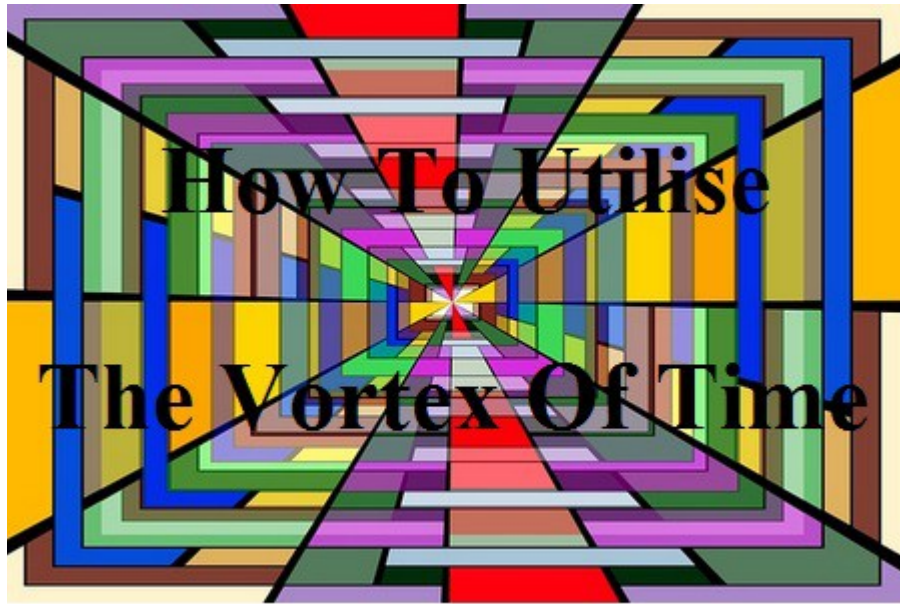


# *How To Utilise 'The Vortex Of Time'*



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## **How to Be Ruthless with Time;**

If you've created a time management plan and still failed to reach your goals, it's likely because you're too flexible and easy on yourself and others when it comes to the schedule. The sorry fact is that time is not limitless. You can't get more. You can't work harder to get more of it; it's a finite resource that cannot be increased or replaced.

When you realize that time is finite and that there really might not be some future distant tomorrow, you might start being more ruthless with the time you've got. Follow these tips to make time management so much easier.

\* **Just Say No** – The biggest factor in being ruthless with your time is learning to say no. If you really do not want to do something, you must say no. There is no sin in saying no. The only reason you feel guilty about the word is that your mother taught you saying no was wrong. It's time to realize that as a grown-up you can now say no.

\* **Get Up on Time** – This is a hard one for many but it doesn't have to be hard as you think. If you are a small business owner who works from home, it's actually pretty easy. You do not need more than seven or eight hours of sleep a night. If you can limit your sleep to no more than eight hours, you will gain time. If you typically sleep less than six you may need to get in a bit more sleep to be most productive with your time.

\* **Try to Be Early** – If you need to drive places or you have deadlines for work, schedule your time so that you are going to be early. The reason is that this is one of the ways to eliminate urgency from your life, which in turn causes stress and can cause problems with time management. This way if something does happen out of the ordinary, you will still have time to meet a deadline and be on time.

\* **Turn Off Technology** – The very thing that is supposed to make our time more productive can have the opposite effect too. The notifications of new emails, your Facebook stream, and unscheduled time on Pinterest can get out of hand. Turn it off. You'll gain so much more time. That includes your TV, too.

\* **Understand Your Internal Clock** – Everyone has an internal time clock. It's important not to fight against that and be aware of what it is. Some people are early risers and some people are night owls and others are in between. It's important for you to determine for yourself what your own internal clock is and then work with it.

\* **Make Lists** – If you understand each step that goes behind a calendar listing, it will be more beneficial because it's easier to allocate enough time for each thing when

you know what it takes to complete any given task. You won't be able to accurately determine the time it takes without all the information.

\* **Calendar It** – Put everything in your calendar including everyday tasks, small steps for a project due in the future, and time with family, friends and yourself. Don't skip this step so that when someone asks for your time you can easily schedule them in (or not) based on your availability.

\* **Avoid Meetings** – Some meetings are important, such as a first client meeting to establish goals and determine tactics, but after that almost everything else can be accomplished through updates in a project management system. There is no real need for weekly meetings for updates, or to discuss anything that can easily be put into a memo.

