

# Marc Andreessen's Productivity Trick to Feeling Marvelously Efficient : iDoneThis blog

## Marc Andreessen's Productivity Trick to Feeling Marvelously Efficient

I've noticed an interesting phenomenon among productive people: they often overlook their own productivity. The more productive you are, the more likely you are to get down on yourself and think at the end of the day, "I wasn't very productive today."

Because ambitious people measure themselves by their progress towards achieving audacious goals, they often can't appreciate a single day's worth of tiny, incremental advancements that they've made. Plus, the fuller your day is with activity, the harder it seems to pinpoint what exactly it is that you did at all.

Between starting Netscape, Opsware, Ning, and Andreessen Horowitz, Marc Andreessen has done monumental work in his career and seems particularly at risk to fall into this trap. To arm himself against the daunting imperative of making meaningful progress toward his big objectives, **Marc came up with a system: the Anti-Todo List.** It's his way to stop and recognize his own accomplishments, measured not by a project's impressive success, but in increments, to fuel his motivation for getting stuff done day after day.

What you do is this: every time you do something — anything — useful during the day, write it down in your Anti-Todo List on the card.

Each time you do something, you get to write it down and you get that little rush of endorphins that the mouse gets every time he presses the button in his cage and gets a food pellet.

And then at the end of the day, ... take a look at today's card and its Anti-Todo list and marvel at all the things you actually got done that day.

(via The Pmarca Guide to Personal Productivity)

Note that he's advocating for more than crossing items off your to-do list. His Anti-Todo List gives him credit for everything he gets done, not just what's preordained by his to-do list. And keeping a separate list means that when you take stock of what you've achieved, you aren't hounded by what's still left to do.

There's value gained from the act of slowing down to write down accomplishments, which is inaccessible without acknowledgment. It turns out that "being able to put more notches on my accomplishment belt, so to speak, by writing down things on my Anti-Todo list as I accomplish them throughout the day **makes me feel marvelously productive and efficient[,] [f]ar more so than if I just did those things and didn't write them down.**"

Rather than waiting for a major milestone to celebrate an achievement, recognize that tiny, wonderful triumphs happen every single day. Turn that into a daily process of rejuvenation and inspiration after a hard-day's work, and you'll have added a crucial ingredient to your day that maintains the positive emotional balance necessary to accomplishing great things.

Chris Savage, CEO of Wistia, wrote about how magnifying your field of vision when it comes to your perspective on progress is key to generating the momentum and joy to accomplish big things. He expressed

this lesson concisely in two graphs:



versus this:



There's a hard road to travel to get to big-time achievements and reaching heady dreams, whether it's making your first million, mastering the piano, or running a marathon, and if you're too exhausted every day to take stock of your successes, you'll lose heart. Take a note from Marc Andreessen:

[Y]ou know those days when you're running around all day and doing stuff and talking to people and making calls and responding to emails and filling out paperwork and you get home and you're completely exhausted and you say to yourself, "What the hell did I actually get done today?"

**Your Anti-Todo list has the answer.**