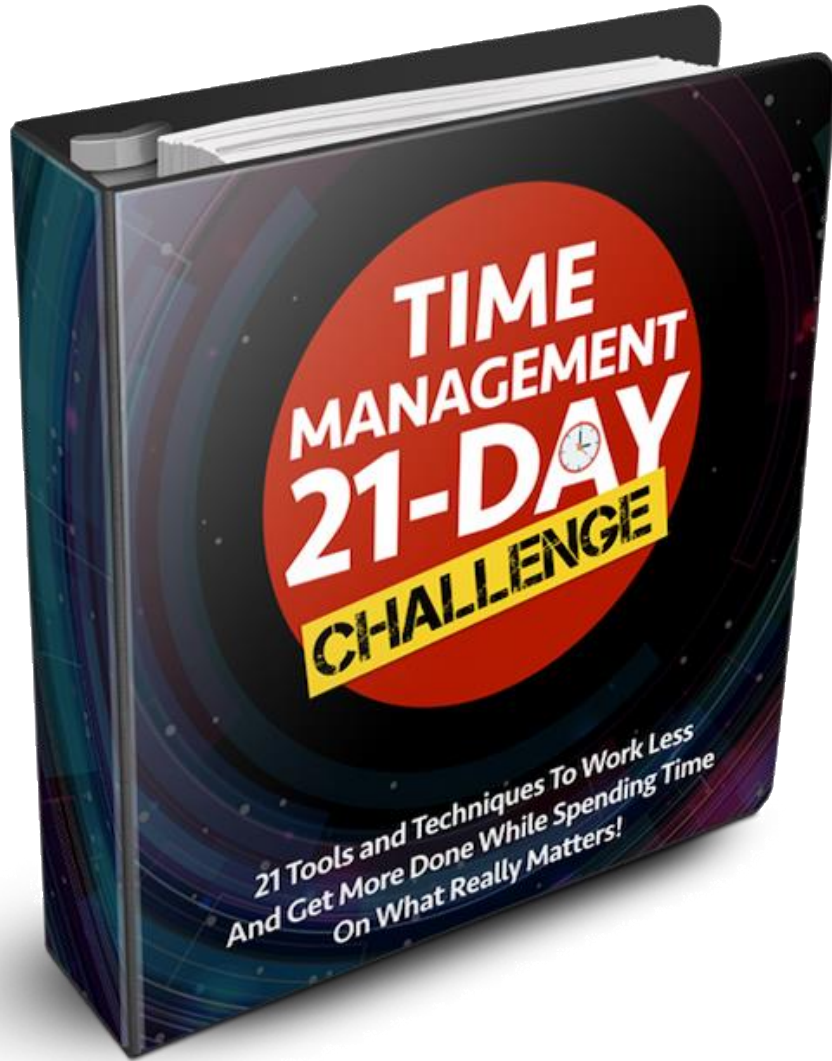




Introduction:

Welcome to the 21 Day Time Management Challenge Ebook.

It's a fact. People love challenges. A well thought out challenge puts people into action. And there of course is the magic word-ACTION!

Without massive action, you cannot change your life for the better. You will be like the proverbial hamster on a wheel, going around in endless circles.

For the next 21 days, you can take action on one of the hacks contained in this Ebook. There will be "Action Steps" to follow after each day, to get you moving in the proper direction.

Are you ready to become a master of time management? I can hear you shouting, "Yes, I am." Lets get started.

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1. Identify what matters most. Define your goals, what really matters. Define and clarify your biggest, most important goals, and move toward them with ruthless efficiency.

Filters are very important. In cars or furnaces, they trap and hold the dirt so that clean air goes in and gets converted to energy. When you identify what is most important to you, in essence you are filtering non-essential time wasters. You are bombarded with so many things that try and gain your attention. When you allow this happen, it can lead to anxiety and even depression.

Ask yourself, how many times have you felt pulled in so many directions, that it seemed like you were being pulled apart?

It's such a horrible feeling and the best way to eliminate from your life, is to have totally focused goals. You need to clarify what is most important to you in all aspects of your life.

In writing out goals, you need to be very specific on what the goal is and why it is very important to you. You want goals that get your blood fired up every time you read them over. It's also important to attach weight to goals. If you have a list of health and fitness goals, you need to decide which ones are the most important to you and make them your anchor goals.

For example, if you have goals for running, what is most important to you? Is it the distance, the time it takes, the calories shed or how you feel as soon as the run is completed? It is going to be different for each person. Some may attach more weight to how they feel mentally and physically after a run, rather than the time it took to do it.

Writing limp goals will get you nowhere fast. When you have a goal for something like weight loss, you need to make it very clear what your intentions are. Instead of saying, "I'm going to lose 50lbs," you need to write out, "I'm going to lose 5lbs a week by doing exercise and eliminating sugar, which includes not drinking soda everyday."

You can get much more detailed than that but for this example, we want to get the basics in. Next, you need to have clarity on why you want need or want to lose 50lbs. Really think about it. Is it because you are not happy with the way you look or did your doctor mention the possibility of diabetes becoming an issue in your life?

When you are clear on the why, the easier it's going to be to manage your time and achieve those goals.

It will take some time to define what you want to have and who you want to be in life. In the end, it will be worth it because you are fine tuning your brain to get it working with you, instead of being one of the root causes of your unhappiness. When your brain understands where you want to go and why it so important to you, it will do all it can to assist you in life.

The word "attack," can be used to describe not only something horrible but also something wonderful. In this case, you want to attack your goals with ruthless aggression and make them work wonders for you.

Welcome back. Now that you have set your goals and understand why you want to achieve them, lets move on to setting priorities.

Many people struggle with priorities. An example would be a person having a spouse and three kids. The combined total income of both spouses, is around \$50,000. The person decides to buy a brand new BMW X6, with a monthly payment of \$600.00. In this case, it is clear, the person has the wrong priority. Proper shelter, food and clothing for the kids would be the number 1 priority.

You have to be clear on what matters the most to you in life. All aspects of your life should have goals, from relationships, health and of course business.

When your goal setting muscles are weak, you will produce weak goals that will not spur you to action. It is imperative that you identify and move through your biggest goals, while also taking a moment to adjust if you get off track.

Action Steps:

-Decide how you are going to set your goals. Use something like the 90 Day action plan, where you break the goals into 30 days, 60 days and 90 days. A 90-day plan works best. When you write out 7 days worth or 365 days worth, you won't have enough to get excited, or you will so many goals that it will seem impossible to complete, so you never start.

-Decide exactly what your goals are. Do you want to lose weight? If so, how much and what is the healthy time frame? How about business goals? Do you want a promotion? Write down why you want one and what steps you need to take. Ask yourself if you need to improve your knowledge in one area or become more proficient in organization and planning.

-Once you write your goals out, go back and put a timeframe beside them. When do you want to accomplish this goal? Then, write down, your big WHY? If you do not have a reason that will drive you into massive action everyday, then you will let that goal slip.

2. Based on your goals, define your priorities. What tasks matter that will help you achieve your goals?

Getting your goals down on paper or listed out in a word document, is just the start. Now you need to prioritize. There are a number of things to consider when deciding which goals should be first in order.

A good starting point, is your health goals. Ask yourself if your physical and mental health is where it needs to be, in order to even get started on your financial, weight loss or personal relationship goals.

When you are not in your best physical health or you are suffering from periodic bouts of depression, then just getting started on those other goals is going to be a tough task. You need to really power up physically and mentally. Even if you are close to where you need to be, a morning ritual is a must, in order to get the fire within burning.

Taking a cold shower instead of a hot one will get you totally alert, and focused. Drinking a power smoothie instead of eating a bowl of cereal loaded with sugar will get the type of energy your brain needs to get cracking.

Having a mission statement, that is filled with your personal values, will help prioritize what you need to do in the timeframe you pick to do and achieve your goals. You need to know who you are and exactly what you stand for in for life. When you don't really know what your values are, then setting and attaining goals will be difficult.

Think of couch surfers; those people who lay on the couch and watch endless hours of television drivel. Since they have no idea what their values are and how achieving goals will bring them ultimate pleasure, they watch the lives of others in fiction and reality shows...in order to gain pleasure. But it is short lived pleasure and the addictive need for more is overwhelming.

When you are totally focused and have nailed down your priorities in life, going out and attaining those goals will be far more pleasurable than couch surfing.

One of the essential parts of hacking time, is deciding what tasks matter right at this moment. To give an example of the right tasks, let's look at early morning.

