

Systems Activity 8 – 1% Planning

Each day, every single one of us has the same number of minutes to spend – 1440.

Entrepreneur, coach and writer Allyson Lewis argues that if we spend just 1% of these minutes planning and reflecting, we should be able to spend the other 99% getting on with our work and enjoying our lives. 1% of 1440 minutes is about fourteen minutes, and Lewis suggests we split that into two seven-minute sections. (Lewis, Allyson, *The Seven Minute Difference*, Kaplan Business, 2006)

Inspired by her approach, we've developed our own seven-minute system with a focus on planning study. Here's how our '1% Planning' works.

1. Every morning you set aside seven quiet minutes.

This might seem ridiculously obvious but it's harder than it looks! You'll quickly realise how much of your day is the noise and activity of conversations, arguments, cafes and canteens, TV, social media, gaming, and travel. You'll need a space and time when none of that applies. You'll need to space to write (we like using a single flash card for this activity) and you'll need to be totally focussed. Once you're ready to go, scribble notes under the following headings so that you have three things you really want to do:

What one thing needs completing today?

Select one thing that you want or need to finish and cross off today, no negotiation. This is your must-do.

What one thing needs further work today?

Choose one thing you need to continue work on today – something you've already started but needs attention.

What one thing needs starting today?

Select one thing you haven't even begun yet, but you need to get going on today.

Left overs

Throw down everything else that's on your mind here.

Completing:	Left overs:
Further work:	
Starting:	

Then, at the end of the day...

2. Every evening you set aside seven quiet minutes.

Again – harder than it looks, but do your best to make sure you’ve got this small pocket of time to think back over the day and check through what happened. We find these five areas of questioning and reflection really useful:

- How did your day go? Did you get your three things done? What’s left over?
- What’s tomorrow looking like as a result?
- What’s on your longer-range radar? (This is a brain-dump that should take a couple of minutes: anything and everything that you know is coming up, throw it onto the flash card.)
- In your studies, what do you need to do more of?
- In your studies, what do you need to do less of?

You might want to use the other side of the flash card for this reflection:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflection on the other side of the flash card.

And that’s it – your day’s finished. Tomorrow gets another flash card and a fresh start.

If this system ever feels difficult or time-consuming remember; it actually isn’t that bad. You still get 99% of your time to spend getting on with your day. And just because the 1% is a tiny time period, it doesn’t mean it isn’t effective. Just these two small pockets of quiet thinking and planning could make a massive difference to your sense of calm, your levels of stress, and your feelings of control.

That’s the power of 1% planning!