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# TIME MANAGEMENT

## HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT WHATEVER TIME I GIVE TO LEARNING SOMETHING RESULTS FROM IT?

### OVERVIEW

Rich, poor, in sickness or in health, we have one thing in common – 24 hours a day!

What makes us different is how effectively we use these 24 hours. Some people may be naturally better at using time than others, just as some people naturally need more or less sleep, have more or less energy.

Learning to manage time is not something restricted to executives on fancy courses! It is something that everyone needs – you control time or time controls you.

The 10 time management techniques described here are simple. What is difficult is putting them into practice – not because they are hard but because they are unbelievably tedious, require an enormous amount of self-discipline and persistence, and because you don't see any immediate result.

Months after you begin using time management techniques consciously and continuously, you will look back and say, **“I'm managing my time much better now”** But if you rest on your laurels and stop using the time management, you find that you slip behind again.

Time management is a boring but unavoidable chore! There are no short cuts. You need to make time management part of your life, like brushing your teeth!

## TWENTY STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Know what you want to do and put it into writing. Set your priorities. Make sure you are getting what you want to out of life.
2. Focus on your long term goals. You're most important daily/weekly activities.
3. Set at least one major task each day. It will help you reach your goals more easily.
4. Keep a record of how you use your time. Get rid of bad habits.
5. Think about everything you do in terms of your goals. Find out what you do, when you do it and why you do it? Ask yourself what would happen if you didn't do it.
6. Get rid of at least one time waster from your life each week.
7. Plan your time. Write out a plan for your time each week. Ask your self what you hope to have accomplished by the end of the week and what you need to achieve those results.
8. Make a **'TO DO LIST'** EVERY DAY. Be sure to prioritise your tasks and estimate how much time you have available.
9. Organise your time to do the most important things first... But leave room for the unexpected interruptions.
10. Make the first hour of homework/study time productive. You'll be amazed at how much you'll get done.
11. Set time limits for the tasks you do.
12. Take time – do the task right first time, then you won't have to waste time doing it over again.
13. Get rid of those problems out of your time that keep happening again and again.
14. Create a 'Quiet Hour' in your day – a block of uninterrupted time for your most important tasks.
15. Develop the habit of finishing what you start. Don't jump from one thing to another. If you do, you'll leave a string of unfinished tasks behind you.
16. If you are in the habit of putting things off until later, get rid of it! **LEARN TO DO THINGS NOW.**
17. Make improving how you manage your time a daily habit. Set your goals, work out what's most important, plan and estimate your time. Keep to your plan and resist the temptation to do things you haven't planned to do.
18. Never spend time on less important things when you could be spending time on more important things.
19. Take time for yourself – to dream, to relax, to live.
20. Develop your own personal view of time – what it means to you and how it relates to your life. Then don't allow other peoples view of time to get in your way.

**PARENTS: REASSESS YOUR OWN CAPABILITIES, INDEPENDENT OF ANYONES 'SUPERWOMAN/SUPERMAN' EXPECTATIONS OF YOU. YOU NEED TO HAVE A DEFINITE CUT OFF POINT AT, WHICH YOU SAY "NO" TO FAMILY DEMANDS. BE CONSISTENT.**

## ASSESS YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

1. Are you the sort of person who likes to plan ahead? Do you like to know what is happening, what you're doing when and where?
2. Do you write lists of what you need to do - on bits of paper, in a diary, on your calendar? Do you get a sense of satisfaction when you can tick off the things you have done?
3. Do you enjoy routine? Do you find life easier if you can anticipate certain things will happen in certain ways at certain times?
4. Do you like to work at a fairly even pace with fairly regular hours and moderate pressure?
5. Do you like to relax and let life happen? Do you prefer to respond to life as it happens rather than planning too far ahead and tying it all up neatly?
6. Do you procrastinate? Do you have good intentions but somehow end up doing everything at the last minute, and quite enjoying it?
7. Do you leave your income tax bills to the last possible moment even when you have the money because you just can't be bothered?
8. Do you pride yourself in working well under pressure, when there's a deadline?
9. Do you enjoy variety, working in sports and relaxing totally in between?
10. Do you get a buzz out of crises? Do you like coping with whatever happens when it happens? Do you find yourself amazed when other people seem to go to pieces and get angry and upset when things go wrong?

