

Time

There is what there is...24 hours each and every day. Everyone gets the same amount. What matters is how you use it.

Most people don't know how they are using their time. Keeping a log periodically and collecting actual data is very useful. First, you are more aware of how your time is being spent when you are keeping a log. Second, you get metrics that can be quite informative.

Who is choosing—circumstances, others, or you? If you compare your schedule for last month with what you say matters, there is likely to be a mismatch. How do things get on your calendar? Does your schedule reflect your areas of focus?

What is your focus for today, this week, this month, this year? Effective people tend to have clear goals for each of these time frames and they consistently remind themselves about what matters. If your life was really working, how would your time be spent or organized?

Learn to say no. Each time that you say yes to something in life, you are saying no to something else in your life. Given the limited resource of time, every yes is also a no. Effective people say no frequently.

Create systems and structures for reoccurring items. Efficiency is founded upon tools that allow things to happen easily. Most time management courses are about systems. A Blackberry is a structure. Drive-through windows are structures.

Ask others to do things for you. If you are overwhelmed you are not making enough requests. Consider paying people to do things. You are worth it and your time is precious.

Get started. Don't wait for blocks of time to show up. They are not coming. Even if you have just 30 minutes start the bigger projects. Notice where you are waiting.

Figure out what allows you to be focused. Notice how much you can get done on an airplane. Two hours of focus produces five hours of work. How can you get the same level of focus in your normal environment? Using someone to think with is one idea.

Increase meeting effectiveness. Meetings are high leverage events. Cut your meeting time at least by 50 percent. Make each agenda item count.

Make promises. You are amazing up against a deadline. Use this by committing to deliver specific things by specific dates. Then keep your word.

Make completing things a priority... small things... overdue things... things that have been hanging around for awhile.

"Forget about likes and dislikes. Just do what must be done. This may not be happiness, but it is greatness."

—George Bernard Shaw

