

More Time Now

A Pretty Simple Way To Invest One Hour A Week
To Free Up 1000 Hours a Year



BREATHE EASY.

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Why Time Management Will Never Work

THE BIG PROBLEM

... is that you can't actually "manage" time. It doesn't work that way. **Time just is** – and it moves along at its own pace, whether you choose to do something that changes the world or just sit on the couch playing World of Warcraft.

But we humans don't like to believe that – and so we get it in our heads that **if only we were more organized** that we could suddenly become masters of time management and start getting things done. There's an entire industry built around systems, expensive planners, and complicated gadgets that promise relief from the frenzy of daily activity that grinds you down.

It's funny, though, how the biggest empires in the world were built without the benefit of Franklin Planners, Palm Pilots or web-based to-do lists ... and how people lived balanced, fulfilled lives for centuries without a well-worn copy of Getting Things Done or The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People by their side.

Kind of makes you wonder how they pulled it all together, doesn't it? They simply used the one true tool at their disposal: **Their mindset.**

“Recreation” isn’t simply playing video games – it’s literally **re-creating yourself** and shedding your baggage so you can live a remarkable life.

WORKING YOUR INNER GAME

... is more important than any book, planner or gadget you can buy – and it doesn’t cost a penny. Holding yourself accountable for **becoming a better player at the game of life** is the single most important thing you can do to win your day (and your life) back.

But for far too many of us, reacting to urgency and surrendering to our desire for **comfort at all costs** have become the true priorities in our lives. Taking stock of what we really want and pushing ourselves to become more – for our own sake as well as for those we care about – has fallen by the wayside.

There’s no sugar coating it: As a society, we have progressively become weak, needy and reliant on using distractions to “unwind” rather than pushing ourselves to do things that will renew us and push us in the direction we **say** we want to go in. “Recreation” isn’t simply playing video games – it’s literally **re-creating yourself** and shedding your baggage so you can live a remarkable life (and not necessarily an “organized” one).

And only **when you decide to stop settling for less** do you begin changing your life. It can get messy, but it’s worth it.

GETTING MORE ORGANIZED

... isn't enough to take your day back. If simply being organized was the answer, that to-do list you wrote out so neatly would be shrinking every day. Chances are pretty high, though, that the opposite is occurring – that your list is **growing** on a daily basis.

Or maybe it's worse: **maybe you don't even have a list yet.** Maybe everything you need/want/should do is just floating around in your head, causing you so much tension, frustration and stress that as a rule, you want to do anything **but** take action on all those things.

It's a downward spiral, and if you're caught in it please know that you're not alone. Most of us feel that way on a regular basis, and because this feeling is so prevalent, **very rarely will anybody call you on it.** Few people have the courage to point a finger at someone else, knowing that when they do, they have three fingers pointing at themselves.

But I'm calling you on it - right here, right now. If you've read this far, then you know how frustrating it is to feel like you're treading water ... so let's start talking about how to break the cycle.

The busiest people in the world are not by default the happiest any more than the richest people in the world are more fulfilled than the average Joe.

STOP CHASING PRODUCTIVITY

... as a Holy Grail. Doing more for the sake of being impressive (either to yourself or to others) isn't going to ease your burden. The busiest people in the world are not by default the happiest any more than the richest people in the world are more fulfilled than the average Joe.

Leo Babuta of zenhabits.net offers volumes of wisdom in his slender book, [The Power Of Less](#). There he describes

*how to “to streamline your life by **identifying the essential and eliminating the unnecessary** – freeing you from everyday clutter and allowing you to **focus on accomplishing the goals that can change your life for the better.***

In other words, simply doing more will not make you happier or finally free you up to have “peace of mind.” Fulfillment comes from doing less of the things which **steal your time and don't ultimately matter**. Once you do that, you can use that extra time to do more of the things that are truly important to your life.

To start, let's look at three things that are stealing your time away.

These three behaviors are so deeply ingrained in your psychology that they aren't going to go away overnight. They may not even go away in a year.

To be honest, **they may not ever go away completely.** But that's not important.

3 BEHAVIORS MUST CHANGE

... if you want to break out of your old patterns and start getting more out of your life.

