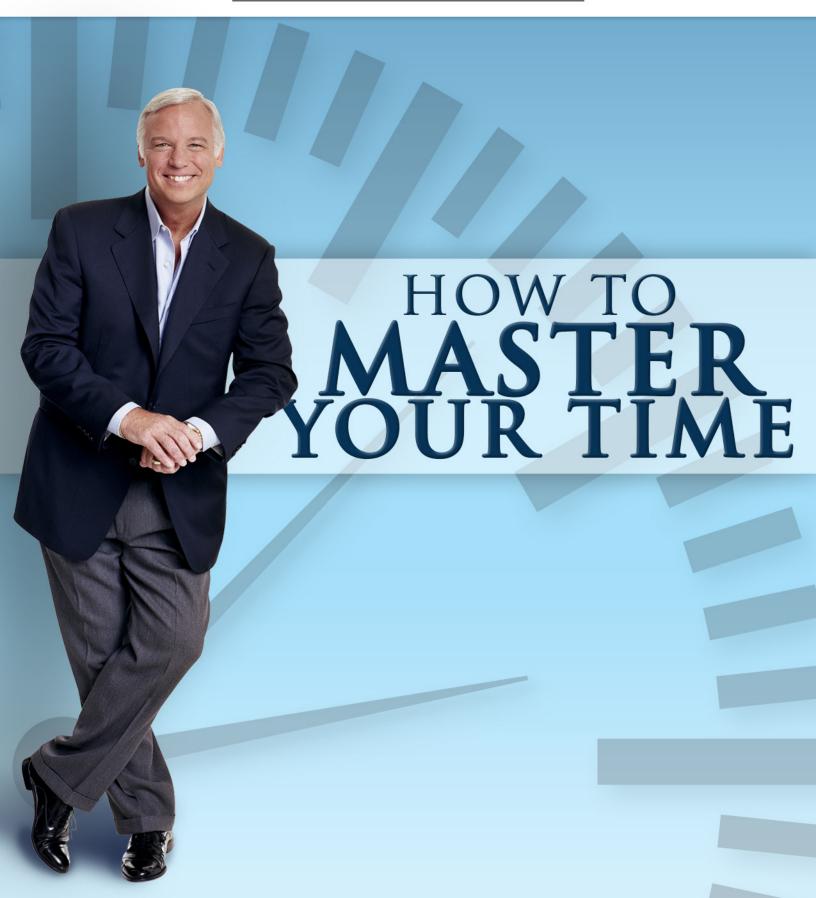
# JACKCANFIELD COACHING\*\*



## **How to Master Your Time**

Regardless of whether you start or finish strong, when it comes to achieving your goals, how well you take action is the biggest contributing factor as to whether you will realize your goals or not.

Most people have no problem with dreaming dreams and hoping for something better. The difference between the dreamers and the achievers is how well they manage their time.

Time is the great equalizer. Whether you are young or old, rich or poor, everyone is granted 24 hours every day. What you make of it determines your destiny.

To help you make the most of every day, this special report outlines key principles of time management and execution that will help you achieve your goals faster, with less mistakes, all while enjoying life more.

# **Developing Successful Habits**

Living the life of your dreams comes down to how well you develop habits that support that life. The current quality of your life is determined in large part by the cumulative effect of your habits, both good and bad. The path you have chosen to walk on a regular basis has taken you to this moment in time.

For some, that truth can be discouraging. It is easy to get down on oneself over poor choices, lack of discipline, or bad information. But, while your habits have helped create the life you have today, you are not your habits. You have the ability to cultivate new, more effective habits that will bring your life into alignment with who you want to be. By focusing on the "what lies ahead" side of the habit equation, developing successful habits becomes an empowering journey.

## Replacing the "Bad" with the "Good"

The key to getting rid of bad habits is understanding that you don't stop doing something as much as you start doing something better.

For example, most people would like to have the "good" habit of exercising regularly. Often, they decide now is the time. They hit the gym for a couple weeks, things begin to get in the way, and before they know it, they're back to their old habits.

The problem comes when "things begin to get in the way." Usually, this is because—in our example—the habit of exercise was addressed independently of the other aspects of the individual's life and not within the entire eco-system of habits. For example, a bad habit of an inconsistent bedtime could contribute to being too tired to get to the gym. An inconsistent bedtime may be the result of too many late nights at the office because of a lack of planning or an inability to say no to unrealistic requests.

Now this is not to imply that you must be perfect in every area of your life for this to work, but to draw awareness to the fact that you need to set yourself up to succeed by thinking holistically about your habits rather than independently.

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And nowhere does thinking about how the parts affect the whole come into play more than in the planning process.

# **Planning**

Planning when done properly creates a synergistic effect in your life by developing objectives, habits, and space to let the universe create in your life what you most desire. Unfortunately, most people don't plan.

Most people get frustrated with planning, because...well, nothing ever goes according to plan. Right?

This frustration with planning is because of an unrealistic expectation. Planning isn't about predicting or even controlling the future. Planning is about creating a context for yourself where you can make the choices that best align with your goals and priorities.

