The purpose here is to challenge you to decide what you ‘value’ and then create and schedule time for those activities and people you value. For some of you, this may be a welcome refresher and pat on the back for your efforts to bring your lives into balance and to make your career and business less of an intrusion.

For some, this may fly in the face of what you’ve been taught or even the expectations of the environment in which you find yourself currently engaged or employed.

Please trust me when I tell you, it is all about finding a sense of *‘flexibility’*, balance, and purpose and then applying that to being more productive in your life. Your career is only a part (arguably, a larger time commitment) of who you are and what you will do with your life. Ensure that you factor in the important people in your life, as well as time to reflect and time to play and recharge your emotional and physical energies. Invest your time wisely, it is all you have.

Here are some **time-tested tips, techniques, and principles** to make effective time management a part of your life.

- Use a master task or **‘big picture’** list. Update, review, replace, and amend as needed to keep this current.
Use this master list as a tool for your long-term planning efforts and to keep track of what you want to do or promised to do. Then schedule accordingly to best use your time to fulfill your promises and to move your life and career ahead productively.
- Develop a **‘STOP DOING List’** of items you are determined to eliminate in your life and work.
- Invest at least 5-10 minutes in pre-planning for each day. Refer to the big picture list and see where these items might fit in your daily schedule.
- Carry over ‘essential’ items from your previous day’s list; but remember, schedule wisely to avoid overbooking, or overload.

- Design a **'Someday list'** as a place to park activities you can use as productive fillers while waiting.
- Design in **flex-time** for life's little surprises. You know - the things that get in the way of your plans. I've learned to never schedule more than 50% of any day which leaves flexible time for fill-ins.
- Use the method Andrew Carnegie paid a consultant \$25,000 to learn. Rank tasks as A, B, or C's. A's to be done today, B's will soon move into the A category, and C's are 'done' only when you have extra time.
Often, the C's can be deleted or delegated without any loss or even being noticed. This works to help you set priorities and then schedule them accordingly.
- **Break larger projects into smaller ones** and do a line chart with real deadlines for accomplishments. Put those deadlines and checklists in your day timer or on your electronic calendar so they remain visible. Focus your efforts and work towards specific manageable tasks. Can you delegate some of them? As a leader, you simply cannot do everything. Think strategically and delegate effectively where applicable!
- Handle each piece of paper, phone call, or email only once, if possible. Apply the 3 D's of time management: deal with it, delegate it, or dump it!
- **Apply the 2-minute rule:** If it can be done in 2 minutes or less – do it now!
- Use on-the-spot notes and documentation to adjust your priorities as needed. **Do it NOW!**
- Understand and use your energy levels and schedule for maximum output. Understand your biorhythms for best results. Know when your best time of the day is for creative or brain challenging work and schedule those activities accordingly.