

TIME MANAGEMENT TACTICS

A Step-By-Step System To Get More Done,
In Less Time, And Take Control Of Your Future!



Nathan D. Amaral

Disclaimer and Terms of Use Agreement

The author and publisher of this tutorial and the accompanying materials have used their best efforts in preparing it. The author and publisher makes no representation or warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability, fitness or completion of the contents of this material. The information contained in this ebook is strictly for educational purposes. If you wish to apply ideas contained in this tutorial, you accept full responsibility for your actions.

All rights reserved

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work beyond that permitted by Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act without permission of the copyright owner is unlawful. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the Business Products Division, Fearless Life Solutions LLC. This book, Time Management Tactics, has been confirmed as the work of Nathan D. Amaral. As such no unauthorized use, copying or publication of all or any part of this book will be allowed in any form including electronic, audio and print media without written permission from the author.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| Take A Moment To Imagine That You Had Won The Following Prize In A Contest:..... | 5 |
| What Would You Do? | 5 |
| Actually, This Game Is REALITY!..... | 5 |
| The MAGICAL BANK Is TIME!..... | 5 |
| Introduction..... | 7 |
| Respecting Yourself..... | 8 |
| Step 1: Respect The Value Of Your Time..... | 9 |
| How You Spend Your Time Determines The Quality Of Your Life..... | 9 |
| Time Is Your Single Greatest Asset..... | 10 |
| What Are Yours Saying? | 11 |
| What Trivial Activities Did You Find Taking Up Your Days?..... | 12 |
| How Much Time Did You Actually Focus On Productive Tasks?..... | 12 |
| Start Becoming Aware Of What You're Doing And What It Means..... | 13 |
| Step 2: Eliminate Time Wasters | 14 |
| What External Distractions Are Taking Up Much Of Your Day?..... | 16 |
| So, What's The Secret?..... | 16 |
| This Is A Crucial Step! | 18 |
| Step 3: Systemize Your Life..... | 20 |
| You Have To Create Next Steps For Each Item..... | 20 |
| Action Pile..... | 22 |
| Things That Might Need To Be Acted On Later Pile: | 22 |
| To File Pile..... | 23 |
| Step 4: Prioritize Your Time | 25 |
| What Do You Want Your Future To Look Like?..... | 26 |
| Step 5 Examine How You Work..... | 29 |

Filtering Out The Unnecessary Or Distracting Information.....29

Focus On What Really Matters.....31

Work To Your Strengths.....32

Step 6: Communicate With Others 34

 Determine When You Will Be Disturbed.....34

 Use Communication Tools More Effectively Voice Messages:.....35

 Outsource Tasks To Others.....35

 Show Respect For Everyone's Time.....36

Step 7: Take Back Your Time 37

Time Management Checklist..... 38

 Step 1. Respect The Value Of Your Time.....38

 Step 2. Eliminate Time Wasters.....38

 Step 3. Systemize Your Life.....39

 Step 4. Prioritize Your Time.....39

 Step 5. Examine How You Work.....40

 Step 6. Communicate With Others.....41

 Step 7: Take Back Your Time.....41

INTRODUCTION

TAKE A MOMENT TO IMAGINE THAT YOU HAD WON THE FOLLOWING PRIZE IN A CONTEST:

Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400.00 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules, just as any game has certain rules. The rules are:

- 1. Everything you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.*
- 2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.*
- 3. You may only spend it.*
- 4. The bank can end the game without warning. At any time it can say, it's over. The game is over! It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.*

Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400.00 for that day.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You would buy anything and everything you wanted, right? Not only for yourself, but also for all people you love, right? Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right? You would try to spend every cent, and use it all, right?

ACTUALLY, THIS GAME IS REALITY!

Each of us is in possession of such a magical bank. We just can't seem to see it.

THE MAGICAL BANK IS TIME!

Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life, and when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is NOT credited to us.

What we haven't lived up that day is forever lost. Yesterday is forever gone.

Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time... WITHOUT WARNING.

SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars.

Think about that, and always think of this:

*Enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.
So take care of yourself, be Happy, Love deeply and Enjoy life!*

And Start spending!

INTRODUCTION

In our fast paced society, being starved for time has become the norm. It's expected (and often encouraged) that we race against the clock and fill our schedules to the brim. We are taught to multi task, to increase our speed, and to make every moment a productive one.

Many of us barely have time to breathe. We run from one commitment to the next, putting out fires, and accomplishing items on other's to do lists; with no regard - or time - for our own goals and desires.

The technology that was supposed to make our lives easier has only added to the problem. The barrier between work and home has crumbled. We're expected to respond to emails at all hours of the day and night. Add in voice mail, fax, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter...the list of communication mediums has exploded in the last few years and created more stress on our overburdened schedules.

We all feel it...one of the most common topics of conversation is the lack of time that everyone has these days. We bond over our 4 hours of sleep, our massive to do lists, and our frazzled state of mind. We discuss with others how we all need more hours in our day, a more relaxed way of being, and a break from all the crushing commitments we have in our life. We all talk about it - but most of us don't do anything about it.

Or we do the wrong things.

We get so burned out that we create a backlash against managing our time. We procrastinate when we should be working. We surf the web, watch TV or get lost on Facebook or Twitter. We are so exhausted by our daily schedule that we don't take time to focus on what we really want for our future - or what we need to do to make it happen.

We lose our way...and more time gets lost.

If you're reading this book, it means you're tired of not being in control of your time and ready to take action. It means you're tired of the stress, the lack of progress in your life and the feeling that, no matter how hard you work; it never seems to be enough.

This book will give you a clear path to follow to help you get out of overwhelm, create focus in your day, and accomplish more than you ever could have imagined possible.

If you commit to working through these steps, the level of freedom and productivity you can achieve is unlimited. Your life will be transformed. They're that powerful.

And it all starts with YOU.

As you've probably heard before, time can't really be managed. The concept of time management is really about managing yourself. This book will show you seven steps that will allow you to do just that. The system is based around R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

RESPECTING YOURSELF

Respecting your dreams and ambitions Respecting your time...

The steps consist of:

Respecting the value of your time

Eliminating time wasters

Systemizing your life

Prioritizing your time

Examining how you work best

Communicating with others

Taking back your time

While all the steps are universal, it's important to realize that we all have our own styles of managing our time. Some people thrive on having a very precise schedule while others prefer to live a less structured existence. No matter which camp you fall into, these steps will help you stay on track.