\* **Touch "It" Only Once** – Another way to be ruthless with your time is to not allow yourself to wait to do things later. If you get an email that requires a response, **do it now**. If you check your snail mail and a bill needs to be paid, **schedule it now**. If you get junk mail, **delete it now**. Only check your mail when you have time to deal with these issues.

**Finally**, don't be too hard on yourself in terms of the hours you schedule yourself to work. Yes, be ruthless about the schedule, but also schedule in fun time. Humans aren't designed to work 20 hours a day. Go ahead, schedule 8 to 10 hours a day of work. But, in between, schedule in breaks. Time with friends, family and spouses during any given work day is important too. Also, remember to schedule in breaks like weekends and vacations. If you do that, it'll be so much easier to be ruthless with time and stick to your schedule normally.



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*(The following chapter may seem like a duplication of this one – it's not – but it does go on to 'impress' on you the importance of the points made here :-)*

## How to Create a Time Management Plan:

*Creating a time management plan keeps you from wasting time.*

Having a plan makes every hour count, ensures that you get to work more quickly and helps distribute your time over all the tasks that you need to do each day, week, month and year. Creating a time management plan is an imperative if you want to be successful.

\* **Be Realistic With Your Plans** – Don't go against your own internal clock when planning each day. If you know you struggle to get up in the morning, do not schedule things in the early morning hours. If you can manage better in the mornings by doing tasks you like first, try that.

\* **Set Time Limits** – This is especially important for both tasks you dislike and tasks you like. You always have a risk of procrastination when it comes to tasks you hate by spending too much time on tasks you like. Use the timer on your phone or a good old-fashioned 'egg timer'.

\* **Eliminate Distractions** – One of the biggest killers of any plan that you set are distractions such as television, interrupting phone calls, social media, and yes – children and spouses. While nothing is ever perfect, you can eliminate most distractions by planning ahead about how to deal with them. Turn off the TV, turn off the phone, use social media only at certain times with a timer set, and explain to children and spouses the importance of not bothering you while you are working.

\* **Differentiate Important from Non-Important Tasks** – One of the hardest tasks before you when creating a time management plan is understanding what is important and what is not important. If you make it a habit to do the most important things first, you're going to feel more accomplished and get more done.

\* **Use a Calendar and Technology** – Where would we be without technology? Using Google Calendar or another system synced to your phone is a great way to ensure that your calendar is always with you and that you don't forget things. You can even set reminders and alarms to help.

\* **Eliminate Urgency from Your Life** – This can be difficult but most things really aren't urgent. If you are a service provider, stop taking last-minute work; train your clients to give you plenty of time to work tasks into your schedule. If you set family time and play time into your schedule too, that will eliminate the need for a last-minute meltdown from the toddler too.

\* **Create and Use Lists** – It is one thing to note on your calendar “work on project A” but it’s quite another to list exactly what you are to do during that time period on project A. This is the most effective way to schedule your time so that you meet your goals. Be very specific with lists so that no time is wasted.

\* **Create a Daily Action Plan** – There should always be at least four or five things that you can do each day toward any future goal that you have to help you feel accomplished. Plus, having a variety of things to do each day will eliminate boredom and procrastination.

Creating a time management plan is an essential element in creating success.

Most successful people live and die by their calendars.

When you meet someone and wonder how in the world they do it all, it’s probably a very thought-out and coordinated schedule that allows them to accomplish so much.



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## **Incorporate a Set Time for Mindless Fun:**

As they say, all work and no play makes you dull. But what it really does is make you stressed out, and ineffective. If you really want to be good at your job and productive every single day, setting aside time for mindless fun each and every day is imperative.

Being mindless for a little bit each day will make you more creative and productive.

\* **Go for a Walk** – Everyone should try to take a walk each day for about 30 to 45 minutes. Walking at a brisk pace for this length of time will help your heart, as well as clear out the cobwebs from your mind. Avoid taking anything with you to listen to, like music, or lectures, or books. Instead, try not to think of anything but how your breath feels going in and out of your lungs, and how the air smells to your nose.

\* **Read a Chapter of a Book** – No, don't read something about your industry. Read something simple and mindless that is not realistic. Read "chick lit", murder mysteries, science fiction or another genre that you enjoy that seems like ultimate pleasure and nothing more.