But before we talk about what they are, we need to set some expectations first. These three behaviors are so deeply ingrained in your psychology that they aren't going to go away overnight. They may not even go away in a year. To be honest, **they may not ever go away completely.**

But that's not important, really. The only thing that truly matters is that you make a conscious effort to work on those behaviors on a regular basis, **reducing their influence on your life and keeping them in check.**

People who exercise and eat well on a regular basis can splurge on a deliciously unhealthy meal without suffering for it because it isn't the norm for them. In the same way, just getting these behaviors "mostly" out of your way can make a huge difference.

Facing uncomfortable truths is a requirement when you decide to stop settling for less in your life. Get ready to face the first one.

First of all ...

STOP WASTING SO MUCH TIME

We all waste time in ways we don't realize (or don't want to admit).

... and stop rationalizing how you're "really not wasting any at all."

We all waste time in ways we don't realize (or don't want to admit). We're either not aware of it or we're dressing it up in some euphemism that makes us feel better about doing something other than the things we know we should be doing.

We waste time when we surf the web "to take a break" when we're really avoiding doing work that makes us uncomfortable.

We waste time when we flip channels, passively looking for something interesting when we're avoiding doing something meaningful that would require work we don't feel like doing.

We waste time when we engage in escape activities that are disguised as "unwinding" – but afterwards, we don't end up feeling like we've relaxed at all when it's all said and done.

Keep in mind I'm not talking about true re-creation – such as taking a break from work to hit the gym or reconnect with someone you care about. I'm talking about spending time doing

How many things **do you regret not having accomplished, attempted or experienced** over the last ten years?

things that add no real value to your life at all. I'm talking about filling your time with disposable activities you won't remember a week from now, much less than a year.

And before you think I'm trying to be a killjoy, trying to lure you into the seductive and well-groomed cult of productivity, ask yourself these two questions:

1. First, how many things **do you regret not having accomplished, attempted or experienced** over the last ten years?
2. Now, **how much time each week** do you spend playing video games, web/channel surfing, or doing other disposable activities that don't leave you renewed and more fulfilled?

When I asked myself that question for the first time, I **almost broke down in tears**. Get honest with yourself, give a ballpark estimate of **how many of those regrets didn't have to happen**, and make an internal decision to wage war on wasted time.

And when you start doing more of what truly matters to you, you can take a break to watch LOST **because you earned it**.

If it sounds like I'm intimately acquainted with the psychology of this downward spiral, it's because I've lived it myself. And while some days I fall back into this spiral – and hard – I do my best to undo this behavior as best I can.

It's crucially important that you **stop underestimating the true cost of wasted time**, because it truly is devastating.

Opportunities pass you by that you will never get a shot at again. Relationships fade, and suddenly it's too late to do anything about it. Your sense of personal power and strength saps away, because even though you're constantly **busy doing things**, you aren't doing enough of the things that make you feel good inside.

And most cruelly of all, instead of looking forward to each new day as a chance to move forward and have a richer life, you're weighed down by regret at what you haven't done.

And so the desire to avoid that pain becomes so overwhelming that instead of fighting against the time-wasting habits that caused the pain in the first place, you feel an incredible urge to distract yourself from the suffering. And so you click another web page, or watch another television show, or play another game.

If it sounds like I'm intimately acquainted with the psychology of this downward spiral, it's because I've lived it myself. And while some days I fall back into this spiral – and hard – I do my best to undo this behavior as best I can (and it gets a little easier each

Be warned: There will never be a shortage of people who try to pull you back into the downward spiral, because they're trapped in it themselves.

Don't resent them, though – do what you can to help them.

week). And if you put what you'll learn in the next few pages into practice, you'll find yourself trending upward over time as well. It's a good place to be.

But be warned: There will never be a shortage of people who try to pull you back into the downward spiral, because they're trapped in it themselves. Don't resent them, though, any more than you should resent yourself – but do what you can to help them.

When you decide to **stop settling for less** and to start changing your life, you're going to have to overcome a tremendous amount of resistance from the people who you are closest to. We tend to live in a “flock” - either surrounding ourselves with people who share our standards, or letting our peer group's standards drive our own – so when we raise the bar, we rock the boat.

Nobody enjoys realizing they've settled for less than what they're capable of – but if everybody else is living the same way, it's “safe.” Once someone starts raising the bar, though, it forces the rest of the peer group to acknowledge what they're doing.