Since I know you're starved for time, this guide will also be short and concise. There will be exercises and examples but no filler material.

Valuing your time begins right now.

You deserve to make your future one of your own choosing. You deserve to make it extraordinary.

Let's get started...

STEP 1: RESPECT THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME

Imagine you're far out at sea with your family and your boat suddenly starts taking on water. You have only 10 minutes before the whole vessel will be submerged.

What would you do?

Would you send out a distress signal, grab some supplies and get you and your loved ones onto a lifeboat? Or would you take a call from a friend, finish your card game and wait for the water to get just a little bit higher?

It's a pretty easy choice, right?

You would do what is necessary to ensure the safety of you and your family. In times of life and death, your survival instincts provide you with immediate clarity and focus on what you need to be doing. It propels you forward into action. There is no second-guessing, no procrastinating and you automatically shut out any distractions or interferences that get in the way of your goal.

You manage your time extremely effectively.

Though it may not seem like it, learning to manage your time in everyday life is just as critical a skill as when you are in a life or death struggle. A pretty dramatic statement, I know, but absolutely true.

Think about it...

Time is the vessel that carries you into your future. It is the medium through which you breathe life into your dreams. If you use it wisely, you can create untold success and build a lasting legacy for future generations. If, however, you squander it, you will see the death of all you had hoped to accomplish and achieve.

HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE.

Time is not just immensely important – it's also extremely unique. Of all the resources in the world, time is the most finite. You can't bottle it, replenish it or create a reserve fund. It exists only once...and then it's gone forever.

Every year, every day, every second, is a ***once in a lifetime moment***. It will never happen again. It will never be repeated.

Time is not just a placeholder of all our treasured memories, it is the reason they exist.

TIME IS YOUR SINGLE GREATEST ASSET.

The first step to getting control of your schedule is to see how well you are respecting the value of your time...and where you are really struggling. To do this, you need to spend at least three days simply keeping track of exactly where your time goes. Don't judge or analyze at this point – just take note.

The schedule needs to be extremely thorough. You don't just want to uncover the big picture; you want to dig into the smallest details as well. It's similar to what people who are trying to manage their money are taught – keep track of every penny you spend – no matter how small.

Otherwise, you won't know where it really goes.

It's usually the small items that end up being the biggest drain on your budget – the coffee you get each morning, the soda out of the drink machine, the lunch out with colleagues.

The same is true with your time. It tends to be the small things that add up to the biggest time wasters. So, every time someone interrupts you while you're working (either in person or on the phone), every time you find yourself surfing the web or checking email, every time you spend 10 minutes chatting in a forum – write it down.

Here's a snippet of one woman's log:

Before work (6:30am-8:15 am) Time (in minutes)

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Listen to radio, hit snooze button | 15 |
| Shower | 15 |
| Dress/makeup | 25 |
| Breakfast (while surfing web) | 20 |
| Commuting | 30 |

1. Morning at work (8:45-1:00)

| | |
|--|----|
| Chatting with coworkers | 15 |
| Reading email | 20 |
| Interrupted by coworker (put out fire) | 30 |
| Daydreaming/Facebook | 15 |
| Phone call from client (incoming- not scheduled) | 15 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Scheduled phone call from client | 30 |
| Looking for folders/clearing desk | 10 |
| Filing papers | 10 |
| Work on client project | 30 |
| Chat with boss | 15 |

Can you see the level of detail that is captured in the log? That's what you want yours to look like. The more you can pinpoint EXACTLY where your time is going, the easier it is to see if you are truly valuing your time, or debasing it – either by sabotaging your own efforts or letting others determine its worth. Either one is a very dangerous precedent to set. As someone once said, "If you really put a small value upon yourself, rest assured the world will not raise your price."

Actions always speak much louder than words.

WHAT ARE YOURS SAYING?

Once you have enough data compiled (at least three day's worth, but preferably a week) look at the information as if it were that of a stranger's. It's your job to understand, just from the log, and with no other information, certain things about this person.

Can you see where their passion lies?

Do you have any idea what they are looking to accomplish in their work?

How much of their time is controlled by others?

How much do they spend on themselves?

Can you tell by the log what they truly value in life?

Most people are stunned after they finish this exercise. They can't believe how much time is wasted on trivial things - interruptions, tracking down lost items, playing phone tag with someone, or any other number of time wasters.

WHAT TRIVIAL ACTIVITIES DID YOU FIND TAKING UP YOUR DAYS?

What are some ways you can eliminate or minimize these tasks in the future? For instance, if you found you wasted a lot of time driving around running errands, can you consolidate them into one day, or better map out your route? We'll discuss some solutions in later chapters, but for now, just brainstorm ideas you may have to combat these problems.

The other big revelation people have, as they analyze their log, is seeing - with perfect clarity - the amount of time they spend procrastinating on projects or letting their life be dictated by other's goals and priorities. (When your life is overrun by projects and you feel you can't breathe, it's a clear sign that you've let your boundaries become blurred and are focusing too much on the demands of others.)

What ways did you procrastinate during your day? Did you daydream, surf the web, chat with coworkers or watch TV?

What were the main things you were trying to avoid? What were you supposed to be working on when you were procrastinating?

The biggest shock of all, for most people, is seeing how little time is actually spent being productive or spending time doing something they really enjoy. These are usually the items with the least amount of time devoted to them - and yet they're crucial to creating a successful and stress free future. (Pretty ironic, isn't it?)

HOW MUCH TIME DID YOU ACTUALLY FOCUS ON PRODUCTIVE TASKS?

How much time did you devote to your own well-being and personal fulfillment, be it in the form of relaxation, exercise, or personal growth?

This exercise is not meant to make you feel bad. It's simply meant to make you aware. In order to master time management, you have to first see where your problem areas lie - and understand the importance of valuing your time appropriately.

If you want to step into a more successful future, you must first shift into a different mindset. You must commit to respecting yourself and your time. The next chapters will cover the actual steps you can take to master time management, but they'll be useless without a change in your attitude as well.

START BECOMING AWARE OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHAT IT MEANS.

When someone asks you to do something, don't automatically agree. Stop and think about the amount of time it will take, whether it's really something you value, and what you will have to give up to say yes.

When you find yourself chatting with coworkers or checking your email incessantly, stop and ask yourself what it is that you are avoiding and what it will do to your future if you continue putting off the task.

When you find yourself procrastinating, stop and think about what you are saying to yourself. Often, when we get into this mindset, we play the role of the victim, fighting against something we are "forced to do".