If you have teenagers, try reading some of their books for a real eye-opening experience.

\* **Play a Video Game** – There are many different games you can play today, from games online to old-fashioned games on paper. Take just 15 minutes or so to play a round or two of a game that you enjoy and don't think of anything else while you're doing it. Set the timer. Time flies when you're playing games.

\* **Create an Art Project** – Want to learn to paint, knit or sew? Why not start now. You can learn something new and find a hobby that takes your mind out of your work. Painting is really good for that because you can be abstract and not exact on your creations. It will teach you that imperfections can be beautiful.

\* **Meditate** – This requires a quiet room, comfortable clothing, and just 15 minutes. Find a way to sit that is comfortable, usually with your legs crossed and your back straight, hands relaxed on your thighs. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Breathe in, and out. In through your nose, and out through your mouth. Take deep, long breaths and focus on nothing else for the time you've set aside. You want your mind to literally think of nothing.

\* **Jump on a Trampoline** – One of the best exercises is rebounding, and it's fun too. When you are jumping, think of only the fun of jumping, not what's next in your life. Just think of right now, jumping up and down.



\* **Get in a Hot Tub** – If you have access to a hot tub, or just your tub full of hot water, get in. Fill up the tub with nice smelling bubbles, light some candles, and enjoy until the water cools down. Different smells will give you different feelings. Try mint for more energy, lavender to calm down.

\* **Get a Massage** – Depending on where you live, you can get someone to come to your home or office for a massage. Massages usually take from 30 to 40 minutes and are a perfect weekly treat to help you get out of your head and enjoy mindless fun. An [Indian-Head-Massage](#) is ideal for those who prefer the more relaxed option that doesn't require a dis-robe.

\* **Take a Vacation** – You can't take a vacation every day of course, but you should take one at least once a year. If you cannot take one long two-week vacation each year, try taking more frequent smaller three-day weekend vacations where you disconnect and unplug so that you can come back refreshed and ready to work.

\* **Watch Funny Videos** – (*But not too many ;-)*

Everyone loves cat videos, or videos of babies laughing. Set aside a bit of time on occasion to watch some funny videos. It will help you have a full happy day, and spark your creativity due to the happy endorphins released during laughter.

\* **Take a Nap** – A 20-minute 'power nap' can do wonders helping you become more creative. You need somewhere good to nap such as a cool bedroom or a comfortable couch in your office. Pull the shades, turn off the technology, and set an alarm.

\* **Take in a Movie** – Whether you go to the theatre or watch instantly on Netflix, a good movie can take you to a whole new world. Most movies are one to two hours long, so plan this one into your schedule carefully.

\* **Learn to Knit** – Once you learn to knit, it becomes a mindless activity that is very repetitive yet something you must focus on to get it right. Having something mindless to take your focus can make you that much more energetic and creative when you come back to work tasks.

\* **Take a Dance Class** – Nothing can quite get your blood pumping like a good dance. You can take lessons with a friend, or a spouse, or even alone depending on the type of dance you want to learn. It's not really important that you're good at it, just that you have fun.

\* **Create a Vision Board** – While not totally mindless, it's very helpful to create a vision board to help you envision and plan your future by making them look real on a vision board. You can use Pinterest or old-fashioned paper, glue and paint to do it.

\* **Romantic Love** – This might seem like a strange thing to say but so many of us get so busy with our working lives that we forget about our spouses. Life, children, and

work take precedence over fun activities like sex far too often. It might seem that it's not so romantic to schedule it in, but it's very important if you're in a relationship like that not to ignore it.

All of these activities are pretty mindless and can get you out of yourself a bit. It's important to incorporate mindless fun into your life so that you can be even more wonderful than you already are. All of these activities get you out of your head-space and can actually get your creative juices flowing. Just be sure to stick to your schedule so that mindless activity doesn't take over completely and that work doesn't get in the way of having mindless fun.

\* Gardening – Such a relaxing hobby with the benefit of being productive too. Click the image below to visit '[The Gardening Labyrinth](#)' Blog that's packed with good ideas, tips and tricks.



