

Ten Tips to Tackle Time Troubles

by Joy-Ellen Lipsky, **Success with Joy!**

Time is your most precious asset -- spend it wisely. Always ask what is the most important use of your time, right now.

- 1) Take a look at where you actually spend your time during the week, relative to career, family, social/friends, finances, health, personal growth, spirituality, community service. Maintain a reasonable balance between work and the other areas of your life.
- 2) Gain time by outsourcing some of your lower value activities to others: gardening, housecleaning, house painting, errands, grocery shopping, etc. Think about co-ops formed around taking kids to/from school, other activities, illnesses, etc.
- 3) Use short bits of time (while you are waiting) for reading articles you keep with you, or for short phone calls, isometric exercises, meditation, journaling, etc.
- 4) Maintain a master list of all the things you wish to have or do. Take your top three to five items and create a plan to achieve them. Work on something every day to move you forward on these goals. Keep the master list current -- add new items as you think of them and delete those you have completed.
- 5) Save time by keeping your task list, appointments, and contacts electronically, on your computer. Buy a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) and keep it with you to make additions and updates when you are away from the computer. Make sure there is a slot for a memory card in the PDA, so you can backup your information. Also, make sure you can synchronize your PDA with your computer.
- 6) At the beginning of the month, the week, the day, block off time in your calendar for your most important tasks for your personal goals (from your master list), as well as your work tasks. To prevent procrastination, divide larger tasks up into manageable pieces -- then schedule the pieces.
- 7) Prioritize your daily tasks and continue to work on the most important one until it is done, or you can go no further. Then start on the next highest priority task. Track the status of your daily tasks, so you know what is still in progress at the end of the day, and needs to be rescheduled. Schedule regular times during the day to read email (get yourself a spam filter), and return phone calls.
- 8) Demand a timed agenda before attending a meeting. Make sure there is something relevant to you before you attend. Be prepared.

- 9) Create categories within your online contact list to identify groups. For each contact in your list, set the appropriate categories. Then if you wish to contact all the people in a particular category/group, simply view your contacts by category.

- 10) Fight clutter. Cancel unwanted catalogs, magazines, junk mail. Keep your paperwork in folders, and the folders filed. Get rid of anything you haven't used in a year, unless it is required by law, or is your tax papers. Put items back where they should be -- then you can find them quickly the next time.

Joy-Ellen Lipsky is a speaker, trainer, and technologist, whose success skills guide her clients in creating effective lives and organizations.

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