

SELF & TIME MANAGEMENT

Time Management Article

If you want to be in charge of your life then you must be able to direct that change. Sadly most of us use only a very small portion of our true potential. We sell ourselves short, instead of realizing our marvelous capabilities. Change occurs the very moment people stop saying "I guess this is something I have to live with" and start asking themselves, "How can I do it easier?" By learning to manage your time you will have more time and energy for the relationships in your life that are truly important!

Procrastination is a fact of life, but it is not a part of your nature. It is learned by reward. You are strongly affected by what happens immediately after the behavior occurs. Your brain makes the link - this is **The Principle of Reinforcement**. The moment you don't do what has to be done in favor of a snack, television viewing or any other activity, but the one you intended to do you are rewarding yourself for procrastination. The brain learns by succession and makes connections from one moment to the next. This is also called **anchoring**. You are anchoring a more pleasant behavior to the act of procrastinating. You must learn to reverse this. This can be accomplished easily by beginning your task, by breaking it into smaller steps which you can accomplish easily and rewarding yourself for taking the first, second, and each subsequent step.

A **reward** is anything that brings you pleasure. Research indicates that any behavior you are likely to do on your own constitutes a reward for an activity you are not likely to do. You must realize that procrastination is its own reward - so use it to get yourself to do things. Start rewarding your performance and not your lack of it. Whenever you face a task you don't want to do ask yourself, "What am I in the mood for that I could easily do right now?" Then be sure to do that immediately after you do the first small step.

William James said "nothing is so fatiguing as the hanging on of an uncompleted task". What this means is procrastination and lack of good time management are actually more draining and energy zapping than plotting your course of action and following through.

Blocks to Getting things done:

1. Poor attitude - avoiding discomfort, fear of failure or success
2. **Rationalization** - lack of skill, waiting for the right moment, beliefs
3. Fatigue, stress, illness
4. Environment - noise, messy area, distractions

Guides to getting things done

1. *Activating your Attitude:*

Learn to ask yourself the kinds of questions that lead to getting results. Remember every action or inaction involves a choice. You are always spending your time in some manner. Do you want to really spend it whining and complaining or would you prefer to learn to ask questions that get you what you want?

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2. Stop rationalizing, develop skills and adjust beliefs

With rationalizations the key is to build in an alarm system that goes off so that you catch yourself. You need to ask yourself "Is this constructive or am I rationalizing?" When you force yourself to do something you don't want to do, your self-esteem and self-satisfaction increases.

3. Meeting your physical needs.

Rest, relax, take short breaks, exercise and have proper diet to insure your wellbeing.

4. Create the proper environment.

Have the proper tools and have them organized. Rule: Clean your workspace before you leave. The advantage to this is ridding yourself of the junk so that it doesn't get mixed in with the important stuff thereby avoiding clutter. Force yourself to get organized and only handle each piece of paper only once. If you don't need it at the moment file it immediately or ditch it.

Questions designed to help make your environment more inviting.

Do I have all the tools I need? Do I have enough space? Are things organized? Can I easily get to the tools I use most often? Are there distractions I can eliminate? Do I have a good system for handling paper work? Do I have the privacy to get things done?

Time management is the science of how to use the hours in a day more efficiently. Pencil and paper are the two most powerful tools in time management. It is done by planning.

Rule: "Work expands to fill the time available" This means that most people take an hour to do something that can be done in ten minutes. "Action without planning is the cause of every failure" A. Mackenzie.

One minute of planning will save you ten in performance. When you plan set deadlines and stick to them. Actually give yourself less time to accomplish the task than too much. This will give you more time to spend on what really matters. Additionally, most people work better under pressure. Self-discipline can create the pressure you need while giving you a cushion.

Get Focused - when in the office be in the office, when playing tennis be totally on the tennis court. When in the office work, when with your family be with your family 100%.

Three means of managing your time:

1. Do it - get it done
2. Delegate it - give it to someone else who is competent
3. Ditch it - forget about it all together, it is really unimportant

Remember every action involves a choice between what is more important and what is less important. **The Law of Excluded Alternatives** - doing one thing means not doing something else. Separate the urgent from the important.

ABCDE Method it will save you 25% time.

A = absolutely, B = had better, C = comforting D = delegate, E = eliminate.

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The Law of Forced Efficiency states that there is always enough time to do the most important things. Ask yourself, "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" Assess how you will feel afterwards - will you feel better or worse if you don't do it right away?

Answer the following questions about this article.

1. What is another name for the Principle of Reinforcement?
2. What are the 4 blocks to getting things done?
3. List and explain one of the 4 guides to getting things done.
4. How long will one minute of planning save you in performance?
5. What does the writer mean about getting focused?
6. What are the 3 means of managing your time?
7. What does the law of excluded alternatives state?
8. What is the ABCDE Method?
9. What is the law of forced efficiency?
10. What do you think "work expands to fill the time available means"?

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