## Learn to Say No:

### *Increase the Power of How You Spend Your Time;*

One of the very best ways to manage your time is to learn to say no. Saying no is a great way to control how you spend your time and take your power back. Most of us don't know how to say no because our parents taught us very well not to say no. Many two-year-olds love saying no, but they are quickly taught that the word no is very unacceptable. But, it's time to take back the power of no and earn more time in your day for doing what you really want to do.

**\* You'll Reduce Your Stress** – One of the worst things about over-scheduling your time is the stress that it will cause. Learning to say no will automatically reduce your stress, even if the first few times you say no will be a little stressful. The freedom you experience will soon overshadow the fear of saying no.

**\* You'll Be Perceived as More Professional** – No one person can do everything. If you already have something scheduled and can't do something, it is to be expected of a professional person. You don't even have to provide a reason; just say that your calendar is full.

**\* You'll Improve at Tasks You Really to Want to Do** – If you're not spending time doing stuff you hate doing, you'll get to spend more time doing things you want to do. That means you'll get more practice and become better at the things you already like doing.

**\* You Get to Spend Time Doing What You Want to Do** – No one wants to spend time doing things they dislike doing, but they tend to say yes due to the lessons their mum taught them. If you really want to spend more time writing or helping your clients solve their problems, say no to doing things you don't want to do and recommend someone else.

**\* People Will Respect You More** – Even really good people lose respect for those who act like doormats. You probably don't want to appear as a doormat; you're just trying to be helpful. But even nice people will take advantage of those who say yes all the time. That's why you'll notice it's always the same three people doing all the work in any group. The yes people.

**\* Saying No Gives You the Opportunity to Say Yes** – This may sound counter-intuitive but it's true. If you learn to say no to things that don't advance your business or life in any measurable way, you'll have more time to say yes to things that do.

**\* You Won't Bite Off More Than You Can Chew** - People who say yes to everything tend to do most things half way. They don't mean to, but they get too much on their plate and end up not being able to do the tasks they agreed to do to the best of their ability. If you say no, you can avoid this embarrassment.

**\* Pause, Breathe Deeply, Check Your Calendar** – In order to say no without a problem, when someone asks you to do something, even if it's something you know immediately that you do want to do, make it a practice to take a pause, take a breath, and check your calendar. The act of calendar checking can give you time to give some thought to whether or not you want to say yes or no.

Saying no can truly give you back enough time to create the life that you really want to live. If you're feeling hurried and overwhelmed take the time to practice saying no. By saying no you'll take control of your schedule and feel like you get more time in your day.

**Click the image below to read the free E-book;  
'Self Confidence – Chasing The Unicorn'.**



## **Managing Your Emails**

### **So They Do Not Get the Best of Your Time:**

Email is great, and saves a lot of time. You no longer have to wait three or more days for someone to get a message from you. You can use it to be more organized, set tasks, and more. But, email can also get out of control and suck up a lot of time if you're not organized.

\* **Use Rules, Filters, Labels and Folders** – Remember that simple is better than complicated so don't go too crazy with these, but do create labels and/or rules and filter to help you organize your mail better.

\* **Read Emails and Act Immediately** – When you open an email, take care of it immediately. Read it, then act. If it requires nothing, delete it; if it has something interesting you want to note, use a note-taking program to save it. If it has a task, copy and paste into your to-do list and calendar.

\* **Set Specific Times for Checking Your Email** – Don't keep your email notifications on all day long so that you're constantly dealing with email. Instead, choose specific times during the day to check email, at the very least first thing in the morning, after lunch, and about an hour before the close of business. Let your people know your schedule.

\* **Create Separate Email Addresses** – The great thing about email addresses is in most cases you're not limited to how many you can have. Don't go nuts, but do create a separate email for unimportant information such as business that requires an email sign-up to view information, or non-relevant newsletters. Separate customer service addresses are good too.

\* **Be Free with the Delete Key** – It's tempting to save all those cool newsletters with great points and things to learn, but the truth is, you're not likely to ever read them again. Use your note-taking tool to keep the most important points, and then delete.

\* **Create a Swipe File or Hot Keys with Automatic Replies** – If you find yourself saying the same things over and over again, which is not uncommon, create a swipe file or hot keys that enable you to answer those questions again and again. Another way is to create a FAQ on your website and link to that specific answer.

\* **Keep Email Replies Short and Simple** – You don't want to write really long emails to anyone. If you do, people will get confused and not really understand your answer. At the most an email answer should be about three or four paragraphs. If you include bullet points it will be easier for the recipient to act on.

**\* Copy Tasks to Your Calendar Immediately** – Use your calendar to its fullest advantage by copying and pasting anything with a date in it to your calendar immediately. If it's a task, copy and paste to your project management system too in order to stay on track with your activities.

A final idea is to outsource anything to do with customer service to someone else. That way you don't even need to deal with it. Using these tips and tricks can help you manage your emails so that they don't take up too much of your time and effort. Taming the email monster will pay off in many ways and give you back more time each day to use on more important tasks.



## **FREE 30 Minute List Challenge!**

Even if you have never built an email marketing list in your life, we will show you how to get started in less than 30 minutes! Follow my steps to start building your own targeted email marketing list absolutely free in 30 minutes or less!

Our system is designed to help the absolute beginner be up and running within 30 minutes or less. We will walk you through the steps and the leads are yours to keep!

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## **Put It in Writing: Set a Schedule for Managing Time and Stick to It;**

The hardest part about time management is making a real commitment to following a schedule. It can be especially difficult for people who want to work for themselves to work on any type of schedule. It can feel wrong somehow to keep a schedule as an entrepreneur. However, keeping a schedule is going to increase your success exponentially. Putting your schedule in writing will help you follow it.

\* **Use Your Smartphone** – Today’s cell phones are really mini computers. You can have your entire life on there, including your work schedule with alarm reminders and everything. If you see a pop-up on your phone every time you go to use Facebook, reminding you of tasks that need to be done, you will not have much of an excuse for not doing them.

\* **Try Google Calendar** – If you have a Gmail account, then you already have access to a powerful system that can help you put your time in writing, while helping you keep track. You can easily set up different calendars for different aspects of your life and colour code the entries. Further you can print out a calendar each day or sync to your smartphone so that you don’t forget anything.

\* **Try a Project Management System** – Project management systems like Basecamp can help you put your schedule into writing, and organize it too. You can use this system whether or not you outsource tasks to others by just assigning the work to yourself if you don’t have others to assign them to. You’ll get an email reminder before the task is due.

\* **Use Evernote** – This nifty little program can be used to help you keep track of your schedule, notes for projects, and more. It has a bit of a learning curve, but once you get used to it you’ll enjoy using it to keep track of many tasks.

\* **Try the “Old-Fashioned” Date Book** – The old Filo-fax still exists and many people prefer it to using technology. If you’re one that does, don’t despair because many people stay better organized with everything in writing in one single notebook. If that’s you, you can still do it that way.

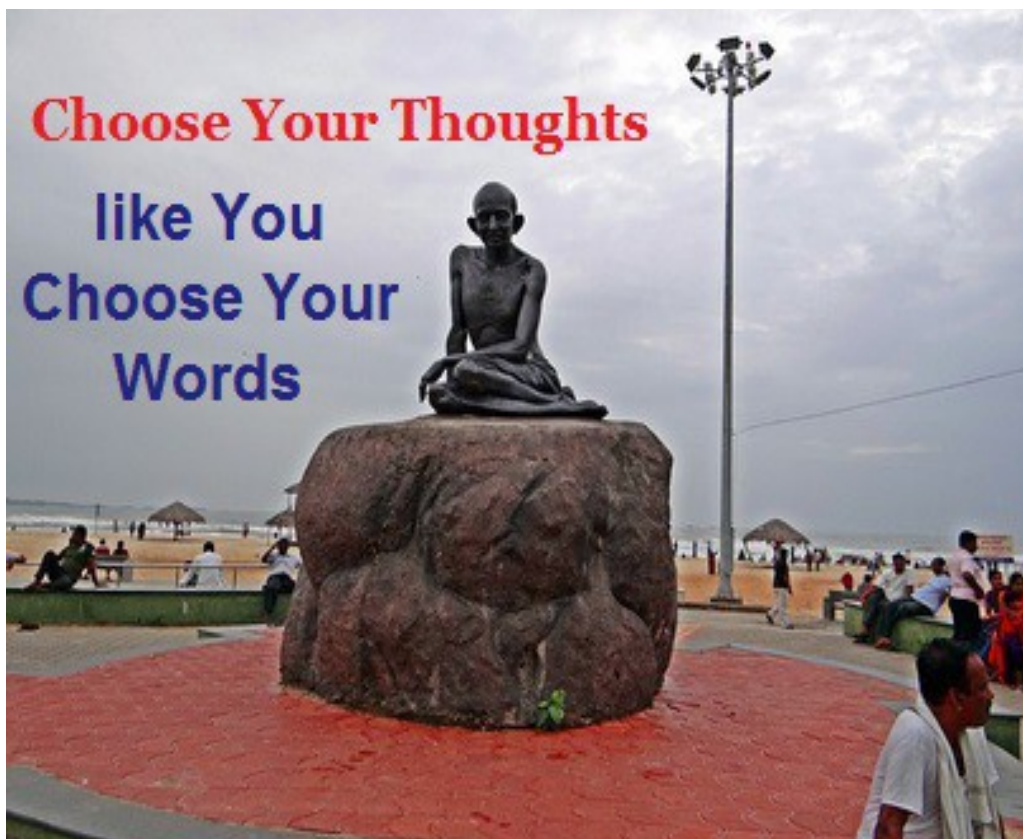
\* **Use a Large Whiteboard** – The great thing about having a large whiteboard on your office wall is you can’t escape the tasks that need to be done since they are very obvious. You can also feel accomplished as you erase things as they get done.

\* **Use Time Tracking Software** – FreshBooks.com comes with time tracking software that enables you to keep track of what you’re doing easily once you set up

names for them. Make entries for using social media, making phone calls, even doing the dishes, and you'll soon figure out where you're wasting time. You can't get time back, so it's nice to know where it all went.

**\* Create a Contract with Yourself** – Actually put your promises and goals into writing in the form of a contract. Write down in black and white what you will do, what your work hours are, and what you plan to do during those work hours. Then sign it.

Setting a schedule and sticking to it requires commitment to your business as if it is a job. This isn't to say that it won't be more flexible than a job. But, if you have to move the two hours you wanted to work on a particular project, due to a family emergency, you need to then take time from elsewhere to replace the two hours you were going to work. Seeing the schedule in writing will help you schedule things the best by making a visual representation of your day.





## Set Aside Dedicated Areas for Various Aspects of Your Time:

One way to help yourself manage your time better is to keep things separate. If you have a specific area to accomplish a goal, you'll be able to get your mind dedicated faster to that one task. It might seem like a pipe dream, but if you really want to be creative, find a space that makes you feel creative and go to it each time you need that extra creative spark. In that way, you become more in charge of how your time is spent.

\* **A Reading Cubby or Snug** – You may have had one in elementary school, a little place that you could go for quiet reading time. You can do this at home easily by just setting up a chair in the corner of a living room, bedroom or office that is set up with good light for reading and if necessary the proper electronic components if you want to read by laptop or Kindle.

\* **A Mail Checking Station** – This works especially for snail mail and is best if it's close to the trash-can. Get the mail in, and immediately go through it, tossing the trash, and then taking the mail to the computer in order to schedule, process and pay bills.

\* **Games Only** – Some people cannot afford this but it is something that will truly help you manage your time better. Separate your work computer from your fun computer. At the very least create different sign-ons to your computer: one for work, one for games. This way you won't be tempted to check work when you're having fun, or play games when you're supposed to be working.

\* **TV Time** – It's very different to get work done, or even read a book with the TV blaring. Having technology in the bedroom is also not conducive to a good night's sleep. Consider having the TV in only one room in the house and only using the TV during limited hours.

\* **Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner** – Eating is a very important part of your day and should be treated as such. If you eat all over your home and office there is no true break or time to digest your food. Take the time to set the table, and eat at the table or breakfast bar in order to differentiate the time spent on eating, versus working, versus play.

\* **Resting and Sleeping** – There is nothing wrong with taking a nap on a rainy Sunday afternoon, but you want to be very careful about sleeping and resting during the work day. Plus, you want to avoid working when you're supposed to be resting and sleeping. Make your bedroom a peaceful oasis away from the rest and go there when you need a break.

\* **Being Social** – So often, the internet becomes a substitute for true social gatherings and due to this easy access to a social life, it can be all too simple to flow from work to being social accidentally. Like with gaming, set up specific times to be social - whether it's out of the house, outside of business hours, or on the computer.

\* **Exercise** – If you don't have time and space set aside for exercise, it's unlikely you will ever do it. Set aside the time, and the space, even if you have to go to a new space. If you get to the new space, you'll automatically reach your exercise goals because your surroundings will inspire you.

