

10 Keys To Time Management

1. Start With The Recognition That You Are Not Effectively Managing Your Time

You can only manage yourself (your attitudes, beliefs and actions) within the flow of time. The experience of time has more to do with your thoughts than with clock time. The stress you feel that you associate with time originates in your thinking. Example: Think about the distinction in your perception of time between when you're late and when you're waiting for someone who's late. The actual clock time doesn't change, but your experience of time does, based on your perception.

2. Prioritize Your Efforts

Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, makes the distinction between things that are important and things that are urgent. Most of the time, doing the things that are important, rather than urgent, results in greater effectiveness. In other words, don't major in minor things.

3. Do Less To Get More

Economize your efforts. Example: when you're boiling a pot of water, you can fill the pot with water, cover it and turn on the heat and let it come to a boil while you do something else or you can "watch the pot" while it comes to a boil.

4. Eliminate Sources Of Adrenaline

These are substances, activities, relationships, situations, or attitudes that result in your feeling "charged up". Adrenaline can distract you from the focus needed to complete a project, increase feelings of anxiety, and intensify the feeling that time is flying. Over time, excessive adrenaline can have negative health consequences as well.

5. Eliminate Things, Which Are Taxing Your Time and Energy

These are the situations, attitudes or behaviors (in yourself or others) that you're putting up with in your personal or work life, which don't serve you or your larger purpose but consume physical, mental and/or emotional energy. Eliminating them results in an increase in available energy for people and projects, an over all feeling of calmness, and the experience of more time to get things done.

6. Simplify your environment.

Clutter in your office or home environment can create stress. It can actually "feel" like you have more work to do than you really do when you "archive" things you don't need in your environment.

7. Simplify Your Tasks

This may involve over-responding and/or under-responding. Examples: Under-responding — a fax, which needs only a quick response or a confirmation. You can write your answer on the faxed document and fax it right back. Over-responding — if someone asks you for something specific, and you know that by offering more help than was specifically asked for, you can avoid the situation or issue from coming back to you in the form of a problem, then isn't it worth it to do more? Make a point of over-responding to any situation in which there is an opportunity to solve more than one problem in the process and when there is the potential for the situation to be presented again, requiring additional energy.

8. Really Listen To Others

When you allow other thoughts to intrude into your "listening space", you actually create anxiety for yourself about both what you are listening to and what you allow to intrude. This anxiety is created because you can neither act immediately on the thoughts you allowed to intrude, nor can you completely take in what the person with whom you are talking is trying to tell you. You are left feeling incomplete with both.

9. Decide What You Can Give Up In Order To Get What You Want

The day has only 24 hours in it, and yet, how many times have you "borrowed" from the next day to finish a project and thereby lost valuable sleep, or "borrowed" from your relationships to pursue a goal, or borrowed from your personal time with yourself to work on a project? When we choose among multiple possibilities for how we will spend our work and/or personal time, the universe almost always asks us to choose what we will give up in order to have the "more" in our personal or work lives. Much pain and suffering around "managing time" could be avoided if this process were respected.

10. Find some time each day for quiet reflection.

When you commit to spending some time each day suspending your thoughts and judgments and creating inner stillness, you'll train your body and mind in what it feels like and with that awareness, you can transform how you experience the flow of time when you are "in the world".

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