

Take Control of Your Time

By Archie R. Lawhorne

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Take Control of Your Time and Take
Control of Your Life

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If you're ever going to take control of your life and make it grand, you'll need to start by taking control of your time. Without question, effective time management is fundamental to succeeding in any area of life. In fact, it is often the main difference between life's achievers and those who, although always busy, never get anywhere.

Not surprisingly, an entire industry has been created out of the need to better manage our time. But if you look a little deeper, you'll see that its not so much about time management as it is self management. Because in reality, you can't control time, but you can control yourself and what you do with each moment of time.

Most experts agree that success is the result of habit. Therefore, the first step in improving how you use your time starts with your habits (self control). And your habits start as consciously made decisions (i.e. what time you get up, what kind of books you read, etc.).

Once established, good habits become second nature. In many cases, success is not so much the result of doing the unusual, but rather the result of one's ability to "master the mundane." By consistently performing all of the little rudimentary tasks that are important, over time these activities transform into huge achievements.

Here's some simple rules to follow for better time management:

Don't procrastinate. Do it now. When people put things off, it kills momentum, slows achievement of current goals and restricts future opportunity as time is clogged up. The way to tackle procrastination is to set deadlines by which goals should be achieved. The way to avoid last-minute deadlines brought on by procrastination is to set intermediary goals which must be achieved and then steadily track progress.

Track your activities. Memory is a poor guide when it comes to assessing how you spend your time. A better way is to record your activities throughout the day, listing everything you do. Most people will find that they have about three hours each day that can be used in a more constructive or efficient manner. Take stock of the time you spend chatting on the phone, flipping through magazines or aimlessly surfing the Web, and eliminate all that isn't necessary.

Concentrate on results. Many people spend their days in a frenzy of activity, but achieve very little because they are not concentrating on the right things. Don't confuse working efficiently with working effectively. Activities can be tension-relieving, but not goal-achieving. By concentrating on fewer "major" priorities regularly, you can achieve a lot more in less time.

Remember the 80/20 principle: 20% of your key activities will give you 80% of your results. Your aim is to change this to ensure that you concentrate as much of your effort as possible on the high payoff tasks.

Use travel time wisely. It's easy to overlook time spent traveling in your assessment of time management. Consider carefully whether this is time that you could use more productively. For example, if you opted to take the bus or train to work, would this provide an opportunity to make better use of your commute time? Or if you do drive, are you listening to educational or motivational tapes (rather than the Top 40) which could help improve your skills and make you a more productive and well-rounded person?

Develop action plans. An action plan is a brief list of tasks that you have to complete to achieve an objective. It differs from a "To Do" list in that it focuses on the achievement of a goal, (and the specific steps to get there) rather than just on the goals to be achieved in a period of time. Whenever you want to achieve something, drawing up an action plan allows you to concentrate on the stages of that achievement, and monitor your progress towards that realization.

Respond quickly. For example, take care of your mail as you receive it. Don't let those bills and letters pile up on you. If you're unable to respond to a letter immediately, file it in a special place that's visible, and note on the envelope the required action and date you intend to resolve it. When possible, act on requests the same day you receive them. Don't let your computer, your desk or your mind become clogged with useless things.

Be Decisive. Learn to say no to people. Your time is important, so don't let other people impose or use you to compensate for their poor planning. Eliminate distractions as much as possible. Close your door, turn off the ringer on your phone or simply ask not to be disturbed.

Schedule time to relax. When you're organizing your time and your business, make sure to set aside some time for relaxation. If you plan for it in advance, it's less likely to come up spontaneously and distract you from other tasks. (No, sitting at your computer with a mouse under your hand does not qualify as relaxing).

Your first step toward better time management is to take stock of the time you waste each day and from there, reorganize your activities to maximize every minute. (Essentially, it boils down to exercising better self control - it's simple, but not easy). Above all, stick to your plan. Your schedule will work only as well as you commit to it. Keep it with you everywhere you go and refer to it often. By following these tips, you'll create more space to be, do and have more in your life. Best of all, you'll approach life in a more proactive and intentional manner.

Archie R. Lawhorne, APR, is an accredited public relations professional, marketing writer and consultant. Archie's FREE 7-Day MLM Crash Course uncovers the dirty secrets and exposes the ugly under-belly of MLM like you've never seen before. Don't make another move or invest another dime until you read this material. For instant delivery, send a blank email to: MLMInsights@infogeneratorpro.com, or visit <http://www.profitleader.com> . FOD: 403-934-6061 (Doc. 362104).

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