You've already gotten out of bed early. Your eyes are wide open and the lungs are full of air. What is your priority task right now besides a healthy intake of food or liquid? Many people would choose to read the newspaper or live news on a device. That is the wrong way to start your day. You need to be in top mind frame, so reading your daily and weekly goals would be a much better task. The positive messages that you send to your brain, cause it to mirror what you want.

If you want a day of negativity, then your brain can arrange that by replaying all the things that the news tells you is wrong with the world.

Action Steps:

- Read through your goals and write down the top 3 priorities, from each group of goals. Remember you should have health, financial, business and the like.
- Now assign a value to each priority, using the numbers 1 to 5. The one that you assign a 5 to, is your top priority.
- Now write down the tasks you need to do, in order to complete the top goal. For example, in health, if you want to run to lose weight, what would be your tasks? Buy new running gear? Get a running partner to motivate you? Learn proper stretching first, so that you do not injury yourself?

3. The Eisenhower Matrix for assessing and prioritizing tasks.

Being the president of any country brings great responsibility. When Dwight Eisenhower became the 34th president of America, he had already accumulated a great deal of knowledge on how to deal with difficult tasks and manage his time effectively.

Dwight Eisenhower was a general in World War Two and become the supreme commander of the allied forces. Some would argue that he had the most important position of any general that ever served.

It became apparent to Dwight Eisenhower that he needed a system to do the most effective job that he could. In this regards he came up with is known as the **Eisenhower Matrix**, that has been used for many years and has also been improved with additions.

The matrix is actually a four-quadrant box. When you draw out a large rectangle, you then divide it into four parts. Part one in the upper left-hand corner is labeled, "Do Now." Next to that on the right side you write, "Plan." Under the "Do Now" box, you write, "Delegate." The last box is the lower right- hand one and in it, you write, "Eliminate."

Now we are going to write outside the box. This is where we label our priority. Quadrant one is top priority, so over the top of that, we write, "Urgent." On the left-hand side of that Quadrant, we write, "Important."

Now we are going to label two more Quadrants. Over top of the Quadrant two which says, "Plan," we will write, "Not Urgent." Now go to the Quadrant in the lower left-hand corner which is labeled, "Delegate." On the outside of that Quadrant, write, "Not Important."

Excellent. Our Eisenhower Matrix Quadrant is set-up. Lets go through the whole process of how it works, starting with Quadrant one.

Quadrant one, is our do it first priority. These tasks are of utmost important in our personal lives or whatever we may do to make a living.

Some examples of a Quadrant one task might be something unpleasant like, paying your property tax promptly at 9:00 a.m. because you have already received notice that you are very overdue and face legal action. In the business “do it now,” it could be something like you have a report to send to a client and you know the client will drop you if you are late again.

Both these examples are what happens when you procrastinate, and it finally is “do or die.”

What might come as a surprise to you, is the fact that Quadrant two, is the area which you will focus most of your time. Not everyday is going to have a Quadrant one moment. Quadrant two is where you do the actions that will make your goals and dreams, come true.

Examples of Quadrant two might be planning out your healthy meals for the week and then getting a good forty minutes of exercise in. For business items in Quadrant two, it may be composing emails and replying to customers on questions they have regarding your product or service.

Quadrant three might be your favorite. This is where you delegate tasks to others. The tasks may have some importance, but they don’t have the same weight as Quadrant two. In business, you might have a trusted assistant that can wade through your emails and decide which ones are necessary for you, while answering or deleting the others.

Delegating in your personal life, usually means getting a significant other or children to do tasks that pull you away from Quadrant two. These could be household chores for example. In some cases, you might have a personal assistant that can do your errands for you.

Last Quadrant is the deleting aspect. You have tasks in here that can be removed permanently. Tasks in here are mostly entertainment tasks. While you need to wind down, you don't need all the items here.

When you look at it, do you really need to watch as many television shows as you do? Of course not. Go ahead and pick 2 to 3 and delete the rest. The same goes for outside entertainment. Instead of a weekly night out, delete down to bi-weekly or once a month.

Now you might say to yourself, go out once a month? That's impossible. However, it isn't and there are many successful people who only go out to eat or see a movie in a theatre...a couple times a year. Now that you have a complete understanding of the Eisenhower Matrix, take action, and set it up today.

Action Steps:

- Decide whether you are a kinesthetic learner or a visual learner first thing. A kinesthetic learner is hands on. They relish getting their hands dirty or just plain using their hands to fashion or draw. Visual learners, are excited by video's, computer graphics and plenty of color.
- Once you know for sure, then you will need either some good strong drawing paper and pencils to make your matrix or get an app. You can check out [Eisehower.me](https://eisenhower.me).
- Brainstorm each quadrant before using either paper/pen or app. Get some notes down, so that you don't go to the app and start filling in quadrant one...with the first thing that pops into your head.

4. Track your daily and weekly activities to see what you're spending your time on. You would be surprised how much time you waste and on what...

Before we delve into how much time is wasted per week, let's look at over estimating the time a task takes. In our example, we will look at writing a novel.

Many people who are big time readers, feel that they would love to try their hand at writing. Why? One answer is this...when they read a number of novels per month, not all of them are stellar. Then the thought crosses their mind, that they could do much better. But it takes too much time. That simply is not true. Let's do some basic math.

Ask yourself if you could write 500 words a day, seven days a week-say after dinner instead of watching three to four hours of television? When you write 500 words a day, in one month you would have slightly over 15,000 words. In five months, you would have a 75,000 word novel.

It doesn't take years and years to write a novel. It takes simple action, everyday.

By doing this bit of math, we also came to the realization, that most of us are wasting precious hours. Yes, we all have 168 hours a week. Some of us will waste hours by sleeping more than necessary, watching mind numbing television multiple hours a day, or playing video games.

As you think about watching television program after television program, you realize the hours that you waste. However, we waste time in groups of minutes as well.

Think about your social media, which is huge. As you do some work for a bit, the urge comes to text your sister. After that is done, you decide that if you

had to tell your sister something, then perhaps you better tell your brother as well, since they might get upset and feel left out.

Think about jumping onto Facebook, to see if you got a reply from one of your friends. As you notice there are no new messages, a discussion about the horror of puppy mills pops up and well...you love puppies, so you will just take a second to see what is being said.

In both the above examples, it is very likely that you spent more time texting, correcting and sending than you believed. Same goes for the Facebook five second check. That five seconds has now become five or ten minutes. You have lost a grouping of value minutes that could have been spent on Quadrant one activities.

There are a wide range of examples just like those that were covered but you probably are getting the general idea. Now we need to look at actually tracking time and see if any of this holds true to you.

Grabbing a decent size notebook or daily planner. You will need to label your days at the very top. The most effect way to track time, is to pick what bursts you think you work in best. Many people will set a timer for 15 minutes, while others may find 20 or 30 minutes maximum to work best for them.

As you start the timer, work on your most important task. After the timer goes off, make a quick note of the what the task was.

At the end of the first day, look at your timed events. This is where you have to be brutally honest with yourself. If you wrote down, worked on emails for 15 minutes, then wrote down took a 5 minute break...did you really take a 5 minute break or did it stretch out much longer than that because you decided to run and grab coffee/snacks?

Circle where you might have stretched the truth a bit and that is an area you want to work on the next day. Honesty to yourself will serve you well. Next, you have to be very consistent with tracking your time. This is very important,

so don't skip it. Track all your time, each and everyday for at least two weeks. This is the only way you will get a true picture of how your time is being used.

To really drive this point home, look at people who do food tracking for weight loss. Those who track what they eat, when they eat for example and do it consistently and honestly...lose more weight than people who are not tracking.

Action Steps:

- Start practising tracking by using Excel. In order to get good at anything, you need to practise everyday and the assumption is, you will be on your computer daily.
- When you open Excel and label it, make sure it is saved to your desktop, so you can see it as soon as your computer starts.
- Decide what you are going to practise tracking. How about what you eat, drink per day and when you do it. You may find you are snacking more than you thought.
- In excel at the top, you can label what you are tracking vertically which makes it easier to get more columns in.
- At the left block out the times, from when you wake until you sleep. Then after you fill in each time you eat or drink, color code it. Use something like Blue for appropriate time and red for wrong time. Example, if you eat breakfast at 6:30 am and then grab two donuts and coffee at 7:45 am before entering the office...that is coded red.
- Practise this for one week and then start tracking your work, projects and tasks.

4. Use a Planner. How to do it and what kind of planner you should use.

Using a planner can be similar to the Eisenhower Matrix. As you fill out your planner for the week, you will be deferring certain items. This is not procrastination because you are actually writing down when you are going to do it, rather than continually putting it off.