Setting up different areas to get various activities done will help you differentiate your time better, be more organized, and get more done than you thought possible. Creating dedicated areas for specific activities is an excellent time management tip that will work for most people.

## Setting Priorities for Managing Your Time:

One of the hardest parts of time management is learning how to set priorities. Sometimes it can feel like every last thing you need to do is an emergency. But the truth is, there are ways to organize your time and manage the tasks that you need to do so that you get them finished right when they need to be done without feeling overwhelmed or rushed.

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not Urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	<b>Urgent &amp; Important</b>	<b>Not Urgent &amp; Important</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Urgent &amp; Not Important</b>	<b>Not Urgent and Not Important</b>

Stephen Covey's Time Management Grid: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Thankfully Stephen Covey's time management grid is here to save us from ourselves. It looks like this:

The way you use the grid is to designate each item on your to-do list to a coloured square. Instead of quadrants like Mr. Covey's has assigned, they are different colours here.

- \* **Purple:** Needs to be done immediately
- \* **Green:** Needs to be done but can take longer and needs more strategic planning
- \* **Pink:** Distractions, but needed by others
- \* **Light green:** Not at all important and often used in order to procrastinate

Use the grid to help create your daily to-do list by prioritizing the importance and urgency of each item you have to pick from. It can be as simple as doing the purple things first, then the green, next pink, and finally the light green items. But, if you do it this way you might miss out on something important you can learn from the time management grid.

### **Eliminate Urgency from Your Life;**

By focusing on green you can eventually lessen the purple items on your list. By learning to say no to others you can virtually eliminate the pink things, too. Finally, by getting your schedule under control the light green will eliminate itself because you won't feel the need to procrastinate anymore.

### **Learn to Say No;**

As children we are taught to not say no. Unfortunately, this transfers over to adulthood in a bad way, especially for females. If you determine something is in the pink or light green area, you can use that to determine whether or not you should say no. If it's something that your client wants that takes five minutes, but it's not that important, you can do it. If it's something you just like to do, you can always do it after you've done three purple or green tasks.

### **Assess Your Time Expenditures Now;**

Now that you have Dr. Covey's time management chart, you can go back and re-evaluate the things you are currently doing each day to find out what colour they are. Knowing their colour will help you label each thing that you do throughout the days, weeks and months ahead so that you can prioritize them.

Finally, when you are assessing any task, make sure you label it, then ask yourself if it fits in with your core values and goals. If it does, it's going to be in either the purple square or the green square. If it doesn't, it's probably in one of the other squares. As you learn to use this system it will start becoming more automatic so that you can say yes or no faster and put your time management on auto drive.

## Surprising Time Management Secrets:

### *One certainty in life is that time is limited.*

While no one is sure how many years they'll be given to finish doing what they want to do, everything is equal for each day you are given. Everyone has the same 24-hour day to dream, determine goals, and complete tasks that will help them meet those goals. But doesn't it seem like some people are just better at time management than others? Surprisingly, there are some time management secrets that make you feel like you have hours more in your day.

\* **Set Priorities** - There are really only four choices:

1. Most important
2. Most urgent
3. Least important
4. Least urgent

When you identify tasks and set your priorities carefully by what is important over not important, as well as avoid having issues of urgency each day, you can get a handle on your time in ways that you never thought possible.

\* **Learn the Power of No** – Saying no is probably one of the most important things you'll ever learn to say. The problem is our parents disciplined the word "no" from our vocabulary. It's time to learn how to say no again. If something is not right for you, is too "urgent", causes you stress, or you just do not want to do it and it doesn't fit in with meeting your goals, say no. Saying no will free up untold amounts of time to focus on your priorities.

\* **Disconnect from Technology** – Unplug the phone, turn off email notifications, and for goodness sakes get off Facebook. If you've not completed the most important tasks on your daily list, you have no business messing around with technology. The idea of multitasking is overrated, so unplug and tune in to the tasks at hand. You'll work faster, smarter, and gain the time you need for other things.

\* **Schedule Everything** – Your priorities need to be added to your calendar. Everything from the 15 minutes you need to use social media for marketing purposes, to the one hour you take your kids to the park, needs to be put into your calendar. If you have a project due in a week, you should have five days of scheduled time to work on the project prior to the due date. This helps avoid those urgencies mentioned earlier.