## **TIME STEALERS**

1. POOR MEETINGS
2. TELEPHONE TIME STEALERS
3. POOR DELEGATION
4. UNCLEAR DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES
5. LACK OF PRIORITIES
6. POOR COMMUNICATION
7. INDECISION AND DELAY
8. CRISES MANAGEMENT
9. INABILITY TO SAY NO
10. INVOLVED IN TOO MUCH
11. INABILITY TO FINISH THINGS
12. TOO MUCH ROUTINE WORK
13. LACK OF SELF DISCIPLINE
14. INTERRUPTION BY DROP IN VISITORS
15. TOO MUCH PPERWORK AND READING
16. PERSONAL DISORGANISTION

## POOR MEETINGS

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Purpose of meeting not clear

Draw up an Agenda.

Wrong participants

Invite only those needed the most.

Too many meetings.

Evaluate the results in relation to the time spent.

Poor/no minutes at all

Make standard outline for minutes

Irrelevant talk

Firm chairing of meeting.

No conclusions  
No follow up

Agenda to state which decisions to be taken.  
Minutes to indicate **WHOM? WHAT? WHEN?**

Indecision

Invite a person with **DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY**

Poor chairmanship

Train yourself and your colleagues in **CHAIRMANSHIP**

Not starting on time

**Always start on time.** By waiting on latecomers you reward them and penalise others.

Too many interruptions

From outside. Allow **no interruptions** except for emergency. Let the Secretary/Operator know when the meeting will be finished at the latest.

Not sticking with the Agenda.  
Failure to set ending and/or  
Allocations for each subject.

Be on your guard against hidden agenda.  
To begin with set time-limit meeting.  
Assign each specific time according to importance.

## TELEPHONE - TIME STEALERS

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Discussion too lengthy

Separate chat from information

Wish/need to be available to  
Outside interruption.

Train Operator/Secretary to be selective.

No plans for privacy

Switch off the phone and schedule periods in which you do not want to be disturbed. Set specific times for taking calls –**or say that you will call back**

Unstructured conversations

Make a plan in advance by listing items you want to discuss.

Wish to be involved

Divorce yourself from the details.

Inability to terminate and shorten

Present time limit, **‘Yes I can talk for...minutes’**. Foreshadow ending. Before we hang up. Be polite but factual, ‘I’ve got to go now’

Unrealistic time estimates

Have an egg timer by your telephone.

Lack of priorities – all calls get through

Discuss the problem with your Secretary/Operator. Make a plan.

No Secretary

Ask a colleague to cover your phone for a number of minutes. Do the same in return.

## POOR DELEGATION

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Insecurity –fear of failure	Bear in mind that you have probably learnt most by your mistakes. Teach your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> pass on your experience to them.
Lack of faith in others	Train your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> , build up faith in them.
Overcontrol	Measure your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> on the basis of results, not activities.
Inadequate instructions	Train yourself and your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> . Let your staff accept a task by repeating your instructions.
Delegation of formal responsibility But not actual authority	Give the <b>SUBORDINATE</b> an opportunity of showing results.
Fear of my subordinate doing a Job better than me	Be grateful instead. The whole organisation will benefit. Nobody is expected to be equally good at everything. The better your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> , The better your own promotion prospects.
Involving myself too much in detail	Do nothing yourself you can delegate to others.
Can do job better myself	Don't try to be a perfectionist.
I feel more comfortable doing than managing.	Practise <b>managing techniques</b> . The better you master them, the more comfortable you will feel with them.
Overworked subordinates	Help make them priorities. Make realistic demands. Always have an overview of your <b>SUBORDINATES</b> workload.

