

Would You Like More Time in Each Day?

If you are like many people today, you go to work with the best intentions of getting everything on your “to do” list completed. You are very busy throughout the day and barely have time for lunch, so you certainly feel productive. But at the end of the day, you look at your list and realize that you didn’t get most of the important things completed. In retrospect, you can see that much of your day was spent dealing with customer issues (internal and external,) employee issues, or simply putting out fires.

Now look back at the last month, the last year and maybe the last 3 years, and has this been going on for quite a while? If this has been a pattern of your past, then why would you believe that tomorrow would be any different? The definition of insanity, is to continue to do what you have been doing, but expect better results tomorrow. Stop fooling yourself into thinking that tomorrow will be a better day, because it probably won’t unless you are committed to change.

If you want to create more time in your life, you need to become proactive and stop being reactive. A reactive person spends all of their time putting fires out with no time to manage important daily tasks. A proactive leader puts systems in place to prevent fires, which gives them more time for important tasks. I am a firm believer that people don’t fail as much as systems do, so what system can we put in place to give us more time?

I suggest sitting down and devoting an hour or so to making a list of the wasteful “things” that consume your day. These are the things that are not on your “to do” list, but you deal with them most days and they divert you away from your productive goals. Next to each of those “things”, write down about how much time that you waste on them each day (on the average.) As an example, you might spend 30 minutes some days and none on other days, so maybe one of the “things” averages 15 minutes per day throughout each week and month. Add up all the wasted time, and consider how nice it would be to use that time for more productive tasks.

Now I would like you to commit to taking only one “thing” per week (yes, only try to tackle one per week,) and finding a way to remove that from your life for good. So let’s say that “thing” number one wastes 15 minutes of your time each and every day. You decided that you could create a new procedure (system) to keep that “thing” from reoccurring. It might take three hours of your time to create this new procedure, but once it’s in place, you have now granted yourself 15 minutes per day of free time you did not have last week.

Let’s say you have eight “things” on your list that consume your life. It is going to take eight weeks to put systems in place, or perform additional staff training, but at the end of eight weeks, you might now have two hours extra time that you did not have before. You might have only invested a couple hours per week into the process, but look at what a huge payoff you got at the end of eight weeks? Change is difficult for humans, but it begins with the first step, so as the Nike ads say: “Just do it!”