In all of these scenarios, you are challenging your inner thought process – the one that has been given free rein to control your actions in the past. Challenge your inner dialogue by stating that **YOU** are in charge and that you **CHOOSE** to do this because it will lead to more success/more happiness/more opportunities/etc.

Change your "must" and "should" items to ones that you choose to do, of your own free will, and that you fully support. (You'll be amazed how this simple shift can eliminate much of your procrastination and inner conflict over getting things done.)

You've probably heard the song lyrics, "Don't know what you got till it's gone." The same is true of your time – unless you change your perspective.

Realize NOW how important your time is, be aware of how you use it, and vow to be more respectful of it in the future. Remember, every great achievement, breakthrough or transformation begins with a single thought...

STEP 2: ELIMINATE TIME WASTERS

Now that we've taken the blinders off and really started to look at how we spend our days, let me share some interesting numbers with you. This is how much time an average person spends on certain activities:

51 days deciding what to wear
Half a year watching TV ads

6 weeks waiting at traffic lights

One and half years looking for things you can't find
Over two weeks peering inside the fridge

And here's a really sad fact:

The average working person spends less than 2 minutes per day in meaningful communication with their spouse or "significant other" and less than 30 seconds a day in meaningful communication with their children.

Our time at work is just as bad.

One in eight telephone calls get repeated because something was forgotten.

And most workers find their days consumed by meetings with no agenda and no real focus. In fact, 49% of meeting participants considered unfocused meetings & projects as the biggest workplace time waster and the primary reason for unproductive workdays.

The amount of time we waste on trivial things is staggering. When you really start to take into account the amount of time we actually have to focus on productive or fulfilling tasks, you quickly realize it's not nearly as much as you once thought.

It makes it even more crucial that you use those windows of time in the best way possible - which is very hard to do when you're constantly being interrupted or distracted.

Even worse - every time you're interrupted or allow distractions (whether mentally or physically) to interrupt your flow, it takes 25 minutes to return to the task at hand if you do at all.

This is especially true if you're working on something that is new or unfamiliar - something that has not yet established regular circuits or pathways in your brain. It is much easier to get distracted from these type of tasks and much harder to find your way back to them.

This is why time management is crucial to success. In order to move forward, it's vital that you step outside your comfort zone and do new things. It's the mark of all great entrepreneurs and self-made millionaires. But to do it, you have to be able to stay focused and avoid getting side tracked.

Microsoft has commissioned studies on how people work. They found that, on average, people get distracted and switch activities every 3 minutes. (Is it any wonder then, that most people don't create success in their life?)

Switching tasks not only kills your focus, it's also physically exhausting. It requires a tremendous amount of energy, leaving you with less of an ability to analyze, memorize, or retain information. You're also much more likely to make mistakes.

By the way, you'll get the exact same results when you multitask, which is another huge time waster. People think they are saving time, when in reality, they are simply creating more work for themselves in the future – either by having to go over the information again (because they never absorbed it the first time) or by correcting all the mistakes they made.

David Rock, in his book *Your Brain at Work*, states, "Even the brain of a Harvard graduate can be turned into that of an eight-year old simply by being made to do two things at once".

While it's impossible to control every aspect of your day, there are many things you can do to 'trim the fat' and eliminate much of the waste. Start with focusing your time and staying on task – if you did nothing else but this, your productivity would skyrocket.

You should also practice the art of "chunking" your time. This is where you group like tasks together and tackle them all at once. So, for instance, if you have a lot of writing to do, set aside a time to focus on writing tasks and devote it solely to that one activity. If you have a lot of calls to make, devote a time for returning calls and place your energy there.

This cuts down on the amount of time your brain needs to mentally shift between activities and allows for increased focus on high-energy tasks. Remember, any kind of knowledge work, which requires active thinking, uses immense mental resources. By staying focused, you allow all your energy to flow into the task at hand – which can create powerful results.

Write down the different types of jobs you do in your work. (You can do this with your personal life as well). For instance, you may have:

Writing content Contacting clients Accounting

Filing Networking

Write down as many as you can think of and look at ways you can group like activities.

Another way to maintain this laser like focus is to eliminate all the external distractions that tend to take you away from the task at hand. Get in the habit of checking your email only at certain points in your day. Turn off your phone.

Limit any open door policy you may have. Do as much as you can to eliminate external distractions and stay focused.

WHAT EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS ARE TAKING UP MUCH OF YOUR DAY?

How can you eliminate these distractions from your day? We'll go into more suggestions later in the book, but for now, just brainstorm different ways you can eliminate these distractions and time wasters.

You should also develop a clutter free environment. Research has proven that the more chaos in your environment, the harder it is to focus, the more exhausted you become (because your mind is mentally working on cleaning up the space) and the more time you waste. Now you may argue that you know where everything is, and that you're happy with the clutter, but your mind will tell a different story.

Our brain is made to systemize and groups things together. Think about it...we have the solar system, our circulatory system, and the judicial system. Our mind functions best when things are organized into systems.

Having everything in its proper place also frees up your mental energy. Your physical environment has a direct effect on your psyche. It gives you more energy, more clarity and literally, more space to bring new things into your life.

It's vital that you get your space in order. Otherwise, you will continue to waste your precious time and mental energy on your clutter. Now, many people have tried to get organized in the past only to find that their efforts were short lived. In no time, they are back to generating clutter and being buried under their stuff.

If you have experienced this yourself, it's not your fault. You just haven't been shown the best way to set up your environment. If you do it correctly, the process will stick.

SO, WHAT'S THE SECRET?

You need to have a system that is easy to use – otherwise it'll never work. Set up your space in a user-friendly manner. Design it for the way you work – not for anyone else.

Place the things you use the most closest to your work space. You don't want to have to get up to get something you always use, or to grab a file you always need. Because the reality is, you probably won't get back up to put it away. And that's how clutter starts. You just place it on your desk instead. And then you do that with the next thing...and the next...and the next.

Instead, place things you use within arm's reach. Then expand out from there. Things you use less often, place a little further back. Things you hardly use at all can be stored in a far off closet or other storage area. By organizing your space this way, it ensures that you will actually USE the system you put into place.

Gaining control of your external world helps you stay focused and provides more mental clarity for tasks. Of course, you also have to fight internal distractions. One of the biggest time wasters is actually happening inside your head right now.