## UNCLEAR DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Inadequate job

Organisation chart with **Key** description  
**Areas** would be great help.

You have the formal responsibility  
But no actual authority.

Show through your results that you can  
live up to the authority.

Indecisive superior...

Try to get behind the words and acts.

Power struggle/disgust in the organisation

**Key Areas, goals** and **objectives** need to be  
established in the organisation.

Job descriptions overlap each other.

Identify overlapping. Eliminate them by  
establishing **Key Areas**.

Ambiguous instructions

Request instructions in writing.

## LACK OF PRIORITIES

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lack time to plan

Planning takes time initially, but saves in the  
long run.

Lack of self-discipline

Establish **Key Areas** and **Tasks** for example,  
for one month at a time. *Use the Elephant  
Technique: **One Bite at a Time***. Maybe study  
Mind Power.

Would rather be doing than thinking

Those who know what to do to succeed once.  
Those who know **WHY**, will succeed again  
and again.

No job description

Introduce **Key Areas**.

## POOR COMMUNICATION

CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Unaware of colleagues needs for Information	Ask them what they need
Language difficulties	Create common expressions and terminology.
Wrong media used	Agree when you should hold meetings, write memos, use the telephone, etc.
Poor timing	The timing of information should be chosen carefully so that the recipient will be open to the message.
Over communicating	Define the aim of communication. Learn to express yourself clearly, unambiguously and completely.
Recipient does not seem open and motivated	Find the recipients true <b>motives</b> and attitudes and examine the attitude beforehand, would you like to talk about...? Does the recipient form a quorum after all?
Communicator and recipient different value norms	Use words and phrases which are not loaded.

## INDECISION AND DELAY

CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Lack of faith in decision-making process	Systemise data entry collection and evaluate for more reliability.
Data addiction	Remember the 80/20 rule – 20% of the people do 80% of the work.
Irrational decision technique	Train yourself and your SUBORDINATES in decision techniques.
Unrealistic deadlines	Everything takes longer than you think. So leave 20% of your time open.
Postponing the unpleasant and the difficult	Do them first, you will feel much better afterwards.
Ignorance of what the decision will lead to.	Set goals. Relate the decision to the Key Areas.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lack of priorities

Learn to distinguish between the urgent jobs and the important. Establish priorities: What is your time primarily spent on?

Trying to do too much at the same time

Learn to say no! Do one job at a time. Have an outline of the next tasks.

Overreacting and treating all small  
All small problems as full crisis

Ignore the problems which are of minor importance. Delegate problems, which your SUBORDINATES can handle. Then you preserve the overview and control.

Overlooking possible negative  
Consequences of a decision

Analyse what could go wrong. Set up alternative plans.

## INABILITY TO SAY NO

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Wish to help others

If you always say yes, others will take you for granted. **BREAK THE HABIT.**

Need to feel important and  
Involved in everything

Stake your efforts on something that matters and show results in this field.

Fear of causing offence.

Learn to say no without offending: "I would have liked to if it had been possible, but let me offer a suggestion".

Not knowing how to say 'no'

Train yourself in saying **NO**. It will make it possible for you to concentrate on things that are important.

Ambition/desire to be busy

It is better to do less **WELL** than a lot poorly!

Others quite simply assume that  
You will say yes

Probably, it's your own fault, because you never say **NO**.

## INVOLVED IN TOO MUCH

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Unclear priorities

Goals/Tasks clearly defined. Use **Key Areas**.

I want to be important and involved in everything.

Be selective. Use your time and energy on the 20% which produces 80% of the results.

Unrealistic time estimates

Recognise that everything takes longer than you think. Add 20% cushion to your estimates.

Overwhelming pressure and large Volumes.

