

The Top 10 Tips **For Utilizing Time More Efficiently**

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Time is a priceless treasure. Treasure every moment you have and remember that time waits for no one. You cannot make six minutes out of five just because you managed your time effectively. Each day you are given the gift of a new day, 24 hours. Utilize it the best way possible and don't let it slip through your fingers. You cannot ever replace lost time. You can't buy time or save time; you can only spend time...once it's spent it's gone!

1. PRIORITIZE

Determine what's truly important to you. Schedule those items and activities first and then schedule everything else around it to the extent you can (noting some things are scheduled at precise times and there is less flexibility). Don't cancel the important (not urgent) activities for any reason.

2. PLAN

Planning is a crucial skill when you want to accomplish something. However, it's often the first thing forgotten when things get hectic and busy. Planning magnifies time by providing direction and enhancing productivity. Life is simpler and easier when planned out.

3. DELEGATE

Anything you're doing that could be handled by someone else could be delegated. If you look at your time in terms of dollars you can compute how much your time is actually worth. Then, you may be more willing to delegate the more routine tasks, chores, etc. and free your time and energy for your top priorities and high-level work.

4. SET GOALS (HAVE STRONG INTENTIONS/A VISION/DIRECTION)

Establish specific goals on a daily basis to help you decide what you want to achieve with your time and to set targets that will lead you to achieving them more regularly. Setting goals may be very effective at raising your self-confidence by focusing on progress. In addition to having increased performance levels, goals will keep you more highly motivated.

5. STRUCTURE YOUR DAY

As individuals, we all have peak performance times. Learn when it's your best time for greatest productivity, quiet thinking, exercise, etc. and arrange your day accordingly to maximize your personal advantage. Each person has an 'ideal' work style that operates as a function of who they are, their body and personality type. Begin to understand and honor that style in you and you'll be more effective as a result.

6. VALUE YOUR TIME

If you demonstrate by your words, actions and commitments that your time is important to you, others will recognize how you value your time and will show more respect of it. On the other hand, if you don't value your time, don't expect anyone else to. By valuing your time, you are in essence valuing your self. One important thing to remember is that the only way others will respect your time is if YOU respect your time.

7. REPLICATE YOURSELF

No, you cannot actually duplicate yourself or add more arms and legs but the fact is, you can find someone who is just as good as you in a given task. You can also automate or systematize some of your routine tasks. Replication is about increasing your results without expending more time and energy.

8. GET ORGANIZED

Have a place for everything both in your office and in your home; it pays off in less wasted time searching for something you just can't seem to find. Over the years, studies have shown that people working with a messy desk or work area spend an average 1.5 hours per day looking for or being distracted by things (at just minutes at a time!) In addition, create a (centralized) list of what you want to get done. Manage the activities and projects you can control; clearly distinguish between what is and is not actionable. You can also group activities that can be done simultaneously or on the same trip out. The key is to focus on about 6 activities you wish to accomplish at the start of each day and to keep your list manageable.

9. BECOME FULLY FOCUSED IN THE MOMENT

By focusing on what you are doing you permit yourself to get absorbed in the activity, be more relaxed and increase your creativity. Fact is, when you allow yourself to become totally focused on what you are doing at the moment, a freer flowing momentum occurs and you actually get the job done faster and easier. Be deliberate in how you use your time. Make the present perfect rather than splitting your attention.

10. ELIMINATE TIME WASTERS

Yes, we all have them in our life---interruptions, distractions, poor planning, ineffective behaviors and attitudes, over-commitment, etc. Rather than letting time control you, take control of your time and your life by incorporating some of the tips listed above. Take personal responsibility for creating stronger boundaries and communicating them to your colleagues, boss, significant other and family.

About the Author:

Natalie Gahrmann is a dynamic keynote speaker, workshop/seminar leader, author, trainer and a leadership coach certified through the International Coach Federation. She combines life experiences and extensive training to motivate others to achieve better results, unlock creativity and gain personal fulfillment in their work and personal life. She specializes in working with Executives, Entrepreneurs, Aspiring Leaders, Working Moms, and SuperBusy Parents seeking to have a more satisfying and fulfilling personal, professional and/or family life. She has appeared worldwide in a variety of publications, newspapers, online, radio and TV as an expert in work/life issues. For more tips, advice and resources see "Succeeding as A Super Busy Parent: 75 Practical Tips for Balancing Life, Love, Kids, and Career" (Infinity Publishing, 2002) and visit <http://www.superbusyparent.com>. To subscribe to our free weekly e-newsletter for working parents, send a blank email to superbusyparent-subscribe@yahoo.com.