While you are trying to concentrate on reading this book, your mind is also probably trying to hold onto other "To Do Items" on your list. When this happens, your mind is not fully engaged. It causes you to:

- Take more time to learn information, or get things done, because you are not fully concentrating on the task at hand. You probably have to reread information and will retain less of what you learn.
- Become exhausted at trying to keep things in the forefront of your mind. Research has shown that our mind can only hold a few items at a time. And doing so requires intense energy and drains our mental resources.
- Feel overwhelmed because your brain has no concept of time. Everything you think about, that you have to do, the brain thinks you have to do it NOW.

This leads to a feeling of failure. If you have two items on your mental to do list, it's impossible to do them both at once – but your mind doesn't know that. It starts sending messages to your subconscious that you have failed. This can wreak havoc on your self-esteem and cause you to sabotage your efforts in the future.

To combat these issues, you need to write everything down. And I'm not just talking about to do items. I'm also talking about any problems, unfinished ideas, things that you want to study in the future, places you want to go – anything that is distracting you, interfering with your thought process, or taking up mental space in your brain.

All of these items consume a large part of your conscious thought process. They eat away at your creative energy resources and limit your ability to retain and process information.

THIS IS A CRUCIAL STEP!

Your brain is always hard at work, behind the scenes, focusing on these loose ends. Until an item has been given some form of closure, your brain exerts energy and resources thinking about ways to solve the matter. It drains your mental resources and leaves you feeling overwhelmed and unable to fully devote yourself to any task or activity.

You need to collect all the things that are not finished. This includes anything, personally or professionally that is incomplete – no matter how big or small, no matter how urgent or trivial it may seem.

Many of these things you've already collected. It could be:

- Your inbox of emails
- Your overflowing to do pile
- Stacks of magazines you haven't read
- Voice mail messages to listen to

Other things that need to be written down are things like:

- Ongoing projects
- Future business ideas
- New projects

Home improvement projects that need to be completed
Errands to be run (dentist, cleaning out car, oil change, etc.)

- Classes to take/Things you want to learn
- Calls you need to make

Everything needs to be put into one bin (or place) to be processed. If you can't physically capture it, then create a sheet of paper to represent that task. For instance, you can put one in there for cleaning out your email box, another for taking care of your voice mail messages, etc. The point is to dump everything into the box that is taking up your mental space.

Really spend some time getting it all down. The more you can capture all of the incomplete items, the more energy you can conserve for future actions. There will be others that crop up later or ones that you forget, but do your best to get as many of them down the first time around.

Obviously this process will take some time. Try and carve out a weekend when you can devote yourself fully to the task. It will pay off tremendously, I assure you – provided you follow the process through to the end.

See, it's not enough to just collect everything and write it down. You have to write it down in a way that your mind knows, without a doubt, that you will find, and look at, the information in the future.

If you just put things in a notebook, or a drawer, never to be seen again – your mind knows that the system is unreliable and will continue to work on the tasks. You must have a reliable system in place to keep track of everything and you must be committed to using the system in the future.

So let's talk about how you can create systems that support your time management efforts...

STEP 3: SYSTEMIZE YOUR LIFE

As I mentioned earlier, systems help us to better organize our world. The more you can systematize the actions you take in life, the smoother it will run. Did you notice I said '*actions*' and not '*stuff*'? While all of those things sitting in your bin are pieces of paper, they are all tied to an action you need to take.

That's the real key to an effective time management system.

YOU HAVE TO CREATE NEXT STEPS FOR EACH ITEM.

One of the biggest hurdles in actually following through on things is that people struggle with what to do next. They see the project as a whole and get overwhelmed before they even start. Or they begin, run into difficulties, and get mired in the problem.

Unfortunately, our brain is wired to do just that. It's actually easier for our mind to focus on problems rather than solutions. This is because our brain has already **seen** the problem. It can recall it very easily because it has a recent point of reference.

It requires much more energy and effort to bring to mind something that the brain has not yet experienced (like a solution). Problems also bring up strong emotions, which makes the memory (and recall) even more vivid, and which, unfortunately, further cloud our judgment.

By creating the next action step to take, however, you help eliminate that roadblock by focusing on an external solution. You simply answer the question, "What is the next physical action I can take to move the situation forward?"

Would it be a phone call or an email? Would you sign up for a class or talk with your spouse? Would you brainstorm ideas or purchase supplies at the hardware store?

By identifying and listing the next step you need to take, you not only feel a great sense of relief at the mental strain being lifted from your thoughts, you also gain a sense of control over your tasks and more motivation to actually follow through and take action.

There's another important reason for making everything actionable. It lets your mind know that it can stop working on the problem. Doing so allows your brain to close the file and consider the matter resolved. Once you know the next step you need to take, it's not lingering in your conscious mind, using up your energy and resources.

The systems and processes we'll talk about in this chapter will help you rapidly increase your time management. While they do take a little time to set up, you only need to do it once. And the rewards you get once finished will be immeasurable – less stress, more free time, increased productivity, and enhanced peace of mind.

These steps are based on ideas from David Allen's book, *Getting Things Done*, though they have been tweaked and modified.

So, let's look at what you've collected and see exactly how to make everything actionable. It's time to sort through the bin.

Now, many 'old school' management systems advocate only touching a piece of paper once. I disagree. It really isn't the most effective use of your time. Remember the chunking we learned about earlier that has proven so effective? You're going to use it here as well.

First, go through the pile you have collected and sort it into these stacks:

- Things that require you to take action
- Things that simply need to be filed
- Things that need to be read
- Things that might need to be acted on later (things you're thinking about)
- Things that can be trashed

(To continue using the system in the future, you should have three bins: Action, File and Read)

To determine which pile something goes in, ask yourself, "What is the next step that needs to be done with this?"

If there are no steps – and you don't need to save the information – then it goes straight into the garbage can.

If there are no actions, but you think you should hold onto the information, it goes into the Filing pile.

If you're thinking about possibly doing something with the information, but you're not sure (maybe a class you're thinking of taking or a conference you're thinking of attending) place it in the "Things that might need to be acted on later" pile.

If there is an action you need to take, it goes in the Action pile.

Once you have everything sorted, it's time to dig into each pile separately.

ACTION PILE

Look at each piece of paper and determine the next action that needs to be done. If it's something that can be handled in under 2 minutes, don't wait. Do it now. If it's something that should be delegated or outsourced, hand it off to another person. If it requires more time, determine the next action step that needs to be taken and then schedule that activity.

