

# CONQUER PROCRASTINATION

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Learn strategic time management to achieve your goals without working harder.

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# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

Productivity is often a misunderstood concept. Being productive isn't necessarily about accomplishing more, but rather it's about investing your time and attention in a more strategic way to add value to your career, life, and relationships. If you're like most people, you probably wish that you could be more productive in your life. However, one thing that you may have failed to consider is the reason and motivation that drives you to work toward accomplishing your goals.

Too often, our desires to be more productive are based on the belief that it is what is expected of us by society or because we think we are being overloaded with work and don't feel as if we can handle the workload. You might feel a desire to be more productive to impress your coworkers and boss or even to appear as though you are busy. While these are all valid reasons for wanting to be more productive, they are all external reasons. Other external motivators for wanting to be more productive may include material things, money, or fame.

While money can be a great motivator for many people, it is vital that you consider whether or not there is something else driving you. If your reasons for wanting to be more productive are shallow ones that don't serve a higher purpose in your life, chances are high that it will decrease your motivation down the line, allowing your productivity to fall by the wayside.

If you want to increase your productivity then you need to take the time to consider what is driving your desire for productivity. If you need more money to support your family, then the love you have for your family might be your driving factor. Perhaps, you've found yourself in poverty, and your drive is the desire to improve your situation and yourself. If you want to improve your productivity, you need to determine what drives you on a deeper level and understand why you are working so hard.

It is critical that you make sure that you know what you are striving to achieve. Only you know what is driving you. Only you know what will make you wake up early and work hard. Only you know why you need to be more productive.

It doesn't matter what you tell other people, and it doesn't even matter if it's true or not. You may have a desire to tell people what they expect to hear, but it may not be your real reason for wanting to improve your productivity. What does matter is what you tell yourself. If you want to improve your productivity you have to be honest with yourself. To keep your productivity from falling as quickly as it has risen, you need to continue to remind yourself why you are working so hard,

being sure to always keep it in your heart and mind.

Unfortunately, there isn't a magic pill that you can take to fix your lack of productivity. Improving your productivity is going to take you time and hard work and you will have to change how you work before you will ever see a permanent boost in your productivity. The next chapters in this book will provide you with the best things that you can do if you want to improve your productivity and start getting more done in less time.

## CHAPTER 1

# **PUTTING AN END TO PROCRASTINATION**

# Chapter 1: Putting an End to Procrastination

Before you can begin to improve your productivity, you have to slay your habit of procrastination. This chapter is going to present you with the three general strategies for overcoming your procrastination, followed by specific tactics to optimize your personal productivity in the preceding chapters. These tactics can motivate you even more to continue staying clear of the habit of procrastination.

## Keeping it Simple

When it comes to a habit of procrastination, tasks and projects that are complex and ambiguous can make it harder for even the most disciplined of people to avoid procrastination.

Simple plans of action and expected results are much easier to understand and implement. Also, plans that are easier to understand and implement are plans that are at low risk for procrastination, that is unless you are already a habitual procrastinator.

You can look at it this way, are you more likely to procrastinate when you have the task of giving your boss a homemade cake that you'll bake yourself, even if you don't have any previous experience baking, or when you have to order a customized cake from an online bakeshop to present to your boss? Chances are pretty high that you'll procrastinate on baking a cake yourself because it is more complex and complicated, compared to ordering a custom cake online. The mere thought of having to find the perfect recipe, buying all the ingredients, and actually baking the cake can be enough to make you put off doing it until the last minute.

## Talk to Yourself

To beat procrastination, you have to use positive self-talk. If you don't know how to start positive self-talk, here are a couple of ways to get you started. First, you can use positive affirmations or declarations to help you overcome bad habits like procrastination. You may be wondering how this works exactly.

The human mind controls how you behave and act, but there are two aspects of

the human mind that account for different kinds of behaviors. There's the subconscious mind, which regulates many of your actions, especially those that you're not aware of but are important, like breathing, your heart beat, your ability to walk. All the actions that require conscious thought or awareness, like solving a math problem, writing, and eating, are all controlled by your conscious mind.

Habits, like procrastination are unconscious and they fall under the control of the subconscious mind. This is the reason why you can only go so far when trying to consciously change your habits before you revert back to your normal habits. This includes things like smoking, cursing, and procrastinating. The only way you can make lasting personal changes is by converting them into habits, either subconscious or conscious, through reprogramming your subconscious mind.