\* **Ignore Interruptions** – Unless the house is on fire or a child is bleeding, the telephone ringing and the knocks on your office door are not important. They are interruptions. Check your email at scheduled times during the day, explain to your children, spouse and family when you are working, and otherwise ignore the door bell ringing. If you didn't schedule it, you don't need it.

\* **Outsource** – Whether it's the housework, cooking, or customer service, it's important to outsource what you can afford to outsource. There are huge pay-offs to outsourcing the things that are simply time suckers from your day. If you can't afford to outsource, your kitchen will not explode if a few dishes pile up, and everyone can do with eating a salad for dinner. And, you can automate a lot of customer service issues if you work from home.

\* **Once and You're Done** – Multi-tasking is not really a bastion of efficiency. Instead, seek to touch each task only once and finish it. For example, when you check the mail immediately throw out the trash, schedule bills to be paid, and deal with any issues that came up with a letter - right then. Of course, your mail time should be scheduled as well so that you can stay on track.

\* **Check Your Schedule** – At least twice a day, set out the time to check your schedule. Usually the morning is good and at the end of the day is good. Ensure that you have your priorities in order, add anything new to your schedule that needs to be added, and remind yourself of what is expected the next day. Checking your schedule helps you feel accomplished at the end of the day, and reminds you of what's coming up tomorrow.

Finally, it's important to be very serious about following your schedule and calendar. Use technology to help such as Google Calendar or Outlook, synced to your smartphone to help you remember what it is that you should be doing now, and next. It may seem geeky to be so serious about a schedule, but it's this one factor that makes these surprising time management tips work.



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## **Time Management: A Group Project Rather Than a Solo Act;**

Managing time takes cooperation from everyone on your team, and in your family, for it to work. If everyone isn't on board, you'll end up with problems and urgent last-minute tasks that you want and need to avoid.

- \* **Create a Shared Calendar** – Whether it's for your team members for your business or for your family, create a shared calendar to use so that nothing gets forgotten; whether it's seeing a movie Friday night or getting some work done on Tuesday for the project due on Thursday. Shared calendars prevent issues from arising and anything being forgotten.
- \* **Appoint Team Leaders** – This works for business and family. If someone is in charge of a particular project, it will help you avoid having to put out lots of little fires. The team leaders can deal with the small fires and only pass things on to you if they become more serious.
- \* **Set Meaningful Deadlines** – Don't just give a deadline for the main project; assign smaller deadlines and checkpoints throughout the work on any main project. The main deliverable has many different tasks that need to be done and if you and the team leaders are ensuring that the smaller checkpoints are being done on time to a high standard, there will be no reason not to meet the ultimate deadline.
- \* **Use a Project Management System** – There are many ways to manage projects, from cloud-based systems like Basecamp.com to using a series of spreadsheets, documents and files that are shared with everyone. It's up to you how you want it to work, but do seriously consider using a system that was made for organizing projects.
- \* **Craft a Shared Vision** – Nothing gets a team more creative than a shared idea or vision to guide them through each project. If everyone is on the same page and understands the ideas and values that you're trying to represent in each finished project, it will help move things forward by creating limits. Contrary to popular belief, limits do not always stifle creativity.
- \* **Systemise Everything** – If you have created a system for everything from landing new leads, to converting leads, to a contract, to working on the actual project, you'll find out that feels as if you have a lot more time on your hands. You can carry this further by systemising your family life too. The more often you do things in the same way, the faster you'll get.

\* **Delegate Responsibility** – Appoint other people to be in charge of different aspects of the business. Virtual assistants enjoy being in charge of other team members, as do children at home. Give someone dominion over something, with clear expectations of what the deliverable should be, and people will surprise you.

\* **Allow Everyone to Contribute Ideas** – If everyone gets to openly contribute to ideas, without any concern of poor reactions, you'll get more ideas. Not all ideas are going to be good ideas, but the more ideas that are generated, the more likely you'll find truly profitable ideas to develop further. Set aside time once a month or so just to throw ideas around.

By allowing everyone to have a say about the time they spend, and what on, it'll make it easier to manage time as a team for your business or as a family at home. Time management takes everyone on the team to work together. Teams can consist of those you hire, outsource to, or family members.





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