



TOPIC: TIME MANAGEMENT

TITLE: TIME IS VALUABLE

February 21, 2000

"Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend." - Thoeprastus

My recent newsletters have focused on staying on track. This is often a tough task for many people. Even though they have goals and know what to do, they find that the day gets ahead of them and soon enough they haven't done what they set out to.

So, how can you keep focused? It's really a process of daily management. There is only so much time we have to work with. As we add more to our plate, we don't get more time. So, how do I manage all I have to do, and still get done what I want to do? The first thing is to have a daily plan - this can be done on a post-it note, or a more formal planning system. The idea is that you have prepared for your day before it begins, and planned for the things you should do, versus the things you have to do. Once you have the plan, it's a matter of staying on track and getting it done.

I've listed below several tips to help you stay focused during the day:

- Give yourself the gift of time. A time-block can do this for you. It's a certain amount of time (maybe 1/2 to an hour) where you forward your phone, close your door, or move into another area to complete the tasks on your plan. The reason behind blocking your time is that you won't be interrupted or distracted. You can do what you need to in a concentrated timeframe and then over on to other things.

TAKE ACTION: How much time will you give your plan each day?

- Keep the same time-block everyday. By doing this you build repetition and momentum, and in time, develop a habit.

TAKE ACTION: What time of day will you devote to time-block everyday?

- Small things make big differences. Do something small towards your goal daily. These can be things like talking with employees, addressing conflict early, reward and recognition, or proactive contact with clients. By being proactive now, you prevent doing more later.

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TAKE ACTION: What are three things you can do everyday to make progress on your goals?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Do the hard things first. These are the top things on your success plan ranked by difficulty. By doing these first, you get them out of the way and ensure you get them done. If you wait, what often happens is your day fills up with other things, or you spend your time thinking about the anxiety you have around doing them - in essence making them much harder than they really are.

TAKE ACTION: What are your top three most difficult tasks?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Set goals and deadlines for what you want to get done. By attaching a timeframe to a task, you have a higher chance of getting it done.

TAKE ACTION: For each action listed above, by when will you do it?

- Plan daily. Whether it's simply writing down the three things you'd like to do tomorrow, writing it and planning it will raise your chances of getting it done.

TAKE ACTION: When will you plan for your day?

- Keep your goals listed in your office, near your phone or computer. When a distraction arises, ask yourself the question "Is this something I have to tend to right now?" If it isn't, schedule a time to address it later that day.



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TAKE ACTION: Create a poster!

My priority goals is:

In order to achieve it I must do:

By when:

- Debrief your day. At the end of each day, check your goal list and daily plan, and ask yourself "what worked well today, and what would I do differently tomorrow?"
- By taking a few minutes to look at how the day went, you can plan differently for tomorrow.

TAKE ACTION: When will you debrief your day?

My challenge for you this week is to implement these tips. Take a few minutes everyday to plan, and end your day by debriefing how it went. You have the chance to learn what's working, and where you can change some of your time management habits. There is never enough time to do everything we want to do, and have to do. However, what you do with your time is within your control, and you have the power to keep yourself on track.