Don't confuse activity with piles of paper effectiveness. Often a lot of activity only indicates that you have "FLAPSI HAPSI"

## INABILITY TO FINISH THINGS

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lack of deadlines

Make it a rule to put deadlines on jobs.

Lack of respect for your time/  
Interruptions by other people

Fix some regular time when you are not to be disturbed. If you really know what you want and have to do, you can also make a stand against your boss/colleagues lack of respect for your time.

Overworked....Too much to do

Drop old responsibilities when you accept new ones.

Laziness

Impose deadlines on yourself. And tell others about them.

## TOO MUCH ROUTINE WORK

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lack of priorities

Establish priorities: What is my time primarily spent on?

Fear of subordinates mistakes

Train them. Measure if they live up to your standards.

Fear of losing influence

Get an overview of what is really important. Be inspired by your **KEY AREAS**.

Can do the job better myself

Train your subordinates and have confidence in them.

## TOO MUCH READING

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Unclear and poorly edited material

Persuade your subordinates/boss/colleagues to systemise information in a surveyable form. Set a good example yourself.

Poor reading skill

Train your reading speed. Take a course.

No priorities for what to read.

List things you must read. Give them priorities and learn selective reading skills.

## TOO MUCH PAPERWORK

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

No system

Introduce and use the **TIME MANAGER SYSTEM**

Poor communication

Select the best and most time-saving methods of communication.

Poor administrative

Ask if things are done to routines/ the control too strict/too formalised? Are the administrative routines kept up to date?

Poor organization

STANDARDISE written communication. See if the present paperwork can be improved. SYSTEMISE information processing. Let a consultant take a look at your paperwork procedure.

## LACK OF SELF – DISCIPLINE

CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Lack of performance standards.	Set your own standards.
Postponing the unpleasant.	Recognise that it has to be done. It is not going to be easier later on. Do the unpleasant things first, then the rest of the day is easy.
Lack of direction in your work	Say <b>no</b> to unimportant matters.
Responding to urgent matters, postponing the important.	Ignore the problems that solve themselves. Delegate the problems others can handle. Attend to those, which only you can handle.
Not following up.	A thing is not finished until it functions in the way it was intended to.
I cannot say NO.	<b>STOP BEING THE NICE GUY.</b>
Not making use of techniques available	Establish which are available. Decide on the use of them
Unrealistic time estimates	All you get out of unrealistic time functions is frustration, FLAPSI HAPSI AND less self confidence.
Carelessness	If you have not got the time to do it right the first time, when will you have time to do it again!

## INTERRUPTION BY DROP-IN VISITORS

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

No plans to avoid drop  
In visitors

Develop screening plan. Insist on  
appointments.

My door is always open.

Establish a quiet hour in which you are  
Not to be disturbed. Find somewhere wise to  
work at that time if necessary.

People ask me to make decisions  
Below my level of authority.

Don't make decisions on something  
You can delegate. Refer to the  
SUBORDINATES in such matters.

Frequent interruptions by my  
SUBORDINATES

Manage by exception. Ask for  
information only concerning deviations  
From plans or budgets. Decide which tasks  
your SUBORDINATES can do without  
asking questions.  
Decide on which situations they may  
Interrupt you and which things can be  
postponed to be discussed at your regular  
meetings.

Inability to terminate visits

You go to their office. Keep standing.  
Make it clear that the visit/meeting is over,

“Before we finish, I would....”

## PERSONAL DISORGANISATION

### CAUSES

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Lack of system

Use your TIME MANAGER. Then you have the best basis for keeping everything organised.

Giving people the impression  
That I am busy, of importance or  
Indispensable

This may symbolise insecurity, lack of system, confusion or an inability to meet deadlines

Fear of forgetting things

Write them down

Cannot delegate

Accept that others have abilities and Experience. Learn to delegate.

Indecision

80% of tasks arriving at your desk can Be handled immediately