It's best to group your next action steps together into chunks. For instance, create a 'TO Call' log that you can access when you're near a phone. Place your reading material where you can access it when you

have a few minutes – perhaps in a briefcase you carry or a bag. This way, when you find yourself waiting on someone or are stuck in a waiting room, you can knock out that activity instead of simply wasting time.

For those items that are tied to a larger project, you need to do more than map out the next step. If you haven't already, you need to create a deadline for the project and then work backward from there.

Create a timeline of all the next steps that need to be done so the process is mapped out.

Also, create a project list that shows all the current projects you're working on. This allows you to see the big picture as well as all the minute details.

WARNING: If you're stuck at a certain point in a project, don't just move the paper to another day when you can think about it some more. Determine, right now, what needs to be done to move forward. You don't have to take action on the next step right away. You just need to know what the next action will be.

Once you determine that, you may find that it actually is something that can easily be handled in the next two minutes. Usually it's involves a phone call to someone, an email to ask a question, or a quick search for answers on the web. Whatever the next step is that will end the impasse, figure it out and schedule it.

THINGS THAT MIGHT NEED TO BE ACTED ON LATER PILE:

For things you're thinking about or still mulling over, schedule a time in the future for you to make your decision or at least to revisit the option.

This is the only time you will have such a pile. In the future, you can simply determine when you'd like to give the matter more thought and place it in the appropriate file.

TO FILE PILE

Designate a time, either daily or weekly, to file papers that have accumulated in your bin. The best time to do this is usually right before you're leaving for the night or when your energy is lowest. For things that need to be filed, you should have a filing system in place that supports your work style. Your files should be created in a way that would make it easy for you, or anyone you work with, to be able to quickly find the information.

One of the main reasons things don't get filed is because people find the process of creating a new file to be too much work. Don't let this happen to you. Make the process easy. Keep the supplies you need close at hand.

Anytime you need to make a new file in the future, you should be able to pull it out quickly and make a new file on the spot, in less than 2 minutes. This is one of those tasks that if you put it off, it never tend to get done. Get in the habit of doing it immediately and it will be much less painful.

For all those pieces of paper that have to do with action items and things you're mulling over, the best filing system to use is also one of the oldest. It involves getting 31 folders of one color (for the days in the current month) and 12 folders of another color (for the months in the year). These files should be close at hand since you will be using them frequently. If an item is scheduled for an action this month, place it in the folder for that day. If an item will be handled in another month, simply place it in the folder for that month.

On the last day of each month, take out the folder for the following month and place any items into the designated day files. For instance, on July 31st, you would pull out the August folder. If it included a sheet of paper with something that was marked for August 15th, then you would place that paper in the file marked 15.

This ensures that nothing gets lost and everything is tracked within the system. For things that you can use any day, for instance, your "To Call List" or Project list, place those in the current day's folder. That way, when you get some free time, you can pull it out and work on it.

While the system described above works very well, there is a major tweak you can do to it if you struggle with scheduling all of your tasks. Many people, especially those who are self employed, don't like to schedule every part of their day. They like to have more flexibility and a little less structure in their life.

If you're nodding your head in agreement, there is a simple fix to this. Rather than scheduling specific times to do each task, you can simply add the action to a master list that you create.

For instance, I mentioned a “TO Call List” earlier. You can create similar lists with whatever types of tasks you do on a regular basis. Rather than scheduling certain times to do each activity, you would place each activity on one of your master lists.

These master lists would be kept in your current day's folder. If you felt like using a chunk of your time to focus on a certain activity, you simply pull out that master list and get to work. The only things that would remain on your calendar then, would be appointments, meetings, and dates for project milestones – things that are non-negotiable and must be done on a specific day at a certain time.

In doing this, you still ensure that all items are accounted for and being tracked, yet you create more flexibility in your day.

While both these systems help manage your time much more efficiently, they won't get you closer to your goals. As Tim Ferris writes in *The 4-Hour Workweek*, “Efficiency is performing a given task (whether important or not) in the most economical manner possible.” Efficiency alone will only help you manage your current workload. It won't tell you which tasks are more important or where you should be focusing your newfound energy and mental resources.

In order to truly prosper, you need to prioritize your tasks and focus on getting results, which is what we'll delve into in the next chapter...

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE YOUR TIME

Remember that sinking ship we talked about in Step 1? Let's go back to it for a minute. You've got less than 10 minutes before the ship sinks. Now, we've already established that you wouldn't waste your time playing cards, calling friends or putting off the decision to leave until more time had passed.

But let me ask you this...

Would you sit down and write out your goals for the future and what really matters to you before you made your exit? Sounds just as crazy as the other things you rejected, doesn't it? Of course you wouldn't! You'd get off the boat and worry about the rest later.

Well the same is true with your time management crisis. When you're buried in paperwork and about to sink from the weight of all your obligations, it's nearly impossible to sit down and hammer out where your priorities should lie and what you hope to accomplish in the future.

You can't think that far ahead. You're just trying to get through the day! You're fighting to stay afloat. And yet, most time management courses ask you to do this at the very beginning. It's one of the reasons why they tend to be abandoned so quickly. It just doesn't fit well with the reality of our lives.

This is why determining your priorities is Step 4 rather than Step 1. Because, by this point, you've been able to track your time, eliminate some time wasters, and get some sanity back into your day. You've created a system to deal with the never-ending flow of information and gotten rid of all the mental clutter that was clouding your vision and eating up your mental reserves.

Now you can think about the future with a clear head. You can breathe...and let your mind wander to the opportunities that exist all around you and the success that is meant to be yours.

Now you can start asking yourself the big questions and really focusing your efforts.

So, let me ask you...

Five years from now, what do you want to be different in your life? Do you want to be successfully self-employed? Do you want to be a best-selling author? Do you want to have a bigger house with 5 bedrooms and a heated pool? Do you want to be 20 pounds lighter, in love with your soul mate and raising a family?

Whatever you want, write it down. Make it as detailed as possible. You want to be able to close your eyes and vividly see the image, as if you're watching a movie.

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR FUTURE TO LOOK LIKE?

Now that you have the picture in your head, let's work on making it real. What has to happen to make that dream come true? What can you do, right now, to start working toward that vision?

For instance, to have a successful business might mean making \$250,000/year five years from now. So a realistic goal to shoot towards for your first year might be \$50,000. That means you'd need to make around \$4170/month.

How many clients/projects/sales would you need to make that figure a reality?

If you're looking to lose weight, you would need to create an exercise regimen. How many times per week would you need to exercise? For how long?