Look at it this way, without a plan, we tend to choose or react to whatever is proximate and pressing. For example, a text message, a status update, or an unexpected visitor at your office door are all examples of inputs that drop into our day and say, "Hey! Pay attention to me!"

Now if we haven't decided beforehand what is the best way to spend our time (the very definition of planning) then we typically shift our attention to this new input. However, if we have planned how we want to spend our time, we can weigh this new input against our existing plan and choose the most important. Sometimes we will chose to follow our plan, other times we will respond to the new input. Either way, we are in control of how our time is spent.

## Daily and Weekly Planning

As you can see, planning isn't limiting. It is liberating. It allows you to be efficient AND effective with your time. As such, successful planning comes down to planning your time both weekly and daily.

Weekly planning is a benefit because it provides you a unit of time that is manageable yet large enough to be relevant for both short- and long-term objectives. Daily planning is essential because it allows you to adjust your weekly plan to account for the unforeseen obstacles and opportunities that come up.

#### WEEKLY PLANNING

The key to planning your week is to not over-do-it. Weekly planning isn't about scheduling every minute of the next seven days, but to strategically schedule priorities so you accomplish what is most important to you before the day-to-day grind fills up every waking moment.

Consider this, if you are still waiting to "find the time" to write the next great self-improvement book that will revolutionize the world, chances are you'll never find it. However, if you schedule time to write (e.g. Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.) then you have "made the time" for your goal. When you view planning as making time for what is most important, a world of possibilities opens up. You can schedule time to meditate to help relieve stress or take your child out to lunch to help strengthen your relationship. All those things that you have been meaning to get to, but haven't, are perfect examples of what could be scheduled in your weekly plan.

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Now all of these plans won't amount to much if you don't keep them (more about execution later), but you need to treat these appointments just as you would an appointment with your most important client. In other words, keep it or reschedule it, but missing it isn't an option.

#### DAILY PLANNING

With the weekly plan in place, daily planning becomes more of a time to check-in, adjust, and refine than a traditional planning session.

Whether you plan for your day the night before or the morning of, you will find the key to effective daily planning in how you define your priorities for the day. Whether you want to call your priorities: "high", "normal", and, "low" or "A", "B", and, "C" or whatever works for you, you will want to have three categories defined as such:

- High Priorities: High priorities are activities that you must accomplish today. Period. But, they don't need to be accomplished today solely because you want to, they must be accomplished because if they aren't the task will becomes worthless or obsolete tomorrow. For example, if tomorrow is your wedding anniversary and you still haven't bought your spouse a gift, buying a present becomes worthless tomorrow because you will be empty handed when your spouse says, "Happy Anniversary!". When viewed in this way, most responsible adults should have very few high priorities on their daily plan.
- Normal Priorities: Normal priorities are the tasks and appointments that move you forward on accomplishing your purpose and goals. Some people struggle with calling these "normal" or "B" priorities, but they are focusing on the wrong word. These are still PRIORITIES. These are aspects of your life that you want to give special attention. The key here is not to overfill your day with priorities. Even though you may have the best intentions and the most worthy goals, there are still only 24 hours in a day. However, unlike your high priorities, normal priorities will still have the same value to you tomorrow. Your job then is to decide which tasks can realistically be accomplished today and provide the highest return-on-investment of your time.
- Low Priorities: Finally, low priorities are the "nice-to-do" things. It would be great if you
  could get to it today, but overall the impact in the quality of your life created by accomplishing it compared to a high or normal priority is minimal.

Now with your plan in place, it all comes down to execution.

# **Executing Your Plan**

When it comes to execution, it is as simple as following your plan. But at times, that can be easier said than done. The most common problem people run into when executing their plan is procrastination. They procrastinate not only by doing nothing, but they procrastinate by doing something else. Properly understood, procrastination is the "absence or misdirection of action."

If you have spent all this time evaluating your habits, planning your week and your day, and then fail to follow your plan because you choose to do nothing or something else, you have wasted all your effort. It is in these moments that you must recognize your procrastination and connect to the motivation that inspired you to create your plans in the first place.

Often, we feel as if we are lacking the motivation to act on our plans. However, you must understand that often the motivation to follow through on our plans doesn't arrive until we are actually working our plans!

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In his timeless essay, "The Common Denominator of Success," Albert E.N. Gray made this observation, "The common denominator of success...lies in the fact that [successful people have] formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do." He went on to point out that successful people don't enjoy those tasks any more than failures, but they have been able to suppress their dislike for a particular task by understanding how it relates to that which they want to accomplish. In other words, sometimes the hardest part of your workout may be putting on your gym shorts.

#### The Bottom Line

Regardless of what you want to accomplish in life, without good habits, solid planning, and dedicated execution, you will never realize the life of your dreams. Conversely, with good habits, solid planning, and dedicated execution, there will be next to nothing you won't be able to accomplish.

Dream your dreams and make the most of the 24 hours life hands you every day. The suggestions provided in this special report are tried and true. So put them to the test and you might surprise yourself with what you are able to do.

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