It's the reason that in a group of people who have terrible eating habits, the one person who's switching to salads and exercise

Don't settle for "living a little." That's the path to weakness.

Make yourself stronger, and **live a lot.**

Kick yourself into gear, and say no to the disposable activities that are junking up what should be a rich and beautiful life.

gets labeled as the "health nut." Suddenly that person is "too good" for the rest of the group, who in many cases is guilt tripped into settling for less for fear of losing friendships or status.

When you decide to raise the bar in your life, be prepared for resistance. When you walk away from the television to do something more meaningful, expect some rolled eyes from those on the couch. When you decline a lunch out with co-workers so you can study something that will change your future, be prepared for whispers behind your back. And when you say no to seconds or dessert, be ready for your overweight friends telling you to "live a little" and to "stop being so serious all the time."

Don't settle for "living a little." That's the path to weakness.

Make yourself stronger, and **live a lot.** That's what that runner over at the next table is thinking to himself as he scarfs down his well-earned dessert, calories be damned. Because he works harder, he gets to play harder, and the play won't hinder his progress.

You can play harder, too. Stop wasting time. Kick yourself into gear, and **say no to the disposable activities** that are junking up what should be a rich and beautiful life.

Secondly ...

STOP TAKING WEAK ACTION

When we have strong enough leverage over ourselves (in other words, pressure), **we push as hard as we have to** and can truly say we did our best.

... and saying to yourself “Hey, I’m doing my best.” We both know that’s not true, because we’ve both told this lie more times than we can count. (*Three fingers pointing back at me? Check.*)

We work hard, to be sure, but we don’t always commit to pushing ourselves to truly do our best. We don’t consistently do things like get the right amount of sleep (*But my favorite show is on!*) push distractions away (*But I can’t turn off Twitter and my cell phone for an hour!*) and we don’t commit to staying as close to 100% focused on the job at hand as we can (*But focus is hard!*).

How can I say this with such confidence? Because of **the living room principle**. You know how you don’t get around cleaning up the house “because it will take too long,” but when someone calls and says they’re coming over **now** it miraculously gets done, really fast? Or when the boss says “I need this (two hour job) done in an hour” ... and somehow it gets done, with minutes to spare?

When we have strong enough leverage over ourselves (in other words, pressure), **we push as hard as we have to** and can truly say we did our best.

What if you took one small action each day to push yourself to truly do your best – to keep focused, to push away distractions and to make knocking out tasks a **game you played to win?**

The thing is, we're generally not focused on creating this level of leverage in ourselves on a daily basis. Sure, we crank it up a notch when we need to finish stuff up so we can catch a plane, or when a hard deadline like tax day falls upon us, but in general, we don't make it a habit to build up this particular mental muscle.

But what if you did? What if you took one small action each day to push yourself to truly do your best – to keep focused, to push away distractions and to make knocking out tasks a **game you played to win?**

A simple example of this is a concept called **timeboxing**, which is the act of setting a short, specific deadline on accomplishing a task. This is essentially what we see in the living room principle, because the external deadline forces you to magically become more discerning with your focus.

The difference with timeboxing is that the deadline is **internal** rather than external – your soon-to-arrive company or your boss isn't forcing it on you. You're **making a conscious decision** to fit the task into a short span of time, and you're exercising your own personal power.

Timeboxing isn't a sure thing, though; there will be plenty of times

And when you're done, you'll realize that you accomplished those results in a far shorter stretch of time than you would have if you just decided to "get to work" without that internal deadline.

Now imagine if you did this every day. How few regrets would you have ten years from now?

you simply can't fit the job into the time you set aside. Maybe you go over, by a little, or by a lot. But that's okay, because since you're aware of the deadline you've just passed, you'll still work hard to get things done as quickly as possible so you limit how far you've gone over.

And when you're done, you'll realize that you accomplished those results in a far shorter stretch of time than you would have if you just decided to "get to work" without that internal deadline.

And amazingly, **you'll find yourself able to resist the typical distractions** that take you off course, because you'll say things like "I need to get this finished in 30 minutes, I can check my email after that." And when someone steps in your office or sends you an instant message, you'll instinctively say, "Can I get back to you in a half hour?"