If you're looking to be a best-selling author, the book first needs to be written. What is the first step in the process that you can plan to take in the very near future? Choosing a topic for the book? Researching how publishing house works?

Work backwards with your list and determine the high priority tasks you can focus on today that will lead you to the tomorrow you desire...

As you go about determining what you will spend your time on, keep these goals in mind. One easy way to do this is to leave a sheet of your goals in your daily folder. You can look at them each morning and each night as you're planning your to do list for the following day.

Your sole focus should be on generating results and seeing your goals come to life in the shortest time possible. Most people unconsciously make more work for themselves.

They get stuck in the mentality that success has to be hard and that it requires a lot of time and effort.

But think about what we've already discovered about time management. I think it's pretty well established that most people spend very little of their day actually working. So we can pretty much throw that theory out the window.

Have you ever stopped to think about why the average workday is 9-5? Do you really think it's possible that everyone in the world needs the exact same amount of time to complete their job?

Of course not!

The 9-5 workday is completely arbitrary. It has no real meaning. It came about simply because someone decided on that time frame.

Most of us live by Parkinson's Law. This law states that a task will fill up whatever time has been allotted to the project. So, for instance, if you are given a week to develop a presentation, it will take you a week. If your boss comes to you at 5pm on Thursday and says you need to make a presentation the next morning, you will have a presentation ready to go the next morning.

It's not the complexity of the task, but rather the time you have to do it, that determines its completion date. One of the hidden benefits of giving yourself tight deadlines is that it forces you to use your time wisely. You actively seek creative solutions to any problems that arise, you focus with blinding clarity, and you aggressively eliminate any distractions.

A great way to use this to your advantage, and determine the critical tasks that deserve your attention each day, is to ponder this scenario each morning: In 2 hours everything related to your work will completely vanish for the rest of the day.

What do you focus on?

Where do you spend your time?

Another law that comes into play when determining how to prioritize your day is Pareto's Principle, otherwise known as the 80/20 rule. The 80/20 rule basically states that 80% of the results you achieve come from 20% of the effort you put forth.

- 80% of your customers come from 20% of your marketing efforts
- 80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers
- 80% of your income comes from 20% of your products or services

If you were to focus the majority of your time on the 20% - the critical things that produce the greatest results - you would not only experience tremendous success, but you could actually significantly reduce your work load.

This is one of the reasons why you should always track your efforts and see where your results are coming from - so you can eliminate the things that aren't working and focus on the things that are.

You should also stop and check in with yourself throughout the day. While your work days may look very different in scope and activity, there should be consistency in one thing at the end of the day, you want to be one step closer to your goals than you were the day before.

To accomplish this, ask yourself,

- Am I being productive or just active right now?
- Is what I'm working on going to directly help me achieve one of my 5-year goals?

Your objective should always be to do at least one thing each day that moves you forward toward your goals.

Whatever that may be, it's best to do that task first thing in the morning. That way, no matter what happens throughout your day, or how far off track your schedule gets, you can feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in knowing that you are still making progress.

Focusing on your goals and prioritizing your schedule will help you rapidly determine where you should best spend your time.

But what about the actual act of doing the tasks? Wouldn't it be nice if there were ways to almost magically speed up your efforts and increase your output?

Luckily, there are. And we'll cover them in the next step..

STEP 5 EXAMINE HOW YOU WORK

Did you ever wish you could bend time to your will - make a 24 hour period stretch to be 48 or even 72? Imagine the things you could accomplish, the goals you could achieve...

While it's a nice fantasy, the reality is that most people would spend the extra time simply procrastinating or spreading out their 'to do list' to fit the extended time period. (Remember Parkinson's Law?) The secret to creating untold success lies not in having more time, but in mastering the time you do have.

Self-mastery is what will create the most change in your life. The process involves learning how to optimize your work time, so you get more done in less time. It's about becoming disciplined enough to filter out all the unnecessary and distracting information, focus on the things that truly matter, and work to your strengths.

FILTERING OUT THE UNNECESSARY OR DISTRACTING INFORMATION

We live in the Information Age. The amount of data that we are able to access is stunning. And it grows every day. We are bombarded with more emails, more reports, more magazines, more conferences, more, more, more...

Trying to stay on top of the information is a full time job in and of itself - and it will get you nowhere. You can possess all the information in the world. It won't do you any good - unless you put it into ACTION.

To create massive success you must take massive action. Your lifestyle will be determined by what you do - not by the knowledge you possess. You must become very disciplined about limiting your input. Otherwise you'll get buried under a never-ending pile of things to read and data to analyze.

If you are not going to use the information on something immediate and important, then don't bother looking at it. If you do, it will be time wasted. When it actually comes time to use the info in the future, you'll have already forgotten it and will have to look at it again anyway.

And really, let's be honest. Much of the information that passes your way will have no impact on the level of success or happiness in your life. As Tim Ferris states in *The 4-Hour Work Week*, "Most information is time consuming, negative, irrelevant to your goals and outside of your influence."

For those things you do need to look at, that you feel will have a positive and immediate impact on you or your business, develop the habit of going through the information as soon as possible.

To do this, you should have a goal before you get started. Know what you want to get out of the information, what you want your take away to be, before you begin reading. This way, your mind is primed to look for that specific information. Not only will you find it faster, but you'll also retain the information longer.

Another thing you can do is master the art of speed reading. One easy technique to get you started is to use a pen or finger to trace under each line as you read as fast as possible.

If you're consuming information in audio or video format, you can buy software that actually speeds up the playback time. Enounce.com is one choice. With most information, you can speed up the playback by as much as 50 to 100% and still get the information just fine. Speeding it up also makes you listen more intently, which helps you retain the data better.

Also, get in the habit of walking away from certain things. If you're digesting information and realize that it can't be used immediately, stop reading it. When you go through your magazines and newspapers, don't read every article to see if there might be something you can use.

Focus on the relevant information and don't worry about the rest. While knowledge is power, knowing which information to hone in on and which to discard is even more powerful.

Finally, keep in mind, when you're looking to develop new skills or learn new information, the different ways that you absorb knowledge. You retain:

- 10% of what you read
- 20% of what you hear
- 30% of what you see
- 50% of what you hear and see
- 70% of what you say
- 90% of what you do

Action is by far the best teacher. Put what you learn to immediate use and you've created a lifelong skill.

Mentoring is another powerful option. With a mentor, you do everything. You read information, you hear what they have to say, you see how they do things and, with their guidance, you take action on the information.