As you look at most of your tasks for the week, you will find that only a few, if any are urgent. As you gain a new task, put it into the next day or the day after that. This allows you to think about that task and how to complete it well.

When working outside the home, it is best to have two planners. One will be used for business and the other for your personal tasks. Only when you realize that a personal task must be done during the week day, would you cross it out of the personal planner and move it into the business.

Not everything you have listed in your planner will be completed on the day scheduled. We call this “having a backlog of activity.” When you go through your planner and notice items not crossed off, look at them and estimate how long it would take to clear the backlog. Then go forward into your planner and mark out the day and time, that you are going to complete all the backlog items.

Choosing your time management system, is really a matter of choice. You might prefer an app on your phone or a computer program.

Many people still prefer the paper method and one reason is that you have many more options available as you work through your planner. You can add stars or checkmarks, cross items out with ease and even add a quick motivational quote overtop of a task that is not important but you have been putting it off because you simply don't enjoy it.

Writing something like, “Joy is demolishing this task,” can trigger your brain to get it done now.

Now if you are planning to go buy a planner at a big box store, that is entirely up to you. Before you do that, it is in your best interests to at least check out planners that multifunction.

The 7 Minute Life Company has a planner available that really delves deep into your goals, dreams, and life purpose. You get all this before you even get started on writing down your daily tasks.

This planner gets you to list out items that are blocking you. We call this mental clutter and will address it further in this book.

One aspect of this planner that should get you fired up, is that it works on the 90-day system. This system has proven to be most effect in setting and achieving your goals. One of the first sections, is listing your 90-day personal goals.

Personal goals give us the juice of life, so this section should be given careful attention.

The 7 Minute Life planner is extremely organized and is constructed with double spiral bindings so that you can work with it and not be concerned about losing pages. It is not your typical black cover planner with basic pages. This is a colorful planner with well thought out pages and segments that you can put to use, right away.

Action Steps:

- Decide on a physical planner vs app and make your purchase now.
- If you are using an app, delete any unnecessary apps first. Apps that suck up data and do not have anything to do with time management or goals, should go.

-Once you have made room for the app, make a list of 10 free and paid apps. Apps that are difficult to use or do not have the elements you need, should be deleted or refunded.

-Whether you are using a physical planner or an app, do not delay. Get at least the first week planned out and all times entered before you finish today.

5. **Wake Up Early**

Getting up early is the best way to be productive and manage your time throughout the day. Late at night, we sometimes force ourselves to stay awake, just to finish a book or a television program. The next morning rolls around and we try to drag ourselves out of bed.

Even if you are not forcing yourself to stay awake, chances are you could be going to bed earlier and falling asleep faster.

There are many benefits to waking up early and, if need be, you can train yourself to do it. Some people find that getting up at 5 a.m. allows them time to do creative thinking with a clear mind. Writers are frequent early risers.

When others are fast asleep, the early riser can use this time to meditate or exercise to get the muscles flexible and the blood flowing, especially to the brain if you do Yoga.

Going into the office very early, allows the early riser to do important tasks without the interruptions of co-workers or the phone. Now some people would say that it is a great time to check emails, yet this not an important task.

Emails should be left to the end of the day if possible. Instead, the early riser should use their clear mind to tackle the toughest job of the day. For some, that might be doing budget numbers or reading complex plans or proposals that need 100% focus.

There are a number of ways to become an early riser. We will go over some of them now but first, think about this. If you normally get up at 7:30 a.m., it is not advisable to try and force yourself to start getting up at 4:30 a.m. This would be a shock to your system and you would likely abandon the idea quickly. Instead work in 30-minute bundles. For the first week, get up at 7:00

a.m., the next week get up at 6:30 a.m. and so on until you reach the desired wake up time.

Most people need to use an alarm clock, while a very small few can tell themselves before bedtime, what time they want to get up and their brain makes it happen.

There are a few tricks you can use. The first one of course, is placing your alarm clock on the other side of the room. This causes you to actually get out of bed and move your body. Now if you are one of those who would just get out and shut off the clock before hopping back into bed...there are solutions.

The clocky alarm clock is perfect for the “back to bed” or the “heavy sleeper.” This clock is set on your floor and has two wheels. When the alarm goes off, it is quite annoying. Next, you have to get out of bed and chase this little alarm clock down, just to shut it off.

There are a wide variety of alarm clocks or even apps for your phone, that can assist you in getting out of bed and getting to it.

Once you are out of bed, you need to come fully awake. Hitting the coffee right away, just won't do it. You need either a good shock or massive amounts of oxygen to your lungs before that caffeine hit.

Taking a cold shower is another idea that you might resist at first. However, many people swear by it. Cold showers not only jolt you awake but get the blood flowing in your body. Martial artists are renowned for cold showers first thing in the morning and just before a workout.

If need be, have a cool shower instead of cold. Then get the blood flowing by doing a few cardio exercises or some vigorous Yoga morning exercises that force plenty of air into your lungs.

After that is done, go for that hit of caffeine or power smoothie. Eating something that can be converted quickly to glucose for your brain, is the way

all of us want to go. That means a smoothie with fruit or just chowing down on oranges or kiwi.

These tactics will help you get up early and stay up, so that you can effectively manage your time throughout the day.

Action Steps:

-Plan if you are going to go cold turkey and just start getting up at 5:00 am. If the answer is no, then write down the time you are going to start practising getting up early. Write it out. "Starting tomorrow for 7 days straight, I will get up at 6:30 am. After those 7 days, I will practise getting up at 6:00 am. Continue until you hit the desired final wake-up time. Maybe you have decided to be just like Dwayne Johnson, aka The Rock and you are aiming for 4:30 am.

-When you know yourself well and your inner voice is telling you that this going to be tough, make a decision to have your spouse wake-up you up, or have a service call you, wake you up and then recheck you 15 minutes later.

-Feel like a spouse or service is not going to cut it? Then go online and find a workout buddy who is already doing the early routine and get them onboard...waking you up and going for that 5-7 mile run.

6. The 80/20 Rule

This rule is also referred to the “Pareto Principal.” The name comes from an Italian economist by the name of Vilfredo Pareto.

Since he was born in 1848, there are number of theories as to how he came up with his principle. Some essays, show that he observed that 20% of the pea plants in his garden, produced 80% of the healthy peas pods. Another one states that he noticed 20% of the population in his town had 80% of the entire wealth.

Once he made his original deduction, he carried on to find more and more examples of an imbalance of how things worked. In the world today, people often take a look at their lives and see if the 80/20 rule applies to them and in many cases, they find it is true.

For example, a person may find that they own 200 novels, but they only re-read 20% of them more than once. Another example that some find to be true, is that 20% of the food they eat is at restaurants, while the other 80% is home cooked.

In business, you will find that 80% of your incoming email is spam/information not required, while the remaining 20% is highly useful information that you require.

The 80/20 rule can also be used in time management. You will find that 20% of the tasks you have given yourself, will account for 80% of your results. Using this model, this is why working on your very important tasks first is so important.

Given that 80% of your results come from very important tasks, you can see why you want to stay out the quadrants we discussed earlier in the

Eisenhower Matrix. The less time you spend in them, the more successful you will be.

You can also use the 80/20 rule in this way. Look at all your tasks and identify them in reverse...20/80. What 20% of your tasks completed, will give you 80% of pure joy. When you are working and happy, you then want it to continue...just like the pain/pleasure principle. You will work that 20% to gain pleasure and avoid pain.

The successful people who use the 80/20 rule find that they are highly motivated when working on the 20%. They have become accustomed to getting great results, so they know that the effort they put towards the 20% is going to yield the greatest rewards. Focusing on the 20% is a motivational tool that anyone can use.

Action Steps:

- Your biggest action step is to finally decide exactly which goals are your absolute must. These are your 20% percent goals. You will focus most of your effort here, so it should be your top 2 to 5 goals. This is where 80% of your happiness will come from, especially if you align them with your goals and beliefs.
- When deciding your goals, you also want to identify and write down which goals require the least effort, for the greatest reward. This follows the principal as 20/80=lowest effort, greatest reward. Highlight these goals with a marker if you are using a pen and paper, or use a color system in your app.
- The final step is to really put on your thinking cap and decide what MASSIVE actions are going to make this happen. What 80% actions will give you the greatest reward. Research what others have done in the same area you are working in. Model success. Try what others have done and if you think there could be more, then shift a bit and try another tactic until you get the results you want.

8. The Pomodoro Technique

The pomodoro technique has become very popular in time management. In fact, it is so popular that different versions of it are used in diffusing procrastination and writing fiction.