You won't be using willpower to stay focused – instead you'll be doing your best because **you've turned it into a game you want to win**. A game where victory makes you feel better about yourself in a way that simply checking off a to-do list item never could.

Now imagine if you did this every day. How few regrets would you have ten years from now?

Start tapping into the power of **microactions** – small and seemingly trivial actions that snowball into life-changing events down the road.

Another simple but powerful way to push your limits and do your best is to start tapping into the power of **microactions**, small and seemingly trivial actions that snowball into life-changing events down the road.

For example, let's say that for years you've kept saying you wanted to get in shape, but you just never have because the time / effort commitment was too much. So you take no action, and you get nowhere.

But if you took a microaction – such as doing just 3 pushups a day, that's a start. It seems so trivial and useless that you wouldn't want to do it at first – but let's say that you did it anyway, even if seemed like a total joke.

Once you do this for a week or so, an amazing thing happens. Your brain gets “tricked” into thinking that exercise is a regular thing for you. Those 3 pushups are effortless, but you notice an almost imperceptible feeling of strength in your biceps after you do them.

So you start wanting a little bit more, and one day you push yourself to do four or five. It's a game now, and your brain already **feels** like pushups are a normal part of your day, so it stops being a big deal to do them. And you discover that you want to push it up

Microactions are a powerful, mind-altering prescription for habit change because they don't require willpower.

Make those microactions as simple and effortless as you want, and as long as you're consistent, you'll ultimately feel that internal nagging to **play a bigger game**.

to seven, or ten, or twenty, because you're proud of what you're accomplishing. And this feeling begins to infect your other habits as well. Maybe you want to see if you can do the same thing with pushups, or with walking, or with eating just one piece of fresh fruit a week (then two, then three)

Microactions are a powerful, mind-altering prescription for habit change because **they don't require willpower**. You can literally treat it as a joke in the beginning, seeing if you can commit to such a laughable start. But once you start, you stop laughing, and you want to continue.

And it works in all areas of your life. Overpay your credit card payments by \$5 a month for a few months, and soon you start wanting to find \$10 to apply to that minimum payment. Then \$15, then \$20 ... and the debt snowball starts rolling in your favor.

Microactions help you push yourself to do your best by taking willpower out of the equation. Make those microactions as simple and effortless as you want, and as long as you're consistent, you'll ultimately feel that internal nagging to **play a bigger game**.

Actions are infectious – and that's precisely why your bad habits took hold of you, strengthening themselves with one tiny pull at a

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time. Now your chance to start making the infectious nature of consistent action work in your favor.

The most challenging hurdle in overcoming our habit of taking weak action isn't willpower – it's indifference. While celebrities, niche A-listers and our role models may intimidate us with their productivity, dedication and “willpower,” the people we surround ourselves with on a daily basis usually don't.

And because they're the people we want to feel “accepted” by, we don't feel the external pressure to raise our standards and play that bigger game. We can stay slack, and they won't call us out.

One solution to this is to spend more time around people who will pull you in a positive direction by their example and standards. If you're surrounded only by people who keep you at a level far below what you know you're capable of, make your first microaction hanging with someone who will challenge you to raise the bar. They'll kick your butt if you start settling for less.

Who knows – once you're infected with a higher standard, you might spread it to your peers. 😊

Thirdly ...

STOP GETTING OFF TRACK

The bulk of what knocks us off track are urgencies that can either be **avoided**, **deferred**, or **flat out refused**.

We say “the day got away from us,” but in a lot of cases, we gave the day permission to go where it pleased.

... and fight tooth and nail to stay true to your priorities.

Somewhere in the back of your mind, you have this list of the things that you **say** are important to you. You try and work on these things, but this funny thing called life gets in the way with one false urgency after another.

I say “false” urgency because the bulk what knocks us off track are urgencies that can either be **avoided** (by making better choices upfront), **deferred** (by putting them off until it makes more sense to do them), or **flat out refused** (by saying “No, this just doesn’t fit in with what I want from my life”).

We say “the day got away from us,” but in a lot of cases, we gave the day permission to go where it pleased. We gave our blessing to distractions, diversions and interruptions and then wondered where all the time went.