FOCUS ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS

There is a big difference between urgent and important work. Urgent is time sensitive. Important work is focused on priority work – it involves doing those things that will help you achieve your long-term goals.

Unfortunately, most of us spend our time focusing on urgent tasks that really aren't that important. The good news is that once you implement the systems and strategies laid out here, your schedule won't be so chaotic. There will be fewer fires to put out. Over 80% of crisis situations in business can be eliminated with proper planning and time management.

For the other 20%, you have to keep your focus on the long-term. Many things that others deem urgent may not really qualify as such. It's up to you to determine what the best use of your time is, and stick to your guns, even if others don't necessarily agree. Obviously, if you're self employed this is a little easier to do. But there are ways to accomplish this even when you work for others. (We'll discuss some specific strategies in the next step.)

With everything that comes across your desk as urgent, look at the long-term impact it will have on your life. If it's urgent priority work, you can dive in. If it's not, either let it go or look for ways to eliminate the situation from happening in the future.

For instance, if you have a client who is always sending you urgent work at the last minute, schedule a time to go over your policies with him regarding time frames. You could also consider increasing your fee if the urgent work continues.

You also need to take this hard stance with yourself. For instance, you know that you should get up early to focus on your personal development and growth, which is a long-term priority. But when that alarm clock goes off, the snooze button just seems to be urgently calling your name.

It's up to you to focus on the things that you will gain by getting out of bed, and perhaps more importantly, the things you will lose by staying under the covers. Pain is often a much bigger motivator than pleasure. If you're really struggling to focus on your goals, remind yourself of what you will lose by not taking action.

WORK TO YOUR STRENGTHS

We all have areas where we excel. Maybe you're a good writer. Maybe you're a master negotiator. Maybe you have a way with numbers or are an idea machine. Wherever your greatest strengths lie, you should focus your efforts there.

The old mantra of, be anything you want to be, is actually hurting a lot of people. Because they will try to create a business (or a life) in an area that doesn't play to their natural strengths.

It's a big mistake.

Research has shown time and again that when people are allowed to focus on their true strengths, who they are at the core of their being, they are 3 times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life.

Another way to maximize your strengths (and your time) is to take advantage of your natural bio rhythms. Particularly if you're self-employed, you should schedule the most attention rich tasks when you are fresh and alert.

Anything that requires deep thinking - like prioritizing, brainstorming or thinking up solutions - should be grouped together and tackled when your mind is at its best.

When doing this type of work, it's also more effective to write down any different ideas or things you're contemplating.

This allows your brain more energy to focus on comparisons because you don't also have to hold the ideas in your mind. With clearer thinking, you can make faster and more meaningful progress.

Another way to conserve your brainpower, and increase your output, is to create visuals for your mind to hold onto for complex ideas. For instance, one of the most common visuals used to describe your brain is that of a computer.

Another common visual reference is using a road trip as an analogy for setting and achieving goals (complete with detours, side trips and highway fatigue).

Using visuals provides 2 big benefits:

It allows you to access a huge amount of information involving complex relationships and dozens of parts, shapes, moving pieces, etc., all in one easy visual image (which requires much less energy).

It allows you to solve problems much faster. Our visual mechanism in our brain is much more advanced than our language processing area. Our ancestors were seeing images and storing them in their brain long before they learned to interact verbally with others.

- Studies have shown that when you give someone a problem to solve and use visual references, storytelling, or metaphors to help explain the problem, they solve it dramatically faster than if the problem is just explained using conceptual ideas.
- For instance, if you're trying to think of how to best maximize your brain-power, you can return to the computer reference. When your computer starts slowing down, what do you do?

You might:

- Clean out all the old files and free up some space (i.e. get yourself organized, throw out the clutter, and eliminate distractions)
- Look for viruses or spyware (i.e. look at your negative self-talk or the demands placed on you by others)
- Increase your ram (i.e. look for classes on speed reading or find a mentor to help you speed up your learning curve)

Finally, make sure you alternate your workload. The brain can only focus on intense mental work for so long. When you feel your energy level start to downgrade, take a break.

STEP 6: COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS

You're probably familiar with the story of Romeo and Juliet and their tragic ending. Juliet, thinking Romeo had really died, took her own life. And Romeo, when he awoke and saw his loved one dead at his side, did the same.

Lack of communication can cause all sorts of problems. While I hope you never experience anything as dramatic as their story, your quest for mastery over your time will die a quick and painful death if you don't get others involved and on board with the idea.

At this point in the process, you should have developed a respect for your own time, developed systems to support your efforts, and established priorities to keep you on track. Now, you need to get the help and support of others.

Basically, you must start training others to respect your time. People will treat you the way you allow them to treat you. Teach – or retrain others – how to deal with you effectively. And once you set your rules – don't waiver on your stance.

The same is true with friends and family. Set clear boundaries and enforce them.

This step is late in the process because it has to be. If you don't first show respect for your own time, you will never be able to get others to do so.

Here are some specific strategies you can use to help others respect your time:

DETERMINE WHEN YOU WILL BE DISTURBED

Most of us have conditioned ourselves, and those who do business with us, to be available at a moment's notice. We immediately respond to email, pick up the phone whenever it rings and allow others to invade our workspace.

Develop a new set of rules about when you may be disturbed and when you must be left alone.

USE COMMUNICATION TOOLS MORE EFFECTIVELY VOICE MESSAGES:

When you leave someone a message, give them as much information as possible and tell them what you would like to know when they call you back. (Even better, tell them to respond via email.)

For instance, if you're trying to schedule a meeting, give them the three times that work best for you. If those aren't suitable, tell them to get back to you with other times that work for them.

Meetings: If someone would like a meeting, have them email an agenda to you a few days before the meeting. Often, the things they'd like to discuss can be handled through email or by a short telephone call.

If you're forced to participate in meetings at your job, talk with your boss about trying to eliminate the need for your participation. Start small – ask to miss one meeting or to perhaps leave early. Document the amount of productivity you achieved during that time. Slowly increase the time you request to be exempt from meetings.

Email: Only check your email a few times each day – and try to avoid doing it first thing in the morning.

Typically, your most important task of the day should always be tackled first. If you start checking your email, it usually leads you down the rabbit hole of procrastination – checking out sites, clicking on links and surfing the web.

Also, you should encourage people to respond to your requests through email. Not only does it create a paper trail, it forces people to be more concise and thorough in their explanations.