While it can be used in an office setting, the technique has become wildly popular with freelancers. Time is money for a freelancer, so the ability to get the job done while being highly focused, makes it a no brainer.

To be highly focused, you need to shut off your cellphone and close your browsers on any other devices. You need quiet, so if you have noise distractions that cannot be turned off, consider wearing noise reduction headphones.

In using the pomodoro technique, you start by deciding what the first important task of the day is. Then you set a timer for 20 minutes and focus 100% on that task. When the timer chimes, get up and do some deep breathing and stretch out your body for 5 minutes. This brings oxygen back into your lungs, especially if you have poor posture and your ribcage is compressed while sitting.

Now set the timer and jump back in for another 20-minutes and then repeat the 5- minute break. As you are doing these 20- minute sprints, which are called Pomodoro's, you may notice that your energy is starting to lag. Here is a tip. After doing four sets of 20- minutes, with your 5-minute breaks in between, take a 20-minute break. This is perfect for a stretch, a drink of water and eating a piece of fruit for energy.

Let's have a quick look at how some fiction writer's use this technique to get the 1st draft of their novels done.

When writing a novel, editing comes much later. The best way to do a novel, particularly if you are selling on Amazon Kindle...is to get that 1st draft done quickly. It's almost like the pulp fiction writers of the 1930's, who hammered out novels in days, not weeks. Buyers on Amazon want new books from their favorite authors as fast as humanly possible. No waiting a year or two for a release.

Some writers groups do sprints. They log-in and everyone sees who is online and ready to sprint. This gives extra motivation. They write fast for 20-minutes and then take a short break. Rinse and repeat.

You might find that trying new things is difficult. This means you are probably stuck in a rut. The pomodoro technique is perfect for you, especially if you find being focused to be a difficult thing.

Loss of focus can be from too many distractions and this technique, forces you to clear your mind and the distractions such as Facebook, before you even begin to work.

You will be energetic and that report your boss has been harassing you about, will finally get done. In all probability, you will start turning in much higher quality work and this can only be a positive thing for you.

Using the pomodoro technique has many benefits. You will become more productive each and everyday. Focus on projects is paramount and this technique motivates you to be very focused. We talked about the breaks and stretching, while having water and fruit. Think how much energy you will have not just in the morning but throughout the whole day. This is important because many people start to lag after lunch.

Try this technique out and if you are sure to adopt it into your everyday routine.

Action Steps:

- Decide on your most important task right now. This is the one that you will practise the Pomodoro technique on.
- When using a physical timer, there are many to choose from but for the very best results, go get an egg timer. The bigger the better. Setting the timer requires a physical motion, which triggers your brain and tells it that action has to take place.
- There are many great apps for the Pomodoro technique. Again, you need to clear your devices of unnecessary apps, install and test Pomodoro apps to find the right one for you.

9. Batch your tasks... Break down your main tasks into chunks.

There is no doubt that it is a hectic fast paced world out there. When you work in an office atmosphere, you tend to be pulled in many directions. If this is you, stop and think for a moment of all the things that come up in your day. Chances are you have meetings throughout the day. Some are very important while others are really just a time waste. The time wasters should be dropped if possible.

Then of course there are multiple phone calls, reports to write and so on. It may seem like your important tasks will never get done.

One way you can get more done, is by batching tasks. Look at your calendar for the week. How many of your tasks are similar? Take the similar ones and schedule out time to do them in the same time chunk.

Here is an example for you. Do you talk to clients, suppliers or co-workers in a different office or country? Get fired up to do all that talking in one chunk. Some of your calls may be done in Skype for example, while others are by phone. In this case, if you have two Skype calls that must be done, schedule for say...Tuesday morning. Then look at the phone calls and arrange an appointment to do those calls directly after the Skype.

How about email? Do you get mountains of emails that you have to go through? It has been shown that sending and answering emails is best done at the last part of the day. There are two reasons for this. First of all, email can be mind numbing. Doing it first thing in the morning, sets you up to be tired throughout the day. Setting between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. to deal with emails is better because you are already starting to wind down the day.

The second reason is that some emails are going to pull your focus. When you check emails for 5-minutes in the morning and then go back in say 30-minutes and check again, you lose focus on your important tasks. Plus, you might get an email first thing in the morning, that if you read it...destroys your focus for the day. Perhaps a client emailed to say they are seriously considering canceling a big contract.

It would be difficult to focus on that other client who is making lots of money for you, if you are worrying about the possible canceling of another contract.

Setup a reply system to let people know that you answer emails in the afternoon and emergencies should be done by phone.

We just talked about action batching. Now we can look at situation batching. In this case, we consider what tools we have to work with, like our cellphone. In our cellphone we would keep lists of people to call that are not high priority and can be done at lunchtime. If you commute, this is also a great time to do some batching. Winding down is something you should do at home, not on the subway or train. Instead, keep a file on your desk of items that need to be read.

You can take these on your commute and use a highlighter to mark the important stuff in the reports you are reading. This is more effective, than sitting at your desk and doing it, when you need the desk time for important batch tasks.

Action Steps:

- The first action you need to take, is making a list of what you do each day. This way you can identify areas that can be batched. Write down your typical day now.
- Combine the Pomodoro technique with batching. This is perfect. Imagine having 10 series of batching tasks. You are not multi-tasking here, simply put, your first 3 batches could be personal tasks, the next 3 financial tasks and the final 4 all related to business.

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10. The art of saying No.

This might come as a shocker to you. It's highly likely that you believe having to tell someone, "No," is going to be very stressful. In fact, research shows, that the harder you find it to say no, the more stress you incur.

The act of not saying no enough, can invoke a triple threat to your health. It can lead to depression, stress and even burnout in the workplace. When your brain has to constantly search for ways to get around saying no to a proposal, it releases stress chemicals.

There are some classic examples of people who have zero issue of saying no, even to someone with great power. Imagine a housekeeper saying no, to the president of the United States. It happened when President Johnson called the house of one of the top economist's at the time.

John Galbraith was deep into a nap and had instructed his housekeeper, that he was not to be disturbed.

When President Johnson insisted that the housekeeper wake Galbraith up. She calmly advised the president that she worked for John Galbraith, not the President of the United States and then hung up the phone.

When you determine that you need/want to say no to a request, it actually means that you have something of greater value in your mind. At work, a co-worker might ask you to assist in preparing a presentation for the following week.

Many people want to be that, "people pleaser." While having everyone love you because you always say yes, it can cause havoc in your life. You might find it hard to say no and if that is the case, you just need to practise. Everything that is new to us, requires practise...music, sports and even saying no.

Try to find as many situations as you can during a day to simply say no. Going for coffee and the barista asks if you want a flavor shot in your coffee? No need to explain why you don't, just say no.

Getting gas and the clerk asks if you want to add in a car wash or some Crispy Crème donuts? As hard as it may be...after all they did say donuts, just say no.

Build up that “No” muscle today.

You end up saying no because the time you take on that project would interfere in you completing a white paper that will bring the salesmen in your organization a lot of leads. In turn, the sales they make, have an affect on your year end bonus. Saying no doesn’t hurt so much when you realize you are actually saying yes to something far more important.

There cannot be any double meaning when you are saying no to someone. It has to be firm but polite. Avoid adding phrases that might lead the person to think you are actually saying, maybe. Imagine telling your spouse that you don’t think you can go to see the in-laws on Saturday. In your spouses, mind, that translates to maybe and if pushed, it will suddenly become yes.

Be more powerful and say “No, I absolutely have to run in the charity race, it means a lot to me.”

There will be plenty of times where you can avoid even having to say no. When you are going in to a staff meeting, greet everyone and then comment on how you have a really pressing commitment to work on. People will get the idea, that you are not the person to go to for help on their projects.

Long weekend coming up and you have a feeling that a visit to the in-law’s might be mentioned? Whatever you need to work on, prep it in front of your spouse. When they ask what you are doing, just reply that you have a pressing matter and you are so thankful there is a long weekend coming up that you can take advantage of. This will start them thinking about not even asking for a commitment on what they want.

How you say no means a lot too. After you have said no several times and the person continues to press for a yes, smile and say no slowly. It shows that you

are not going to get angry no matter how long the issue is pressed and that you are dead serious.

Action Steps:

-Grab a pen and paper. Now think hard about where you are always being asked to do items that waste your time. Write them down now.

-Identify any people who have no regard for your time. Write down any actions you can take, to either eliminate any contact with these people or at least cut down the amount of time you are in contact with them. This might sound brutal but in the scheme of things, you need to eliminate negative people and time wasters if you are going to be successful.

11. Declutter Your Space

This is an exercise you might think to put off but it is one of those things that keeps on paying you back. When you live and work in clutter, you get stressed because nothing can be found when needed.

Having a cluttered home or office also slows down productivity. You cannot work efficiently if you are constantly moving things aside to get at what you need.

When you decide enough is enough, schedule the time estimated to declutter. If you have a significant other and are clearing the home and home office, get them onboard asap. It will go much quicker and with less aggravation if you are on the same page from the start.

Determine what works best for you. Can you do it in chunks, like 20-minutes on and five- minutes off? Or are you the kind of person who needs to roll up the sleeves and go at it for long periods of time?

Decide what each room is going to be and how you can make the most of the room. For example, the bedrooms and the bathrooms should be areas of downtime and relaxing. Set it up so that it is pleasing to the eye and fill the rooms with items that evoke relaxation.

For example, Himalayan salt lamps are debated for the healing properties that are proposed. However, everyone seems to agree that even if they don't have any healing effect, they are very relaxing to look at and calm down.

Get comfortable pillows and spreads. For the bathroom. Make sure those towels are big and fluffy.

Many people have a home office and some work exclusively from home as the work environment has changed.

Having a decluttered home office is essential to work productivity and managing your time. As the saying goes, “everything in it’s place.” Organize your desk so that only the essential elements for that work day are visible. Everything else should be in folders or easily accessible filing cabinets. Pick proper lighting for your home office. You do not want lighting that tires your eyes.

A good idea is to fill your room with plants that are known to produce more than normal amounts of oxygen. For example, an aloe vera plant or two.

You can create zones in each area of your home. A room can have more than one zone. Depending on the size of the home, your living room can be divided into something like 3 zones. One zone is where the couches and chairs face the television. Another zone is the video area, where all the game playing goes on and the games have a storage space. Do you have lots of books? Create a corner area with bookshelves and one chair for reading.

In the home office, zone it so that you have one zone for your writing desk, one zone for the photocopier and related items and a final zone for creative thinking. This could be comfortable chair beside a small fish tank. Have a small end table and notebooks for any ideas that pop up.

All decluttering should include items like, decluttering all those newspapers, magazines, paper bills, dishes that are old and never used. Make a list of all the items you can declutter from your space.

Working in an office usually means a cubicle these days for many people. Whether you have a cubicle or an actual physical office, ask yourself a question? When you enter your space, do you feel joy or is there a sense of anxiety because there is so much on your desk and the surrounding area. If you are not feeling joy about your space and the items in your space, including that cup with the cute saying on it...then declutter.

You will be working on important tasks and you need to have that one and only task front and center. Everything else needs a new spot or the garbage

can. There are many types of desk organizers with multiple drawers available if you don't have enough desk drawers.

Take the time to look at the paper on your desk. Can that paper actually be something that is scanned to the computer and then discarded? Like your physical bills, many items can be moved online. Going paperless has been talked about for years but until we actually do it, our lives are going to be cluttered with hoards of paper.

Action Steps:

- Make a list of what rooms in your living space need to be decluttered and then take the first step by removing the biggest item now. Do you have a ratty old chair that needs to be removed to the curb? Do it now. How about the office? Are you really short on filing space? Go to the office supply store now and purchase a filing system that will fit your space and has the room you need.

- Start getting rid of paper today. Move all your bills online. There are systems where you can put not only your bills but your paystubs from work online and totally remove that paper aspect.

- Consider if you need someone to help you with the declutter. There are many freelancers online that will come to your home and assist you with decluttering, setting up systems and even adding some feng shui elements. Feng shui is arranging your living space so that vital energy flows. This could be really beneficial for your personal growth.

12. Declutter Your Mind

Think of how your mind is right now. Imagine it as a large room shaped like a racetrack. Now when you picture your mind, is that racetrack filled with every kind of automotive machine known to man? Really picture it. See cars, trucks, motorcycles, skidoo's all going at top speed trying to pass one another. Utter chaos.

Most people have a mind that is cluttered with thoughts racing past one another, all competing for attention. What if your mind was more like a racetrack with a single, quiet vehicle. You can see it moving swiftly around the track unhindered with nothing in its way.

This is what you need and want for your mind in order to be able to succeed at time management and other important areas of your life.

How do we get to this point? There are a number of solutions and you can try as many as you like.

Consider doing meditation. It can be done at anytime. You don't have to spend an hour in the morning or night, just to slow your thinking down and focus on one thing. Practise five-minute meditations. We talked about doing a 20-minute task, followed by 5- minute breaks. This is perfect for 5-minute meditations to keep you from getting agitated or stressed out.

Tai chi is also great for decluttering the mind. Practising 30-minutes of tai chi will slow down your body movements, allow you to draw in plenty of oxygen and calm your mind.

How often do you ponder about the "I should have done this or why did this happen to me?" Mentally bringing up stored items of regret and then having conversations in your brain about it...really adds a big pile of garbage to that special storage area you have set aside in your grey matter.

In fact, when people do this, they tend to change their responses and even the responses of the person they had issues with, over and over. Each replay becomes more stressful and clutters up what could be a beautiful space.

One way that you can stop the chatter in your brain, is to write it down in a journal or a diary. Get it all out using pen and paper. Really unload those emotions that have been floating around in your mind for years. After you have it all down, go back with a different colored pen and cross out where you know that the statements are not true. They are blown out of proportion. Then write over top of that, why you are not going to think like that again. Tell yourself how much it is costing you emotionally to keep playing the same CD in your brain on repeat.

For really serious clutter that just won't go, consider spending some time studying how to use different techniques to help destroy those memories that hinder you. There is one in NLP, the study of the language of the brain and it is called, "The Erasure Technique." Never give up, just find what works for your unique situation.

There are smaller but still significant things you can do in order to declutter your mind. Unsubscribe is a word you should get to know on a better basis. You need to limit the amount of information that is pouring into your brain but not actually contributing anything.

Look at the apps on your phone and delete the unessential ones. Unsubscribe from email lists that do not move you forward with power. The same thing goes for following blogs or people on Instagram. Ask yourself if you really need to follow that fitness model or Hollywood gossip site.

Action Steps:

-Take some time now, to think about the people that you associate with. Really analyze who is transferring negative energy to you. You are, who you surround yourself with. Many people find that after spending years around

negative people, they in turn become negative. You need to either eliminate contact or reduce it completely.

- You should always be feeding your mind with positive material. In regards to not being able to totally remove a negative person from your life, make it a priority to re-program your brain immediately after contact with one of these people. Purchase books or Mp3's that you can quickly access.

- Think about your mindset right now. Are you negative, always find issues with everything or unable to stop anxiety? If this is true, go online now and look at life coaches, NLP courses or anything in that regard. Sign up now for a course and make sure you go to every session.

13. Ignore the noise and manage disruptions.

Some people would say that there is very little difference in working from home and having your kids there...to working in an office and having annoying co-workers always asking questions. The big difference is, at home you have lots to barter with kids. Not so much at work.

Let's take a look at working from home first. When you work from home and the house is empty, it is simply a case of shutting down the home phone and cellphone. If there is still noise that is distracting you from working, such as traffic or noisy lawn mowers, then wearing noise reduction headphones might be an option.

Working at home with a significant other or adding in kids, will require some planning. It's best to set boundaries with all concerned.

Have a fun lunch meeting with those at home and discuss why it is important that you are left in quiet to do your work. Establish that the door will be closed but very important questions will be answered. Tell them, that opening the door quietly and checking first to see if you are on the phone, is extremely important. They should know to wait until the phone is put down or you close the Skype program and stop talking.

Children will always interrupt no matter what. Instead of getting upset, do some bartering with them. You need breaktime from work and let's face it, most people who want to work from home, do it so they can be with family and have flexible hours. Tell your child to let you work for an hour straight and if that happens, you will do their favorite activity with them for ½ hour. Chill time for you, means less stress.

When your kids are young, they should be off to bed at a decent hour. Plan to do some work at that time. You have to work out a schedule that gives you noise free time and the ability to get stuff done. One method that people use, is to work 2-3 hours broken into 3 segments. Mornings, afternoons, and last segment around 9 p.m.

This gives you a lot of flexibility in terms of having it all, work from home and be loving to your family.

Working in an office can be a challenge. Depending on the type of work you do, the noise levels will be different. Some will have a number of co-workers that are loud. There will be photocopiers and of course the ever present ringing phone.

Due to the cost of office space, it is now rare to see multiple offices within a company's rented space. Everything has opened to cubicles, open door policies so that people don't get offended thinking that they do not have immediate access to everyone.

While this might be good for office harmony in most cases...it can also be hindrance unless some boundaries are set.

The boundaries need to be established but do so gently. You can talk to your co-workers and let them know that you appreciate their willingness to help, however you do from time to time need quiet. Advise them to look at the cubicle you are in first and check to see if you have your sign out. What sign you may ask? Well that would be the one you had made up that states, "No interruptions please. We don't want to go bankrupt and have to look for news jobs."

You really need to have some humor about the sign you put up. It would cause issues if you just posted a sign that said, "Quiet!"

When you are in charge at the office, you have an advantage. You can have a personal assistant screening calls, scanning emails and organizing them while you concentrate on important projects.

It's also easier to set a very specific hour for a no-interruptions time and have your gatekeeper, hold everyone to it. You can also set the meeting times to

your total advantage and if people are not sticking to your rules, gently assign them new work so they get the hint that interruptions will not be tolerated.

Action Steps:

- Designate a quiet work station today. It doesn't matter if you work from home or out in the workforce. Enforce the rules, get a sign made up now, that tells people you are working and not to be disturbed.
- Go buy noise cancelling headphones today. Try them out in the store first and make sure they are a comfortable fit. Make sure they really work, have someone talk to you and see just how much noise is filtered and keep testing until you find the best.
- Search for a co-working station today. Tell the management company that you want a free trial of one week. You need to find a co-work station that lives up to what they say they offer. It is no good to pay for a service only to find out that it is too noisy or the receptionist at the front does not screen according to your instructions.

14. No multitasking. Focus on one activity at a time

Hopefully the idea of multitasking will become extinct just like the dinosaurs. For those of us who love the Big Bang Theory, we all know the guys and some of the girls are all about science. It's science that has shown us that multitasking does not work and can actually stress you out.

It's been shown to be the most ineffective way to manage your time and priorities. In one of the tests that scientists did on this subject, they gave people a number of tasks to work on at the same time. At the conclusion of the testing, it was shown that the completion of the tasks was actually slowed down by 500%.

One reason for this slow down is the switching of thought process. Although our subconscious mind can operate at beyond super computer speed, our conscious minds work much slower.

To show how this is true, scientists looked at people who spoke two or more languages. They were tested on switched back and forth between the new language and their native language. The time switching was measured as was the ability to start thinking and talking in their native language. There was a definite lag in starting up again in the native tongue.

What is multitasking? It is simply doing one or more things at the same time. There is a very old joke about a person's ability to walk and chew gum at the same time.

While that joke was funny back in it's day, we have moved to something more serious in multitasking. The invention of texting has caused not only unhappiness in significant relationships but also injury and death. Everyday you hear about someone texting and driving or texting and walking into oncoming cars. While walking and chewing bubble gum does not really require any thought process, walking and texting does.

As the person's fingers are flying across the devices keyboards, they may be thinking of something funny to say or they are angry and coming up with negative words.

To really amp up the dangerous multitasking, you can now listen to YouTube on your iPhone while browsing other websites on your cell.

Studies have shown that university students who have multiple browsers open and attempt multitasking, are in danger of chronic stress. One can only imagine having the computer open, a few tests books flipped to pertinent pages, while eating Kraft dinner.

Anyone who attempts to do massive multitasking is only doing harm to their health.

In addition to chronic stress, multitaskers can suffer from depression. The attempt to do too many things at once plus be part of the social scene on Facebook, has people talking to their doctors about how stressed out they are.

Multitasking can also do harm at work. While some workplaces ban smartphones from usage, other encourage it as a means to be productive. Where the harm comes in, is not recognizing the time and place to use the smartphone.

Having a laptop open and already engaged in work, then opening the smartphone...is definitely multitasking. It is so easy to lose focus and be productive. In most cases, the smartphone is being used to check texts while the laptop is open to something like Word document.

It is best to put away the smartphone while doing a project of some kind.

In the office atmosphere, you are frequently engaged in meetings and again it is possible that your laptop is open or there is a presentation being displayed. Taking out the smartphone to check texts, especially if you know it is frowned upon, can lead to stress. It is better to excuse yourself from the meeting if it is truly important to check that smartphone.

Action Steps:

- Take the time now, to write down where you have been multi-tasking. You may not even be aware of some of the items you have been doing this with. Identify them and then write down how you are going to stop multi-tasking in that area.
- After identifying where you have been multi-tasking, write down items that you can delegate. You may have important tasks that are actually better handled by someone else. In the case of your home, you can assign items to others who do not have the same workload as you.

15. The art of the To Do list.

Pretty much everyone has done a “to do” list at one time or another. Sometimes it is just 3-4 items that can be done quickly. In other cases, it is multiple items and some of them are complex. It’s where the item is complex, that frequently it fails to get done. Simple “to do’s” get done and rather quickly at that.

When you look at a “to do” and one item is to simply cancel an appointment, then it tends to get done and crossed off.

However, something more complex like, “fill in sales stats,” might get overlooked.

The way to avoid this issue, is to make that sales stats item, more detailed. Instead, write down, “fill in sales stats, check yesterdays against it. What do I need to improve tomorrow?” Yes, it is a bit longer but it is going to move you forward to doing it because you want to make more money.

Doing your “to do” list should include adding intentions. Remind yourself why you intend to do the task and what the benefit is. Even something simple like, “clean the garage,” can be more of an intention like, “clean the garage so my wife will see there is more than enough room to put a workout set.”

When you have long “to do” lists, it can seem overwhelming. Try batching and starring your to do list. Put similar items in a batch, then take the batches of 5, 10 or more and code it. **VI** for very important, **I** for important and finally, **NI** for not important. Come up with your own coding system that will move you forward.

While pen and paper was the traditional method for to do lists, many people are switching to apps. Let’s look at some of the top apps available today.

1. **Wunderlist** is an access it anywhere app. This is extremely useful when you are creating multiple lists for personal stuff or work. You can access it from your browser, cellphone and even Kindle Fire. Wunderlist is great if you work on projects with others. You can easily share your lists and comment on what is being worked on.

Many people suffer from poor memories, sometimes from overwhelm and also due to health issues. In Wunderlist, you can set the list with a due date and get a reminder. Perfect when you have an issue remembering to actually check your “to do” list. Check it out here:

<https://www.wunderlist.com/>

2. **Todoist** has a great YouTube video to show you all the features. After you are setup, you can log in and create a list, then assign it a name and set reminders of when to do it. You can also set it to be re-occurring. For example, if every Monday morning at 9 a.m., you have to fill out your expense report in order to be reimbursed, Todoist will pop up weekly for that. This app also allows you to set priorities by setting a level number. Of course, #1 being the highest value.

Need to share your list? No problem. Click a button and share it with co-workers or family. This is a wonderful app that can be synced to all your devices.

<https://en.todoist.com/>

Action Steps:

- You need to decide what important stuff goes on the “To Do,” list and then write out a very clear sentence on exactly what it is. Use detail that will motivate you. Under each “To Do,” you can write the next big action that will get it started. Get started now.

- Use the Pareto principle to get priority on each task. Come up with a grading system that will get you fired up. Numbering 1, 2 and 3 doesn't get your blood perking. Try VIP for very important or something like, RI for really important.
- Figure out the time to do each task. With this you can move forward and put it into your calendar. Use a marking system of your choice that motivates you. People love emoji's but on paper you might use a sticky gold star.

16. Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is a valuable tool. In terms of time management and productivity, having a mind map to follow can keep you on track of important tasks.

Our brains thrive on visual learning in most cases. When you are working on time management and you do your work in pencil and paper, your brain is searching for graphics which it prefers. Having your mind map in one of your 5 plus notebooks or somewhere on your computer, leads to a lot of searching. Better examples of mind maps are doing them on large white boards with lots of colors and graphics or using a specialized time management mind map that is easy to find on your computer.

There are some great mind mapping tools for time management. One that gets high ratings is called, “Mindmeister.” Once you have Mindmeister setup on your computer, decide which project is your most important. Put that at the center and then the branches will flow from there.

One branch will become your first sub-topic. You can then add on to it in a variety of ways. For instance, come up with a list of items related to the subtopic. You could think of it in terms of how, why, and when.

Free flow thinking works well with building out subtopics that will help you manage your time on the project. After your mindmap is done, you can go back and delete a portion or expand it as further ideas take shape.

Stuck on ideas for your mind map? Let’s get the basics down by using White Papers as our central topic. White papers are used by companies to promote awareness of a new product for instance and they presell people without actually selling.

Our center piece would be **white papers** and then we build out a few subtopics. Here are a couple of items that would be ideal for any white paper project. You could have a subtopic for “goals for the project.” In this, we would build branches like, build a website for the white paper, make it downloadable and capture emails. Another branch could talk about images in the white paper.

Another good subtopic would be “My activity log or Our Activity log.” Here you would do branches on responsibility. If the white paper is being written by a freelance copywriter, list each department head the copywriter would go to for information.

In the case of the white paper being done by a team from the company, then you would list the person’s name and direct contact number. Build out and show what each team member does. Who is doing the research, the writing and getting images or graphics put together?

Adding another branch with the date the project is started and when each piece of the project is to be delivered, helps to easily keep track of time.

The head project manager can tell in a glance, who is delivering the graphics and when this is taking place. Everything is organized in one spot. Try mind mapping for time management of any project you need to do, and you will find it to be stress free and leading to success.

Action Steps:

- Decide what your first mind map will be. If you feel unsure of how putting one together will look, start simple. Build a mind map for any writing project...like a blog post
- Once you have decided on your first mind map, decide what the main theme will be and put that at the center.
- Now add your main branches, followed by putting sub-branches on the main branch. For example, center would be build a blog, main branch could be get hosting or picking and up loading a theme. Then do sub-branches, what are the plug in’s you need, security and so on
- Each branch should be a keyword, “theme,” “plug ins” “seo.”
- Next up, color code each main branch and sub-branches, so that your visual mind is able to go into creative mode, adding more ideas. Final step is add images

to the branches to convey the ideas of what is going to happen. Think of a roadmap, with images of gas stations, railroads, schools and churches.

17. Use Evernote to organize your life

Previously we talked about decluttering. Many people find that although decluttering a house or office is very helpful, what they really need is to declutter their computer.

We tend to download many things to our computers. Everything from free reports, images, photos, to speciality programs we buy from Clickbank and Amazon. Then the search begins. Many people find it difficult to organize files and their computers and the search function frequently shows no items found. It's like the item you want, purposely goes into hiding.

A great tool for time management and keeping you very organized, is the highly touted app called, "Evernote." This is used for personal and business situations and has people becoming much more efficient.

When we talk about clutter, paper is one of the big culprits. Do you want to reduce your paper usage? You can use your scanner to take any type of document and scan it to Evernote. Think of all those business cards in your wallet. Scan your receipts and put them in an Evernote folder.

Evernote is great for photographs. Anyone who takes photos to use in their business can now easily store and retrieve in Evernote. Real estate agents need to take multiple photos of houses, as does someone who works for an auto insurance company. Quickly uploading your photos with Evernote, they can be tagged and then retrieved quickly by entering the tag in the Evernote search function.

Imagine if you are a blogger of any type. You know that images inserted into a blog will increase search ranking. Food bloggers will find Evernote perfect for uploading and storing all those pictures of yummy food.

When you are organizing a project, you will be taking notes. With Evernote, you can attach whatever you need to that note. Imagine being able to attach lists or audio recordings. Handwritten notes are also very simple to search for on Evernote.

Action Steps:

- Evaluate your ability to learn new computer programs. Are you able to jump right in and learn a new software with basically little instruction? Some people can take a new phone out of the box and throw away the instructions, because they have the ability to navigate and learn on the fly.
- If you discover that you have many items you want to use Evernote for, then grab an Evernote course from the online site called, "Udemy."
- Go check out Udemy now. Currently as this report is being written, there are Evernote Master Courses on sale for as little as \$13.99. After taking one of these courses, you will be able to teach others in your office, how to be proficient in Evernote.
- Remember, you can always create a google alert, to tell you when an Evernote course is on sale.

18. Dictate your emails with Google Docs

Time management is also about speeding up daily tasks, to give you more time to work on other things. One really great method for this, is using Google docs voice recognition.

This is a great tool for doing many emails, short reports or even blog posts. You can do your work in Google docs and then download it in whatever format you need.

Many people find that for blog posts, copying and pasting from their Word docs to a notepad file, works best for transferring it to a blog post. Then simply format and publish.

Voice recognition software has exploded recently since voice to document became available. You can now dictate documents in chrome on the web. It works on Android and ios as well. Google has upgraded the commands available. Want to give it a try to speed up those daily tasks? Let's go through the steps required.

1. Sign into your Google Gmail account.
2. Look for the set of nine dots in the top righthand corner and click on it.
3. This will open a set of Icons and you need to click on google drive.
4. At the top left-hand corner, you will see a blue box, labeled, "New." Click on that.
5. It will now show you a drop-down menu and you need to click on the one called, "google docs."
6. Now you will see an untitled document open on your computer.

7. Click on “Tools,” in your task bar and when the drop box menu opens, click on “Voice Typing.”
8. On the left-hand side, you will now see a large icon of a microphone. Before we do any work, click on the “?” under the microphone, to review all the commands available. You will see that you can command the recorder to type a period, start a new line and a wide variety of items. As well, you can quickly learn how to edit or format your writing. Okay, lets continue.
9. When you click on the microphone icon, it will begin to type whatever you say. You can speak very quickly, and it will follow along.
10. Doing a test run, open it up and click the microphone icon, then say something like that very old typing lesson. Say the sentence, “The quick brown fox, jumped over the lazy dog.” As you state those words, once you are finished, you say period. Then say, “new line.”
11. Wondering what cool things you can do? Well this is set up so that you can even insert bullet points by telling it to do so. Then as you go through your document and you decide you want to highlight something, you can do that too. Just say “bold” “select teacher” “text color yellow.” In saying this, the bold is selected, as is the word teacher, which is then highlighted in yellow.
12. All done your test document? Go to “File,” at the top left-hand corner. Click and then select “download.” Once the box opens, choose if you want to save as a Microsoft Word (docx) or perhaps a PDF. There are a number of choices. Click the one you need.
13. The file will be downloaded to your download area. As a Microsoft Word (docx) for example, you will see it as, “untitled.” Open it and enable

editing. Then save it and name it. You are set. Now you can see how this free tool can save you a lot of time.

Action Steps:

- Sit down and list out what type of writing you do. Look at each one and see if using google docs, can handle this for you.
- Set google docs up now and test it out. You should be able to use google docs without a microphone but if you need one, don't delay.
- Set aside practise time and list out where you are having trouble. It is best to practise first, as you do not want to try and create important emails and have to keep correcting. This will lead to frustration and you may give up. Instead, practising all the things you can do, like bullet points, new paragraphs and even editing without touching the keyboard will give you the confidence to do this.

19. Outsource to free your time for important task.

Have you ever been accused of trying to spread yourself too thin, trying to do it all? When you are engaged in projects that have multiple layers, there are of course “very important tasks,” and those which fall under the “need to do,” but not important area.

It’s the need “to do” ones that you should consider outsourcing. The first question you need to ask yourself, is whether or not, outsourcing is in your budget. The cost of outsourcing varies greatly. Also remember that even if you pay premium costs, that doesn’t mean there won’t be issues. You need to be able to determine that the outsourcer gets results and if possible, check testimonials.

Never outsourced before? Here are a few things you can hire others to do.

1. **Virtual assistant**-these people will take on a wide variety of tasks. You need to contact them with a list of what you need done and set a time frame, plus what you wish to pay.
2. **Graphics**-There are some talented people out there doing graphics. Budget wise, you can hire people from countries where your money is much more valuable than their currency.
3. **Writing**-Again you can hire writers from different countries, however this is a bit different from graphics. The ability for them to understand directions and write with the same proficiency as a native English speaker, needs to be checked very carefully. You might even consider giving them a brief test if you have a lot of writing you need done.
4. **Social Media**-In the event that your projects need to gain attention from Pinterest, Instagram, or other platforms, you can outsource

someone to do this. You can either provide the images or give them a list of the type of images to search and use.

5. **Accounting and Bookkeeping**-Most people hate dealing with daily bookkeeping. This is a task that can be outsourced and in a lot of cases, eases your stress.

That's just five of the things you can outsource. There are many more. Let's look at some of the top place to find help.

Fiverr-This place gets good reviews and bad. Generally, though, the reason people are unhappy with it, is the fact they have not taken the time to learn how to use it.

You need to be able to learn how to sift through the various profiles and pick the "gigs," that are highly probable for success. Look for gigs from Level Two sellers. These people have proven they can do the work they promote. You will see mostly five stars for these people.

Don't just look at the five stars. Read through the comments. You are looking for full comments on how the Fiverr gig was handled. Ignore the "did a great job," comments. They mean nothing. A short paragraph is what you are looking for.

Here is an example of a Fiverr gig that is at the top of the game. Virtualgirl2010 has a 5 out 5 Star rating, with over 1K people having rated the gig. It's an 8-year level two seller.

Fiverr is known to have a good dispute reputation, so if there are issues, getting a refund to your account is not an issue.

Facebook-Now before we delve into finding help on Facebook, let's talk about hiring writers in general. Budget wise, if you can do it,

google blogs in your niche and look to see if they hire outside writers. You can then check the quality of work and contact those people.

Okay, on to Facebook. Facebook groups are a great way to mingle and find creative help. Need a great writer? Join groups that are in your niche. Many groups will have pinned posts at the top.

You can search through those posts and see if the group owner has a list of “recommended sources.” A lot of writing groups will have this and some of the recommended freelancers may do more than writing. If you don’t see what you are looking for, contact the group owner and explain. They are very likely in a large number of Facebook groups themselves and may be able to point you to a group that can help.

LinkedIn-This one might not pop into your mind right away. However, this is a great group for networking and outsourcing work. There are many groups you can join that are related to what your business is.

You can contact people in regards to, help with writing, IT, graphics and everything else. Frequently you see people posting that they have left a position and are looking for work. Some even go from traditional jobs to freelancing and make those announcements on LinkedIn.

Outsourcing can be a great benefit to you in terms of time management. If you have never considered it before, add it to your “check it out,” list.

Action Steps:

- Go through your entire business and find what you can outsource and feel comfortable with. Make lists of jobs and possible outsourcing areas that match up.

- Connect with more people. Networking is vital in business and you should have a lot of people that you offer advice to and get some back. Get some referrals from your network. If someone has been outsourcing bookkeeping to the same firm for five years, chances are, those people are going to be a good fit for you.
- Make a chart of what you are outsourcing, who it goes to, how much time it should take and what the fee plus rewards if any should be. You may even consider color coding this to make it more visual easier for your eyes to follow.

20. Delegate

Working from home, means you may want to delegate some chores to the kids. While you want to help out as much as you can with household items, sometimes your priority list just won't allow it. You have to make it clear to your family, that it's a case of you have to farm out things around the house, not that want to do it. There is a big difference, although it might take time to see it.

In the office, if you hold a supervisors position or you are the head of the office, this is your time to delegate.

You want someone fielding your calls for you. When this breaks down and the caller gets through, be polite and advise that you have a staff member who is better qualified to handle their requests.

When you feel that moving the caller over to another staff member is not an option, then it is time to establish ground rules. Advise the caller you are working on a high priority item and have X amount of time to talk. Usually they will offer to call back at a time when they can have your undivided attention.

Team work is essential and as a person who is able to delegate tasks to keep your time well managed, here is how you handle it.

Make sure you understand the strengths and weakness of each team member. You need to assign tasks to the proper person or your work will be constantly interrupted because a staff member is unclear of how to complete a task.

Now you may be one of those types of people that have difficulty delegating. You just don't want to let go of anything. Releasing your fear of others not being able to do the task as well as you, is essential if you are going to manage your time. Give people the opportunity to show you that they have the skills and the desire. Even though you think that you know your

employees well, delegating might just shock you at how talented your co-workers really are.

In delegating, it is essential that you layout exactly what is expected of each employee. For them to do the best job possible and avoid coming back to you repeatedly, look at giving them more authority. You don't need to give them a raise but show them you have confidence in their abilities and raise their powers as need be.

When meeting and delegating tasks that free you up, you have to make sure each employee is completely onboard. When you sense, hesitation, this may mean they don't want the responsibility or feel they cannot handle it. You need to clear out any hesitation. This may mean asking questions to get to the root of the hesitation. Knowing your employees habits and personal preferences, you decide if you need to clear the air in the group meeting or speak to them individually.

When you get into the habit of delegating and you see how much it frees up your time, you might consider rewards. Giving employees some kind of reward, financial or otherwise, will help in the next rounds of delegating tasks. Everyone wants to feel appreciated.

Being the King or Queen of delegation is key to you managing your time and kingdom effectively.

Action Steps:

- Get into the mental frame of mind, to give it away. Think of it like a charity, so your mind does not tell you to hold onto that task.
- Today, make a list of what tasks can be delegated in your personal and business life.
- Now, write down the person's name and the logical reason you are delegating this task. You need to be able to tell the person, "you are the one to do this task because_____". Make them feel appreciated

and do not let them feel that they are grunt labor that can be handed anything.

- Are you going to reward for tasks delegated and well done? Write down what you are going to do. In the office, are you going to pay for a spa day, after a month of someone picking up your tasks and doing an exceptional job? We don't reward for mediocre performance. 😊

21. Top Apps that will help you manage your time efficiently.

We all like to think we are productive and sometimes we are. To be positive about managing your time and also get some help, let's go over five of the top time management apps.

1. **Rescue Time**-is brilliant. This app is going to run in the background of all your devices. It monitors where you spend your time and analyzes where you are wasting time. You get reports on where you spend your time. A cool feature is where you tell Rescue Time, the websites that are time stealers and it will block them for the time you pick to focus. You get a log highlight of where you spent your time during the day, plus it even breaks down how much time you spent in your emails.

<https://www.rescuetime.com/>

2. **Toggl**-works to help you break down your time and shows you what tasks are actually profitable. It tracks your clients and your tasks so that you can see exactly where your day is spent and what is productive. You can load reports into Toggl so that it can run the numbers for you like a mini-bookkeeper. You get to focus on the planning. It syncs across all devices.

<https://toggl.com/>

3. **Mind 42**-is one of those great online mind mapping tools that you heard about. You can create mind maps on virtually anything with this tool. It's able to do lists, project organizing and even time management for parenting. The sky is the limit. The mind maps you create, can also be shared.

<https://mind42.com/>

4. **My Life Organized**-sounds like a dream come true. If you have difficulty managing your "to do" lists, check out this app. It also helps you focus on the goals that mean the most to you. As you work to reach your goals, My

Life Organized, actually creates and sends you to do lists, with the priorities you should be focused on based on what you want to accomplish

<https://www.mylifeorganized.net/>

5. **Time Tree**-is an app that allows you to share your schedule with family, friends, and co-workers. The beauty of this app, is you can share your calendar with a co-worker who is on your project team and they don't even need to have the Time Tree app.

Time Tree really is perfect for managing family time, balanced with worktime. When you and your significant other share schedules, there is no wasted time or statements like, "I thought you were picking up the kids while I was in my meeting?"

Check out Time Tree today.

<https://timetreeapp.com/>

Action Steps:

- Here we have a number of great apps that can help you with time management. This is another area, where you should speak to your network and find out who is using apps and then make a list of great recommendations.
- -Now that you have it narrowed down to 2 to 4 apps, give each one a try and find that one that speaks to you.
- After two weeks of using one app, if you find that it has not increased your productivity, switch it up and try another one and test it out for two weeks.

As you went through each day, you were given action steps to get you moving in the right direction. If you skipped any day, go back now and complete that action. You now have all the tools you need to become a master of Time Management.

Conclusion:

Time is something you need to manipulate to your benefit. Like a magician, you can make things disappear from your life. Then create something brand new that serves you and makes life far less stressful. Out of all the hacks, several stand out as must do's.

Clutter is a huge issue. We see it in the home and there are shows dedicated to clutter and of course hoarding. That type of clutter is extreme. While most people can manage a cluttered home if they have issues getting it cleaned up...computer clutter appears to affect people more harshly.

The frustration of never being able to find an important email or a downloaded report, drives people over the edge. Computers were supposed to make life easier for us and for the most part they do. Yet, when we fail from the start, to properly organize and declutter our computers, we heap stress upon ourselves. We talked about Evernote but if for some reason, you are hesitating on using an app, go super simple.

It is very important that you declutter now and if you buy a new computer, set it up with a system that gives you a relaxed feeling.

It can be as simple as creating a new desk top folder for each item. For example, if you download or make a lot of pdf's, create a pdf folder. Make a music folder, a picture folder. Next make a notepad folder and in the very first notepad that you put in there-make it your master-list of what is in each of the folders on your desktop.

When it comes time to find something, open your notepad folder, then the master-list and scroll through it to find where you put that short report on, "Making a birdhouse in 10 simple steps." And there it is, not in your PDF folder but in your Projects folder.

We also talked about using a planner. This is so important. Sticky notes are for simple stuff, like posting one on the front door before bedtime, that says, "garbage." That way you remember to haul the cans out to the curb.

Don't try to do time management and planning with sticky notes or something similar. You need a good functional planner to keep everything on track and running smooth.

Managing your time is your responsibility and the gift you give to yourself.