According to Dr. Maxwell Maltz, the author of *Psycho Cybernetics*, the subconscious mind can be likened to heat-seeking or laser guided missiles launched from fighter jets and warships. When these kinds of missiles are launched, they automatically seek out the targets given to them. After the missiles are launched, the pilots and warship captains no longer have control over the movements or trajectories of the missiles. The missiles' on-board computer systems are what control them in route to their programmed targets. The best way to control these kinds of missiles is to give them their targets before they're launched.

Your subconscious mind is like these guided missiles. You can make it go wherever you want and achieve what you want by simply programming it to acquire certain targets or habits, like eating healthy, exercising, and ending procrastination. You can do this by using your conscious mind through visualization and affirmations or through declarations and positive self-talk.

To help you retrain your subconscious mind and end procrastinations, you need to say your positive declaration several times a day and with emotion. An example affirmation might be, "I will stop procrastinating and, instead, be a very proactive person." When you continually tell yourself this, you can change your subconscious mind's programming over time so that it will manifest the affirmation. It can even become more powerful if you combine it with visualization exercises, where you play a movie in your mind's eye and you see yourself acting or living out your affirmations.

Another way you can use positive self-talk to reprogram your subconscious mind and end procrastination is by asking the right questions, particularly positive and empowering ones. An example of a right question to ask would be, "What should I do to start closing more sales?" rather than "Why am I not able to close enough sales?"

By asking how you can achieve something rather than why you can't, allows your subconscious mind to focus on how you can. When you ask why you can't achieve something, you are effectively programming your subconscious mind to continue keeping you from successfully accomplishing something or getting rid of a bad habit.

What you focus your mind on often determines, to a great extent, how your subconscious mind will be programmed. If you can program your subconscious mind for the possibilities, it will go after those possibilities. If you program it for limitations, it will do what it can to enforce them.

## **Just Do It – In 5 Seconds or Less**

The last general strategy for beating procrastination is simple. Mel Robbins, wrote the book, *The 5-Second Rule*, and while you may be familiar with this rule when it comes to dropping food on the floor, this book focuses on the neuro-scientific foundations for how our minds work when we procrastinate.

The idea behind this rule is that it requires you to disarm and decapitate procrastination by taking necessary action within the first five seconds, because the longer you put off action, the higher your risks of procrastinating.

Our brains are naturally wired toward self-preservation. So, whenever we experience stress, such as when we have to wake up in the morning or having to exercise when we don't feel like it, our brains take those signals that something is wrong. This puts the subconscious mind into the fight or flight mode to try to preserve the body through inaction in an attempt to pre-empt dangers from happening. It results in feeling more and more sluggish causing us to procrastinate.

However, with the five-second rule, you don't give the subconscious mind the time to build momentum and yield its power. By acting against its wishes to procrastinate, you nip the procrastination problem in the bud. When you act within the first five seconds, you set your body in motion, which in turn creates emotion. So, by getting up and immediately moving, you'll be able to create a counter-emotion that makes you want to continue moving forward.

So, when you feel the temptation to put off working on the first few tasks of the day, just count backwards from five. As you get closer to zero, act. Action will break the inertia and motion will create emotion. The more you can do this on a

consistent basis, the quicker you can develop a habit that will stop procrastination for good.

## CHAPTER 2

# **PLANNING AND DEFINING YOUR GOALS**

# Chapter 2: Planning and Defining Your Goals

There is never a better time for increasing your productivity and becoming more successful, then now. No matter what task it is, you need to get done, the best way to stay focused is to have clear and defined goals. Doing this ensures you won't lose and you will be able to maintain control of every situation you encounter.

The first thing that you need to do to become more productive is to choose the right goals. You want to identify both personal and professional goals that you would like to achieve, and consider everything that you will need to do to accomplish them.

You want to think about what you want most in life. While there are many areas in your life that you want to excel in, you need to take the time to identify those goals that are most important to you and write them down. After you've identified these goals, you need to have a clear understanding of why they are on your list. You might think that being more successful in your career is important because you love your job and the fulfillment you receive from doing it.