OUTSOURCE TASKS TO OTHERS

You can save a tremendous amount of time by outsourcing tasks that you dislike, or that don't cater to your strengths. The key to doing it effectively is to foster excellent communication between you and your outsourcer.

You want them to be crystal clear on what you expect and how you'd like the job performed. Give them the information and then let them run with the task. The more you can make them feel empowered in their work, the better they will do their job.

Approach others (and yourself) with challenging questions rather than dead end ones.

Which question do you think will get you the best result?

“Jimmy, you lost your biggest account. How in the world could you let this happen?”

“Jimmy, it looks like our biggest account is switching to another company. What do you think we can do to get them back?”

Questions are powerful. The right questions will lead others to open their mind and tap into their creative energy and insight. The wrong questions can shut them down, make them defensive and impede any forward progress. Use empowering questions to guide you to solutions rather than to keep you bogged down in a problem.

SHOW RESPECT FOR EVERYONE'S TIME

Be punctual. It's one of the best ways to show that you understand the true value of time. It conditions others to respect your time because you are clearly showing respect for theirs.

Your time management goals will never be achieved without the help of others. Teach them to respect your time and you will suddenly find yourself with much more of it.

STEP 7: TAKE BACK YOUR TIME

How well you manage your time will determine what your future holds. Benjamin Franklin, who is widely considered one of the foremost experts on productivity, credited all his success to his time management skills.

Franklin amassed a staggering amount of achievements in his life. He was a successful business owner, politician, diplomat, patriot, scientist, humanitarian, and inventor (among other things). He also started the first fire department, insurance company, and post office, just to name a few.

Ben said, "Time IS Money – Time IS Life – therefore time must be considered the most precious thing that we own."

Commit wholeheartedly to the process of time management and your life will be transformed. If you've just read through the book, now it's time to go back and TAKE ACTION. Work through the steps. Establish your priorities. Set your boundaries.

It's only in doing so that you can move forward. Take back your passion...

Take back the things you value...

Take back your time - starting TODAY - and create the future you deserve!

I created this for you, with your future success in mind.

Here's to your success!

Nathan Amaral

For additional help in personal & business development contact:

TheFearlessMillionaire.com

TIME MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

STEP 1. RESPECT THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME

____ Create a log of all your daily activities (for at least 3 days)

Look for:

___ Trivial time wasters

___ Moments of Procrastination

Ask yourself:

What am I supposed to be doing when I'm procrastinating?

What's stopping me from moving forward?

___ Change the language you use to talk about tasks (ex: change "I must" to "I choose")

___ Determine how much time you currently spend on productive tasks

STEP 2. ELIMINATE TIME WASTERS

___ Focus on one task at a time

___ Chunk your time into like minded tasks to increase productivity

___ Do not allow interruptions or distractions during concentrated work periods

___ Minimize external distractions by turning off the phone, closing email and shutting the door

___ Reduce clutter in your physical environment – place items in relation to how you often you use them

___ Minimize internal distractions by writing down all the things that are on your mind, and all the unfinished business you have, both personally and professionally

STEP 3. SYSTEMIZE YOUR LIFE

- ___ Create next steps for each of your unfinished items (Make them ACTIONABLE)
- ___ Sort your items into 5 piles
- ___ Action needs to be taken
- ___ Considering possible action in the future
- ___ No action, but item needs to be filed
- ___ Items needs to be read or scanned
- ___ Item needs to be thrown away
- ___ If an item can be handled in under 2 minutes, do it now
- ___ If an item will take longer, either schedule a specific time to do it in the future or add it to a master list that you check each day (Ex: Call List, Project List)
- ___ If there is an item you're still mulling over, schedule a time in the future to revisit the idea
- ___ Projects should be tracked separately on their own list and timelines for milestones should be tracked on your calendar (along with meetings and appointments)
- ___ Create filing systems to hold unfinished items
- ___ Create a 31 day folder system for the days of the month
- ___ Create a 12 month folder system for the months of the year

STEP 4. PRIORITIZE YOUR TIME

- ___ Determine what you want your life to look like 5 years into the future
- ___ Determine what you have to focus your time on NOW/ to make that happen
- ___ Keep these goals in the forefront of your mind as you go about deciding what to do on a daily basis
- ___ Focus on results, not just actions (Follow the 80/20 Rule)
- ___ Give yourself tight deadlines – otherwise you'll fill your day with busy activities that accomplish very little (Parkinson's Law)
- ___ Stop and check in with yourself throughout the day

Am I being productive or just busy right now?

Is what I'm working on going to help me achieve my goals?

___Have an objective of doing one thing each day (preferably first thing in the morning) that moves you closer to your goals

STEP 5. EXAMINE HOW YOU WORK

___Filter out unnecessary or distracting information

___Only look at information that can be used immediately and has a direct impact on your success or well being

___Determine what you want to get out of the information before you start to read, watch or listen to the info

___ Get into the habit of speed reading and use the accelerated playback mode for audios and videos

___ If you find something to be irrelevant to your current goals, stop looking at it

___Keep in mind you learn best by taking action or by working with a mentor

___Focus on what really matters

___Realize the difference between urgent and important work

___Focus on important work and on eliminating urgent (crisis) situations

___Always keep your long-term goals in mind

___Work to your strengths

___Focus on the areas where you excel

___Save attention rich tasks for those times in the day when your mind is most alert

___Write down your ideas, so your mind can concentrate its resources on problem solving, rather than remembering them

___Create visual references for complex ideas (ex: your brain is a computer)

___Alternate between periods of intense mental activity (ex: prioritizing), low level tasks (ex: filing) and rest

STEP 6. COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS

- ___ Teach others to respect your time by establishing (and keeping) boundaries
- ___ Determine when you will allow interruptions and when you will not be disturbed
- ___ Use communication tools more effectively
- ___ Be very specific in your voice mail messages and teach others to be as well
- ___ If someone wants to hold a meeting, have them send an agenda a few days prior to the meeting. If possible, respond to agenda via email or phone and eliminate the meeting altogether
- ___ Speak to your boss about limiting attendance at meetings
- ___ Don't check your email in the morning. Establish a few specific times to check it throughout the day. Only look at it then
- ___ Get others used to responding to you via email
- ___ Outsource tasks to others
- ___ Approach others (and yourself) with challenging questions rather than dead end ones
- ___ Always be punctual

STEP 7: TAKE BACK YOUR TIME

- ___ Commit to the process of time management - TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE!