

Organizing Tips...

Six golden rules for more effective time management

- By Lorena Prime -



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There is an old saying that you cannot manage time, but you can manage yourself. How true that is! Time management is about habit changes – tiny behavior modifications that you make to help you be more productive. Keep in mind that the goal of higher productivity isn't to do more tasks, but rather to do the right tasks that will lead you to more significant results. Doing the right things will help you get promoted faster, earn higher wages, feel more satisfied, and leave work just a little bit earlier.

Don't think that you don't have time to do a little time management. Everyone can make some small tweaks to their

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habits that will produce big results. Try implementing the ideas below to see how far you can go!

1. Be open to change. This is key. If you are not ready for change, you won't be able to modify your habits in order to try something new.

2. Consider time the same as money. We're cautious with our money, but not nearly as careful with our time which is actually more valuable. You can always earn more money somehow, but you can never earn more hours in a day. Keep in mind that you only have 1,440 minutes each day, so spend your time on activities that matter – both professionally and personally.

3. Prioritize as if you're going on vacation. We become very good at prioritizing when we're about to go on vacation (particularly out of state); we have a lengthy task list that we ruthlessly cut down the closer our vacation gets. If we were this ruthless on a daily basis, we would get more of the important items

accomplished and waste less time on the busy work.

4. Think about consequences. What would happen if you didn't do that task or project? Sometimes we are so quick to say, "Yes!" that we don't realize at the time that we won't be able to do the job adequately. Spare yourself and the other person disappointment and frustration by thinking about your workload and saying "No" politely when needed. You'll gain respect and other people will know they can count on you when you do say, "Yes."

5. Take care of what bothers you the most. You need to do what is on your mind or you'll never be able to concentrate on other tasks. We lose energy, time, and motivation when we let things go day after day. Whether it's completing your taxes, getting the brakes fixed on the car, or creating a complex report, you need to complete these tasks so that you can focus on other things.

6. Use the T.A.R. Principle. Think of every email or piece of paper as falling into one of three categories – Trash, Action, or Reference. This will help you to manage these things more easily. For each item, first ask yourself "Can I throw it away?" If so, then get rid of it because it's trash! If you cannot get rid of it, ask "Is action required?" If no action is needed, then the item is reference and should be filed. If action is required, then ask "What is the next step I need to do?" Record that step on your to-do list. The key is to separate your emails and papers into these categories because you'll realize that you don't have as many action items as you first thought, and it's easier to get started on the action you do have.

These Golden Rules will help you get more of the right things done every day. Remember that life is about your values and big goals, not about filling every second of the day with tasks. By making small changes in thought and action, you'll feel better and accomplish more! **Z**

Lorena Prime, Owner of Clearly Organized, speaks at companies and organizations on Time Management and other productivity issues. She uses a 5-stage process to help people shorten routine office work and save 1-2 hours every day. What could you do with an extra 1-2 hours? For more information, visit www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com or call 617-633-2199.