This ultimately translates into happiness and a sense of satisfaction, which is an excellent goal to have. You might have the intention of spending more time with your family and friends, but this goal is only on your list because you feel pressured by them. This isn't a good goal to have, because if you spend time with them unwillingly, it won't bring you the lasting happiness that you need to accomplish this goal, and you should consider letting that particular goal go.

It is important to remember that you want the goals on your list to be ones that will bring you happiness, better health, a greater peace of mind and sense of security. These are the essential goals that you should have that will help you balance your time between them to increase your productivity.

## Convert Your Goals Into Concrete Milestones

Just having the goal of getting ahead in your career isn't enough. You need to carefully plan where you want to see yourself. In order to achieve your goals, you have to create concrete milestones that will get you closer to achieving your goals with the completion of each task. If you've recently started a new business,

you might want to set a milestone that you will have at least two more stores open at the end of five years.

To further ensure that you will reach this goal, you need to determine what it will take you to reach that goal, and set up smaller milestones that will get you one step closer to meeting your goal after completing each milestone. Each step that you take toward your goal should translate into productivity.

Having a plan and a timeline for accomplishing your goals will provide your activities with structure and help you to use your energy wisely. Without a plan, you will end up wasting your time on unnecessary issues and stressing over too many insignificant issues.

## **Creating a Successful Plan**

Creating a successful plan can be challenging, especially for those who work in the creative fields. It's important that you take some time to think through your plan, because it will have a big role in deciding how things will work for you or against you in the future.

Creating a successful plan takes anywhere from an hour to a couple of days. Even then, you may not be able to plan everything.

However, despite life being somewhat unpredictable, it is mandatory that you spend the time to create a good plan, especially if you want to see a marked increase in your productivity. When you are putting your plan together, it is vital that you are specific about the ideas you have.

## **Tips for Creating a Plan**

### ***Write it Down***

To get the most out of your plan, you need to write everything down. This will allow you to always look at it so that you can ensure you are staying on track.

### ***Start with the Bigger Picture***

When creating your plan, you need to start with the bigger picture and overall results that you want to achieve. Make sure you don't leave out any of your ideas, because you never know which one

of them will help you get closer to your goals. If you have too many ideas, write the ones that you aren't completely on board with on a separate document. Keep it with your main goals in case you need some inspiration in the future.

### ***Break it Into Smaller Steps***

If you try to tackle your major goal without breaking it into smaller steps, you are more likely to become discouraged and abandon your goal altogether. Breaking your goal into smaller steps will help keep you motivated and lead you closer to accomplishing your goal.

### ***Be Specific***

When you are writing your goals down, you need to be as specific as you can. However, you want to leave the information about each task, short, sharp, and understandable. It might help to take notes about each task you need to complete in a separate document.

### ***Set Deadlines***

Nothing motivates us quite as good as having deadlines. For each task on your plan, make sure you set deadlines, and do everything in your power to stick to those deadlines.

### ***Create a To-Do List***

At the end of the day, sit down and look at your plan and create a to-do-list of the tasks that you need to complete the next day to bring you closer to accomplishing your larger goals.

Now that you have a plan, it's time to take action and move closer to your goal. Each day, as you start to work, try to be positive about what the day will bring and never let preconceptions affect your mood. Each day is a new day and even if some days have you feeling lazy and like quitting, remember to just keep moving with the knowledge that everything will be possible again tomorrow.

## CHAPTER 3

# **CREATING SMART TO-DO LISTS**

# Chapter 3: Creating Smart To-Do Lists

When you think about it, the concept of utilizing a to-do list looks as easy as breathing. However, it really isn't as simple as it seems. Not all to-do lists are created equal and the quality of your to-lists can have a substantial impact on your ability to optimize your personal productivity. Not to mention that if you don't make your to-do lists sensible and smart, it can impair your personal productivity. So, what makes for a smart and sensible to-do list?

## ***Specific***

The items you put on your to-do lists must be specific in terms of what you need to get done. Otherwise, you'll have a hard time being productive. This is because if the items on your to-do list are vague, you'll end up encountering two potential personal productivity problems. The first is being unable to objectively determine when you've successfully accomplished your tasks. For example, what does it mean to, "get as much work done as possible?" Does this mean completely processing one, two, or 20 transactions a day?

## ***Measurable***

Having measurable tasks on your to-do list means items that can be expressed in specific numbers or can be broken down into measurable elements. The more measurable a task is, the more objectively you can determine whether or not you've already accomplished an item on your to-do list. For example, it will be extremely difficult to objectively determine if you have successfully "become more joyful" because joy can't be measured, unlike "feed 10 more homeless people today compared to last week," which can be objectively determined.

## ***Attainable***

The items on our to-do list should be items that can realistically be accomplished. Otherwise, you'll just be unproductive most of the time, which can end up with you ending up in a downward spiral of worsening procrastination, unproductivity, and feeling more unmotivated to get things done. However, if you create a to-do list with items that are attainable and realistic, then it's a list that can boost your productivity, morale, and ability to end procrastination.

So, rather than putting something like, "achieve world peace," on your to-do list, you need to include items that are actually within your ability to accomplish, like,

“schedule a one-hour meeting with Doug to determine which new products we should purchase.”

Another part of being realistic is the number of items that you have on your daily to-do list. If you're not careful, it is entirely possible to make a daily to-do list that is counterproductive, resulting in making you unproductive and eventually turning you into a procrastinator.

If you include too many items on your daily to-do list, chances are you will become overwhelmed, rendering yourself unable to finish your daily tasks and creating an ever-increasing pile of unfinished work. If this happens on a regular basis, you'll become less and less motivated to finish your tasks, procrastinate, and become less productive.

A good general guideline to follow when creating your to-do list to keep you from becoming overwhelmed is to limit the number of major tasks that you need to accomplish in a day to no more than three. Including anything more than that can significantly increase your risks of becoming overwhelmed and unproductive.

### ***Relevant***

A relevant to-do list is one that is relevant or focused on helping you achieve your life's most important goals. In other words, you don't want to fill your to-do list with tasks or goals that are all over the place. By focusing only on the tasks that are relevant to your biggest and most important goals, you inadvertently limit the number of things that you put on your list on a daily basis.

This can help you make your to-do list much more realistic and attainable.

### ***Time-Bound***

Lastly, all of the items on your to-do list must have a deadline. If you don't put a deadline on the tasks then you won't have any sense of urgency to complete them. If you've ever planned to lose ten pounds without setting a time frame or deadline for accomplishing it, then the temptation to put it off becomes much, much stronger.

Rather than saying, “finish writing my report,” you want to be more time-bound by saying, “finish writing my report by 11 a.m. by the latest.” This will give you a greater sense of urgency to finish the task and achieve a higher level of focus.

If you want to increase your productivity levels and get more done, then you have to start creating S.M.A.R.T. to-do lists.

## CHAPTER 4

# **ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS**

# Chapter 4: Eliminating Distractions

Being productive comes from a focused mental state. This includes only focusing on the present, and by concentrating on the steps that are necessary to accomplish your goals. To do this, you have to learn how to eliminate the distractions around you that prevent your brain from working to your advantage.

Having a work environment that is free of distractions carries the same importance as having a plan when it comes to improving productivity. While you can have a perfect plan and grand vision for increasing your productivity and achieving your goals, if your work environment holds you back and prevents you from using your talents, then you will continually find yourself becoming disappointed in what you haven't achieved.

According to a study released on work preferences, people can be divided into two groups, those who are able to work with sounds playing in the background and those who can only work in silence.

If you are looking to increase your productivity, you need to determine which group you fall into. Other people may try to tell you that in order to avoid distractions, you have to work in silence.

While this might work for them, you know yourself better than anyone else. To eliminate distractions, or at least control them so they won't derail your productivity, here are several practical things you can try.

## Isolate Yourself

It is too easy to get distracted by other people who want a piece of your time and attention when they have easy access to you as you're working. That's why an open door policy can be dangerous because it sends people the signal and permission to interrupt you while you're working. When you get pulled from the work in front of you and you lose your focus because of this distraction it can be extremely challenging to pick up immediately where you left off.

Getting distracted, especially by people can lead you to procrastinate against your will because the chances are high that they'll eat up a more substantial amount of time from your current tasks. This can make you take a substantially longer period of time to complete your tasks than when you are able to work

uninterrupted.

It is for this reason alone that you should make it a habit to isolate yourself during times when you need to get deep focus work done. There are a couple of ways you can do this.

### ***Isolate Yourself Physically***

If you have an office, simply shut the doors, and if you are fortunate to have an office assistant, tell them to turn people away if they want to talk to you. Of course, you'll need to make an exception for really urgent or highly important instances.

If you don't have a secretary, but still work in an office with a door, place a door sign on the door that says that you can't be disturbed. If your office happens to have glass walls or windows, close the blinds, so nobody can see you and so that you don't get distracted by the people outside your office. You need to try to make your office space as much of a silo as possible so you can focus deeply on your work.

### ***Isolate Yourself Digitally***

This means going completely offline. While you may have already isolated yourself physically, if you're constantly online, even while working on deep focus work, you'll just put yourself out in cyberspace with a sign hanging around your neck saying, "I'm available for whatever. Message me or email me now." Social media, email, and Instant Messenger, all have the uncanny ability to distract you and make you lose track of time until it's too late.

An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. This means that it is better to nip problems in the bud before they become problems. For example, former alcoholics have learned to stay away from bars and alcohol to stay sober. This doesn't mean that you have to stay offline forever, just during your deep focus periods of work. You can schedule your online time to happen during your lunch break, or after you've completed the tasks on our to-do list.

You also want to isolate yourself from phone calls when you are doing deep focus work and provide yourself with optimal productivity. You can take a short break every hour to check in to ensure you don't miss anything urgent or important. If something comes up that is a matter of life and death, people will make sure that they can make contact with you.

## Use the Pomodoro Technique

When you prepare for a marathon, one of the best ways to increase your running mileage and run at a faster average pace or speed is to utilize the Run-Walk method during your training.

Developed by world-renowned running expert, Jeff Galloway, the Run-Walk method requires you to run in cycles where you run for a fixed amount of time before walking for one minute, and repeating the cycle as many times as needed to reach your target running mileage.

The logic behind this technique is that you give your legs the opportunity to rest to optimize recovery by taking short, but frequent breaks instead of waiting until your legs feel like bricks before you rest them through walking.

The thing with this method is that you will have to slow down and walk for a minute at the end of your set running period, regardless of whether you feel tired or not. Taking short, regular breaks during the entirety of the run will help keep your leg muscles fresh for a much longer period, which enables you to run longer and faster.

The Pomodoro Technique is the mental equivalent of the Run- Walk method. It's a method wherein you work in cycles that are made up of a fixed number of work and rest minutes. This helps to keep your mind strong and fresh as long as possible, which will allow you to get more deep focus work completed.

The usual Pomodoro cycle involves 25 straight minutes of focused work, followed by a five minute break, which you'll have to take regardless if you feel mentally exhausted or not. After every fourth cycle, you extend the break to ten minutes.

The point of the short and frequent breaks is to not let your mind reach total exhaustion before taking a break, because if you wait, then it will be too late. By having your mind as strong and as fresh for as long as possible, you'll be able to extend your ability to focus on your work and block out the distractions.

## CHAPTER 5

# LEARNING TO SAY NO

# Chapter 5: Learning to Say No

The single best reason for learning to say “no” to requests from people is for an increase in your personal productivity. If you are someone who tends to say “yes” to just about everyone who asks you to do something for them, you will find that you will never get anything done because you won’t be able to focus on anything and you will be overwhelmed with too much to do, both of which are guaranteed to sabotage your productivity.

This is probably the easiest strategy for improving your productivity, because all you have to do is say “no.” However, simple isn’t always easy, especially when you have to turn people down and possibly disappoint them. Here are some effective ways that you can learn how to become more comfortable telling people “no.”

## The 5-Second Rule

As discussed in an earlier chapter, sticking to the 5-second rule can help you tremendously when it comes to ending procrastination and improving productivity. As a reminder, waiting for more than five seconds to do something makes it much harder to do it.

When it comes to learning how to say “no,” you have to ditch any worries or concerns about what the other person will say or feel about you and just do it. You owe it to yourself to get things done for yourself, before you tackle projects and favors for other people. So, when it comes to saying “no,” just do it, and do it within the first five seconds of the request.

## Be a Velvet-Covered Brick

Being a velvet-covered brick means having hard-stance on the inside, while being soft on the outside. Simply put, being a velvet covered brick allows you to tell people very hard things in ways that minimize the possibility of hurting people’s feelings.

For example, if a colleague asks you to help him out with a report that he needs to submit to the boss within an hour, but you have your own projects to finish as well, rather than bluntly saying, “No! I have my own things to finish.” You could say something like, “I’m really sorry, but I also have to finish a report for the boss

by lunchtime. As much as I would love to help you, I'm afraid that it would put me behind. I'm really sorry, but I'll have to say no this time."

By gently telling your coworker no, you may understand that you have your own work to do, but that you still value them and might be able to help them in the future. However, you need to remember that a gentle tone of voice can make the hardest responses gentle as well.

## **Know Your Enemies**

Unfortunately, some people are just adept at using manipulation techniques and emotional blackmail to get people to do what they want. Regardless if they do so intentionally or unconsciously, you have to be able to resist being manipulated or blackmailed emotionally into saying "yes" every time at the expense of your own personal productivity. The more aware you are of the different manipulative techniques that people may be using on you, the better you'll be able to learn to say "no."

## **Throw it Back**

One of the best ways to say "no" without actually saying it is to make the person feel responsible for what can happen to you if you say "yes." How does this work? Say your coworker stubbornly asks you to take over a project assigned to him for the next several days because he needs to take a few days off work.

Rather than insisting you "no" answer in an irritated tone of voice to the request, you can turn the request back on him by saying something along the lines of: "Okay Tom, I'll help you out.

However, for me to do that, I'll have to put off working on one of my major projects due this week, which might result in me submitting the entire portfolio of projects way beyond the deadline, which will get me in trouble. Which of my projects do you suggest I put off working on so that I can accommodate you?"

Only the most callous and dumbest of people will fail to pick up on that and act accordingly. If by a small chance the person pestering you is such a person, just revert back to the 5- second rule and walk away.

## CHAPTER 6

# **DIVIDING, PRIORITIZING AND DELEGATING FOR OPTIMAL PRODUCTIVITY**

# Chapter 6: Dividing, Prioritizing, and Delegating for Optimal Productivity

Sometimes, the most difficult part of improving your productivity is getting started, because you have so many tasks that you need to complete, and finding time for them seems impossible. One way to combat this challenge is by getting some help with your tasks. This is where effective delegation comes into play.

## ***Delegating Tasks***

If you feel overwhelmed with the number of tasks that are on your to-do list, then you will need to take a closer look and decide which tasks you can delegate. For example, if you have tasks on your list that you feel someone else would be better equipped to complete or those that would simply take too much time to complete, pass those tasks on to someone else so you can focus on more important activities. For example, if you need to create a website for your new business, this might be better left to someone who has the skills and expertise to design and develop a company site. There is absolutely nothing wrong with bringing someone else in to help you complete some of your tasks.

## ***Dividing Tasks***

Now, before you can start delegating your tasks, you need to divide the tasks into groups on the basis of their importance, the time it takes to complete them, and by the relevance to your particular set of skills. It is important for you to remember that not everyone can be good at everything, so you shouldn't feel bad for bringing in help to complete the tasks that you can't do on your own.

## ***Prioritizing Tasks***

Now that you've delegated some of your tasks to someone better equipped to successfully complete them, you need to start to prioritize your remaining tasks. From a time management perspective, you should create a to-do list and include the amount of time it requires to complete each task too. This is a great way to make sure your work hours are as productive as they can be. It is also important that you give each task a deadline for completion.

In some instances, placing an exact timeline on your tasks can be unrealistic because things come up that can throw you off schedule. So, when you are completing your to-do list, be sure to add in some extra time to account for unforeseen circumstances.

If at all possible, try to group similar tasks together on the same day so that you don't have to waste time refocusing your mind to complete each task. To be the most effective in completing your to-do list, divide your work time into hour blocks. For example, work for three hours, then have a 20 minute break, or follow the Pomodoro Technique discussed in Chapter 4, so that you can stay focused and motivated without becoming stressed. How you organize your work hours will ultimately depend on your personal needs. While working, allow yourself to be fully committed to work.

### ***Communicate with Others***

People who are productive use their time and energy wisely, they know that they can't do extra work to accomplish the same goal because they know that what they are doing is getting them closer to their goal. If you feel like meeting your deadlines is tough, then you need to let others know if something is going to keep you from completing your work. When you let others know what is going on, you are more likely to stay motivated because you don't want to disappoint anyone.

## CHAPTER 7

# **DEVELOPING THE RIGHT HABBITS**

# Chapter 7: Developing the Right Habits

Old habits die hard, which is the main reason why it can be difficult and time consuming to start a new work system. It also takes courage to face your personal fears of failure and willpower to begin again. You have to challenge yourself to start the demanding, yet rewarding process of increasing your productivity. To improve your productivity in every aspect of your life, you need to accept the fact that it won't be easy.

People fail at improving their productivity for several reasons; they may have set their expectations too high or they might be insecure about their abilities, but one common theme for being unproductive is being stuck in old habits that are detrimental to their productivity.

With today's fast paced world, people are expected to be in constant self-development and to know everything and be prepared for anything that comes their way. This is why it is so important to be constantly reassessing your situation and losing the old habits that don't help you progress and working to develop the right habits that will help you improve your productivity.

If you've done the same things time and again, and are frustrated that you continue to get the same results, then it might be time to change things. Unless you open yourself up to change, it will never happen. The whole concept of increasing your productivity is all in your mind. Every obstacle that you encounter on your path to improving your productivity can be overcome with a little thoughts and concentration.

## ***Plan Your Day***

When you can make a habit of planning your day according to your schedule, and stick with that plan, you will soon see a marked improvement in your efficiency. Improving your efficiency will lead you to a more productive day, because the more tasks completed equals more accomplishments. Start by thinking about your schedule, what time do you need to start work? Once you figure out the schedule that you need to follow, write it down.

## ***Start a Routine***

Now that you have an organized schedule to follow, your morning routine straight through to your night routine is planned out. With a schedule you have a major foundation to work from. It is important that you follow your set rules, because they have long-term goals and proven research backs-up your planned routine.

### ***Take Care of Yourself***

If you aren't in optimal health, your ability to complete your daily tasks will be limited. It is crucial that you take proper care of your body, mind, and soul. You can start by adding more water to your diet, and eliminating processed and saturated foods. Begin eating more organic meals, and avoid meats that contain pesticides and antibiotics, because these additions have been proven to be harmful to our health over time.

Make sure that you read all the food labels and don't trust every company that sells their products. Learn to be a skeptic, when it comes to the items you are putting into your body. For our bodies to thrive and reach maximum potential we need to feed our bodies and brains with special nutrients, so it is important that you change your daily habits and start consuming healthier options, such as whole grains, lean meats, raw fruits and vegetables, and more water.

### ***Meditate***

When we feel stressed and flustered, we often start to get overwhelmed. This habit needs to be broken to improve productivity. If you can learn how to calm yourself down from the inside to the outside you will gain the mental focus you need to get more done. Meditating on a regular basis can help you find the calm and focus that you need to accomplish more throughout your day.

You may want to consider taking up yoga to help you relieve your stress and help your meditation practice to increase your concentration on your breathing habits.

## CHAPTER 8

# **IMPROVING YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

# **Chapter 8: Improving Your Time Management Skills**

The time you spend on the various tasks of your day should ultimately contribute to the achievement of your goals. If you can do that, then you will have a productive day.

If you want to be sure that you have a productive day, then you need to be able to allocate your time among the various tasks that you have to complete throughout the day. This is what time management is all about, being able to use your time effectively and productively.

If you're like everyone else, you probably look back at your day and wonder where all the time went, especially if you don't feel like you have anything to show for it. If this happens often, the first thing that you need to understand is why your time is not productive. This is something that you can quickly figure out by completing the following steps.

## **Declutter Your Spaces**

Improving your productivity starts with assessing your environment. Take a look around you. Look at the way things in your home or office are organized. Do you know where to find something if you need it, or are your daily tasks slowed down by finding the things that you need to complete them? If you don't know where things are when you need them, then it's time to organize your space. The goal is to organize the spaces where you live and work so that everything has a designated spot, and in which everything has a purpose.

You can quickly become overwhelmed and exhausted by simple tasks that are bogged down by these details. In fact, many projects and tasks fail even to get started because the prep work is too daunting.

While the task of overhauling your entire space may seem overwhelming, if you ever hope to boost your productivity, you need to get yourself organized. To make the task more manageable, take things one room at a time.