As a society, we’re big on setting goals and making plans, but we’re not so hot on tracking progress daily, understanding why we’re getting off track, and making the course corrections needed to get

Goals are what you **want**.
Priorities are what you
do.

But the problem is, a lot
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back on the path we wanted to travel in the first place.

The good news, is there's a lot you can do about that. The first step is understanding the difference between a **goal** and a **priority**. We often use these terms interchangeably, but that gets us in trouble.

Goals are nothing more than results we plan to achieve, in some cases with a due date attached. We like setting goals (and we can easily set far more than can be achieved in a lifetime). Goals are things dream of accomplishing.

Priorities, on the other hand, are the activities that make other activities wait in line. We may **dream** of goals, but we always **act** on our priorities.

Think about that. Your priorities are the goals that get done first, and nothing gets in their way. You may say family is a priority, but when faced with choosing to work overtime (for a promotion) or working sane hours so you can spend time with your kids, one will take priority over the other.

Goals are what you **want**. Priorities are what you **do**. But the problem is, a lot of what we do can be driven by **reaction** rather

Decisiveness is all about telling incoming tasks to wait their turn unless they are so critically important they deserve your full, immediate attention.

than conscious choice. We tell ourselves that our priority is to make time for a quick workout today, but then “things happen” and the workout doesn’t.

These “things” can be anything – a phone call, an in-person conversation, an email – any or all of them with a new task, a new to-do attached. And because this task has just come in, we give it a potentially unmerited sense of priority because we’ve been conditioned to respond to urgency with **reaction** rather than **decisiveness**.

Reaction says “Answer the phone, someone needs something **now**” – even if you’re in the middle of something important. Decisiveness says “It’s important for me to **stay on track** with what I’m doing – I’ll check my voice mail in 15 minutes.” Decisiveness is all about telling incoming tasks to wait their turn unless they are so critically important they deserve your full, immediate attention.

Would it kill you to let 95% of your phone calls go to voice mail so you can stay on track? (Caller ID is one of the greatest inventions of the last century, simply because it makes this decision so much easier). Would it shatter your life to tell a co-worker or housemate “Can I get back to you in 15 minutes? I need to finish this up?” It may make you – and them – a little uncomfortable at first, but it

You need to develop **the habit of personally resisting reaction** so you can stick to your original priorities – shifting them only by conscious decision, when it feels like it's the right thing to do.

will definitely help you stay on track. At the very least, it will condition other people to ask “Is this a good time?” when they come by with a new urgency (and hopefully condition you to do the same the next time you need to interrupt someone else).

And while this may sound like I'm emphasizing the need to stay focused and avoid distractions again (didn't we already cover that in “Do Your Best”?), what I'm really getting at is that you need to develop **the habit of personally resisting reaction** so you can stick to your original priorities – shifting them only by conscious decision, when it feels like it's the right thing to do.

It's really a matter of exchanging the question “Should I give this new thing my attention right now?” for “Is this new thing **worth getting off track** from my current priorities?” The first question evaluates the urgency of the incoming task – a recipe for reactive living. The second question reminds you to make a judgment call on what's really important and **keeps you in the driver's seat**.

All of this is based around the concept of **opportunity cost** – the idea that when you do one thing, you're creating a commitment of time, money, energy and focus that costs you the opportunity to do something else. In other words, there's no such thing as a free lunch. It always costs you the opportunity to have some other

And though you may say you're getting off track "just for today," if you're in the habit of reacting to urgency, you'll be saying this on a daily basis.

experience at that moment in time.

Opportunity cost isn't a bad thing, though, when you get it to work **in your favor**. There are plenty of things you've passed on in order to focus on something more important to you.

Maybe you've passed on the opportunity to dine out because you're saving money for a new car. Maybe you've deferred college for a year so you can backpack across Europe. Or perhaps you've simply decided to eat lunch at your desk so you can go home a little earlier.

No matter what your choices, they cost you the opportunity to do something else. So when you've set your "goals" for the day and you let urgency drive you away from them, **those reactive choices cost you** in a very real sense. In most cases you can't just make up the time and stay on track – you've put yourself behind.

And though you may say you're getting off track "just for today," if you're in the habit of reacting to urgency, you'll be saying this on a daily basis.

If this describes the chaos that you may call a typical day, don't lose heart – there's so much you can do to strengthen your ability

Imagine if you wrote down your major goals for the decade/year/month on a 3x5 index card you carried in your pocket – and you looked at it two or three times a day, asking yourself “Am I still on track?”

How would it change your daily behavior to be consistently holding yourself accountable?

to stay on track.

One simple thing you can do is make sure your priorities are in front of you on a daily basis – and I’m not talking about a to-do list. I’m talking about a small grouping of the really important things. The line in the sand that says “This is where I want to be going with my life right now.”

Imagine if you wrote down your major goals for the decade/year/month on a 3x5 index card you carried in your pocket – and you looked at it two or three times a day, asking yourself “Am I still on track?” How would it change your daily behavior to be holding yourself consistently accountable?

The answer is: **a lot**. This simple microaction would begin conditioning you to make more conscious judgment calls during your day. You would develop the urge to stay in control of your time and focus, and when urgencies came your way you would begin exercising **three important skills** to protect your priorities.

The first skill is **deferring new commitments**. This is the most basic way to stay in control of your day. If something new lands on your plate, you simply move it to the end of the line or schedule it in for another day. Focus saved. Priorities protected.

You need to be more discerning about what new commitments come into your life, because **every one of them costs you.**

The second skill is **delegating new commitments**. This is underused but critically important. The fact that someone has put a task in front of you doesn't necessarily mean that you're the person who needs to do it. Do what you can to assign it to someone else (or better yet, have the requestor assign it!).

We take on too many commitments because of ego (*"Only I can do this the right way"*) or guilt (*"I can't let this person down"*). But you need to be more discerning about what new commitments come into your life, because **every one of them costs you.**

The third skill for protecting your priorities is **mitigating new commitments**. Mitigating simply means reducing the impact of something, and you can do this a number of ways. The easiest way is with a combination of the two other skills.

Someone comes to you with a new commitment? Perhaps you can defer a part of it and delegate another part, instantly reducing the impact on your current priorities. Or maybe you can negotiate the task downward, committing to something less distracting.

However you handle it, I hope it's sinking in that you can be more in control of your day than you are now, simply by being crystal clear on where you want to go with your life and developing just

Protecting your priorities is not about saying no to everything – it's a matter of **standing up for yourself on a daily basis.**

a little bit of savvy in managing incoming commitments. Protecting your priorities is not about saying no to everything – it's a matter of **standing up for yourself on a daily basis.**

So by now you're probably asking yourself, where does all this fit in with the title at the top of the page? How do all these things you've read about – many of which may seem complicated and overwhelming in the moment – come together in a way you can actually use to take control of your time and free up 1000 hours a year (seriously?).

Turn the page. It's simpler than you think.

Pick one thing – **no more than one** – to work on at this stage in your life.

Then sit down with yourself once a week to figure out how to take a step closer to where you want to be.

Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

SIMPLE ACCOUNTABILITY

... is the solution to the stress that's chewing up your peace of mind and forcing you into a life of unnecessary reaction.

Here's what I suggest you do to turn the tide and take back your day: Make the first microaction you add to your life a **weekly personal accountability session**. Just you, a notebook and a lunch, for example. No "big plan," nothing stressful to trigger those feelings that make you want to avoid things ... just a little heart-to-heart time with yourself where you recalibrate each week.

Pick one thing – **no more than one** – to work on at this stage in your life. Then sit down with your notebook once a week to figure out how to take **a step closer** to where you want to be. Determine what's working, what isn't and what's next. Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

This will likely fly in the face of what you think you need to do to take control of your day, your priorities and your life. There is probably so much that you want to change, so many priorities to chase, that you feel you have to work on multiple things to stay ahead of the curve. But that's exactly the plan that **hasn't been working** for you so far. One thing at a time may seem laughable,

An hour for lunch one day a week is an easy way to make accountability unobtrusive to your current schedule.

(You already have to eat, you might as well spend that time feeding your mind as well as your body.)

but all good microactions are.

Here's how it works:

You make a new weekly priority – **a small, true commitment** – to meet with yourself on a regular basis. An hour for lunch one day a week is an easy way to make accountability unobtrusive to your current schedule. (You already have to eat, you might as well spend that time feeding your mind as well as your body.)

During that first meeting, answer 3 questions in your notebook:

1. What **one** behavior do I want to begin changing this week?
2. What are a few good ways for me to do this?
3. How will I keep track of how I'm doing until next week?

Write down the answers to all three of those questions. Then you simply go through your week, taking a look at your answers a few times a day to keep this **small, achievable goal** in front of you.

Keep track of what works and what doesn't. That's it.

This first week is really all about awareness – about seeing how your best laid plans butt up against the reality of your established patterns of behavior.

The first week you do this, don't expect any earth-shattering changes in your life. Chances are high that all you'll be doing is logging your frustrations in that little notebook as your deeply entrenched habits make change difficult.

But that's okay. This first week is really all about awareness. About seeing how your best laid plans butt up against the reality of your established patterns of behavior. So don't stress if you end up making zero headway this first week – you're becoming more aware of what you want to change, which is creating the foundation you'll build on in later weeks.

Then, simply show up for your second one-on-one with yourself the following week, armed with the information in your notebook.

Look at your strategies and see what worked. Keep doing that (or tweak it to make it even more effective).

For everything that didn't work, ask yourself why. Was the strategy so bad it needs to be scrapped? Or does it just need to be adjusted to account for the obstacles you hit this week? Or maybe – and this is hard to admit – the strategy was perfectly valid, but you simply didn't follow through? Whatever the reasons, take some notes on them and readjust your plan of attack for the next

If you do this for a few weeks you'll notice a very satisfying result: **you actually begin getting better at building this new habit.**

Instead of running around to try and hit an arbitrary goal by a deadline, you're concentrating your efforts on **changing the way you act on a daily basis** so hitting that goal is inevitable.

week – and let the cycle begin again.

If you do this for a few weeks you'll notice a very satisfying result: **you actually begin getting better at building this new habit.** This happens not because you're not taking the typical "pass/fail" approach that we typically use for goals such as "I'm going to lose 10 pounds this month."

Instead, you're simply focusing on strengthening your mental follow-through muscles each week. Following the example of losing 10 pounds, you're not running around to try and hit an arbitrary goal by a deadline – you're concentrating your efforts on **changing the way you act on a daily basis** so hitting that goal is inevitable.

Think about it ... What's going to help you get in shape, long term: trying to hit the gym 5 days a week until you're exhausted, or gradually **changing the way you act around food** so that you stay in shape forever?

That example works for weight loss but the same principle applies to "how you act around time." When you gradually change your actions – and reactions – you set the stage for major changes that will free up massive amounts of time down the road.

3 CHANGES = 1000 HOURS/YEAR

So let's say you gave this a try for a few weeks, and you focused on making one single change at a time – maybe getting more focused, maybe managing interruptions better, whatever – and you started making progress on these things.

Over time (less time than you think), you would begin to see three major changes begin to happen in your life:

1. **You would waste less time**, trading off the empty promises of disposable “unwinding” activities and replacing them either with real work or real re-creation time.
2. **You would play a bigger game** during the day, accomplishing your current workload faster (and enjoying it more), freeing up time to get ahead, get balanced, or just getting more time for yourself.
3. **You would stop getting off track** throughout each hour, buying yourself an insane amount of time back through a stronger focus on deferring, delegating and mitigating new commitments that arrive on your desk (or email inbox).

These small changes add up fast. Three little actions each day would buy you back **over 300 hours** in the next year – the equivalent of **seven and a half full work weeks**.

These small changes add up fast. If each day you:

- Cut out 20 minutes of wasted time
- Pushed yourself full throttle for 20 minutes
- Cut out 20 minutes of interruptions

... you could free up around 50 minutes per day right there. (I'm counting that "full throttle" as only buying you about 10 minutes – a 50% performance improvement – which is more than doable for many of your daily activities). Those little actions alone would buy you back **over 300 hours** in the next year – the equivalent of **seven and a half full work weeks**.

And as you became increasingly serious about taking control of your day, you could become even more focused on making these three changes. Because if you're like most people,

- You already lose more than 60 minutes a day to time wasters and escape activities that don't recharge you at all
- You already spend more than 60 minutes a day working at less than full throttle (admit it, we all slack)
- You already lose more than 60 minutes a day to interruptions

So what happens if you make a little bit of progress each week on

Think of all the things you could do in the next 12 months if you had an additional 1000 hours at your disposal.

