

# Do You Believe In Time Management?



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You can't manage time. Create the first 25-hour day and I'll find you a million dollars. Time is the most unyielding and inflexible asset we have. **You can only manage priorities.** Stop going after balance and start going after success. Get your priorities straight, and then structure everything else to accomplish them. If you don't do that, you may not be managing time, but you sure are going to be wasting it. And almost worse, you'll be beating yourself up for not having enough time for your business and yourself.

## Priority Management

So are there any secrets to managing your priorities? No, but here are some tips that give you somewhere to start:

1. **Commit to a vision.** Until you know where you are going, you won't know what your priorities are. If you are only responding to the crises and urgencies of each day, you aren't managing, you are being managed. Set weekly goals/activities that get you to your vision.
2. **Manage to a vision.** Manage only today's crisis and you're not really managing anything; manage only for the long term future and you'll be blind to what is happening now. You have to look at each unit of time (day, week, month, quarter, year) and deliberately assign time for each of the three cycles: taking care of current business (operations), short term growth (sales), and long term growth (team and strategic growth).
3. **Create lists.** I believe in capturing on paper or on your computer, everything that needs doing. Stop making excuses like "I don't need to write stuff down, it's just crazy busy right now, and things will get back to normal." No they won't. Now is normal. Deal with it. You can't remember everything, so start making lists. And while you are at it have a look at that list and check to see that you are spending some time each week or month on each of the three cycles. Note too, that I said *create* lists not *use* lists. When you create lists on those three levels, it puts you in charge. You become the creator of your future, not the reactor to your circumstances.
4. **Use a schedule:** Don't try to wedge activities tightly into every available minute of time. Life will do that to you anyway. So anticipate that and structure your time into large, generous blocks of related activities (like client time or writing time). This commits time to the priorities you have identified, and leaves breathing room so that when the inevitable crises hit, you aren't as rattled by them because you aren't already dealing with a teetering pile of plates.
5. **Learn your work strengths:** Not everyone has a 4-hour attention span. I don't. While switch-tasking is unproductive for some, it works for others. I know I work best in 30 to 90 minute sprints. Then I have to go do something completely different, preferably something out of my chair. (Hopefully not eating). Pay attention to how you work, and learn to build a structure around that.

6. **Build a team:** Whether at home or at work, you can't do everything that must be done alone. Develop your vision and your priorities and then share the execution with others.
7. **Communicate/Delegate:** Nothing motivates a team better than clearly defining what you want and expect from them, then let them do their part. The quality and quantity of completed tasks will go up, and your stress will go down.

So remember, don't try to manage time. Instead, manage your priorities in order to achieve your vision.

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