## **Declutter Your Mind**

Once you've decluttered your spaces, you need to instill some focus in your mind. For you to reach your maximum productivity potential, your brain can't be focused on too many things at once.

When your mind and body are aligned, energy and inspiration tend to flow. When you are tired, stressed, and overworked, your motivation to do anything is usually the first to go.

Our brains process a minimum of fifty-thousand thoughts a day, with a majority of them completely unproductive. We tend to be overly critical of ourselves, thinking about how we look and what others think of us. We worry needlessly about things we can't control. While it's impossible to eliminate these thoughts completely, we can work on how we respond.

Retraining our brains to think more positively will help in the process. Negativity is incredibly draining on the mind and the spirit and can hinder your productivity both personally and professionally. Unfortunately, if your brain is used to negatively processing thoughts, it will always default to it.

To retrain your brain, you have to consciously redirect your thoughts in a positive way. On top of creating more positive thoughts, you need to try to create a mental priority list of things in your mind in order to weed out spending time on things that don't really matter. You can use tools like meditation to focus your mind at any given time.

## **Keep a Time Diary**

Get a schedule and keep careful note of every activity you conduct and the time you spend completing it. Continue to do this for a week. For example, if you start your day in a meeting with an important client, write it down. Next, your mom called with dinner plans for the weekend and you spent 20 minutes talking to her. Write it down.

Once you've written down everything that you've spent your time on throughout the day, you will need to analyze the diary entries. Your time diary and its entries will help you understand what activities during your day are productive and which ones aren't.

By completing this exercise, you can pinpoint all the time that you are wasting on trivial tasks that you could have accomplished at the end of the day, after work, or

those that weren't related to work at all.

You will start to begin to gain an understanding of the time of day when you have the most energy and when you can deal with hands-on tasks. You can also work out times when you are most likely to deal with people related to work, such as your boss, team members, suppliers, and clients. This will allow you to determine the best time to work on reports and other assignments because you know the time when you are the least likely to be disturbed.

All of these factors will help you work out how to make your day more productive by eliminating the unnecessary tasks and assigning more functions to the time when you can work better.

## **Create a Must-do List**

Knowing which tasks you must accomplish on a particular day will give you a sense of direction, and you'll feel more confident about your ability to complete the tasks and more focused on what you need to accomplish.

To do this efficiently, you'll want to create a must-do list. It is impossible for you to remember every little thing that you need to do, and some of the tasks might be high-priority. You can also include those activities that will bring you closer to achieving your objectives.

A good thing to do is write down each task when it comes up. For example, if your doctor calls to remind you that you are due to come in and discuss the results of your blood work in two days, write it down. If a client places an order and requests delivery in a week, make sure you make note of it.

## **Be Flexible**

Being rigid with your schedules and routines will not serve you or those around you well. Life has a way of throwing things at you just as you think it's all coming together. Therefore, you need to learn to plan ahead and leave time for the unexpected.

If you want to be consistently productive, it's a good idea to build up your flexibility so that you can work under any circumstances. Ideally, you probably work better with a clear plan of action, a strict schedule, and a quiet place to work.

However, as we all know, it is tough to come by these kinds of ideal situations.

Instead, learn to build your skills to hone your focus in any environment.

Flexibility is a necessity within any schedule. Feeling as though you must stick to a routine indefinitely becomes stressful and overwhelming. The thought of doing the same things the same way all of the time can quickly degrade your quality of life. Remember, you can't function at your best unless your heart and soul is in something.

Flexibility is all about change. Don't be afraid of it, be curious and accept it. This curiosity will lend you the possibility to do new things, and exciting new ventures to keep your brain fresh and productive.

# CONCLUSION

# Conclusion

Now that you have a handful of strategies for improving your productivity, it's time to put them into action and incorporate them into your daily routine. Remember that productivity waxes and wanes due to a variety of different factors. It's important to run with any bursts of motivation that you have and impart some of these tools when you find that your productivity is lacking.

Whatever you decide to do with your life, you need to make sure you fill it with passion, enthusiasm, and be in line with the values you have in mind. This is the real secret to increasing your productivity so that you can get more done in less time.

Improved productivity isn't something that will come to you overnight, but rather something that you have to consciously work at every day. It will take you time and work to develop the right habits that will allow you to improve your productivity. However, with enough practice and persistence you can improve your productivity so that you can finally get more done in less time.