You can have them. One microaction at a time.

tackling these three areas? You'll move closer and closer to freeing up 1000 hours a year, or more.

1000 hours you could be using to take care of yourself.

1000 hours you could be using to learn new skills.

1000 hours you could be spending with people who miss you (or whom *you* miss).

1000 hours you could be using to figure out what you want to do with your life (and to get started on it).

1000 hours you could be using to build additional income streams.

1000 hours you could be using to pursue an enriching hobby.

1000 hours you could be using to get in shape.

1000 hours you could be using to finish all those projects.

Think of all the things you could do in the next 12 months if you had an additional 1000 hours at your disposal. **You can have them.** One microaction at a time.

No microaction is too small, if you only stay consistent at keeping to your schedule.

Getting that first foot in the door is all you need right now; you can inch it wider week after week until it's all the way open.

YOUR NEXT STEP

... if you want to stop settling for less and to start changing your life is to **schedule that personal accountability session with yourself**, as soon as possible.

Could you do it today, if only for 15 minutes? Or tomorrow at lunch? The sooner the better, because if you let it go, you might never get to it.

No microaction is too small, if you only stay consistent at keeping to your schedule. Getting that first foot in the door is all you need right now; you can inch it wider week after week until it's all the way open.

Right now, there are doors that are closed to you. Will you step up and start to open them?

I hope so. **I'd love to hear how it works out for you**, and to congratulate you for taking your first steps into a bigger game. Drop by my personal development blog [Rock Your Day](#) sometime and leave me a comment. And thanks for taking the time to read these pages; I hope they are the catalyst for a compelling future

where you can describe your life as more fulfilling, exciting, and regret-free than ever.

I've included a few worksheets on the following pages to help get you started. I hope they help. And I hope to hear from you in a blog comment sometime soon.

Congratulations for making the decision to stop settling. You'll never regret it.

All the best,



Dave Navarro
[@RockYourDay](#)

PS: If you would share this document by emailing it, blogging about it or any other means, I'd be ever so grateful.

IDEAS FOR WHAT TO WORK ON

Not sure what to start working on first? This list of common trouble areas might help.

Too many undone tasks • No clear plan for the day • Confusion on priorities

Work / Life imbalance • Avoiding distractions • Dealing with stuff I should delegate

Procrastination • Over-scheduling • Crisis Mode / Urgency Addiction

Anxiety / fear of failure • Lack of motivation • Depression • Follow through

Overwhelm • Lack of control over my schedule • Priorities changing midstream

Unrealistic time tables • Too many undone tasks • Punctuality • Ending tasks on time

Ending meetings on time • Dealing with interruptions (phone / email)

Dealing with interruptions (people) • Lack of solid planning • Fatigue / tiredness

Chasing incomplete / missing information • Indecision • Too many goals

Fuzzy / vague objectives • Lack of organization (general) • TV / Video Games

Lack of organization (workspace / desk) • Web surfing

What one behavior do I want to begin changing this week?

What are a few good ways for me to do this?

How will I keep track of how I'm doing until next week?

More Time Now: How To Invest One Hour A Week To Free Up 1000 Hours A Year

What I'm Working On This Week:

Successes	Challenges

What Strategies Worked This Week (And How Can I Improve Them)?

What Strategies Didn't Work This Week (And What Should I Do)?

TWO OTHER LINKS YOU MAY ENJOY

1. Sometimes all we need is a good kick in the behind to get us moving. That's why I've started the free [Stop Settling newsletter](#) on the Rock Your Day blog. Every Monday morning (Eastern Time) I'll mail out a solid, swift kick from behind to remind you that it's up to you to take control of your life.

With over 2,000 people on the newsletter so far, there's a lot of kicking to do each week. I hope you'll join us right here.

2. If you're running your own business, I have some kick-ass resources on another blog, in a little area I call The Launch Coach Library. I'm talking 20+ page workbooks like "7 Steps To Playing A Much Bigger Game," "7 Steps To Networking Your Way To A-Listers Fast," and "7 Simple Income Streams (That You Can Actually Create)."

Check it out at <http://www.thelaunchcoach.com/library>.

See you there –

Dave