

# **TIME MANAGEMENT FOR BLACK ENTREPRENEURS**

from the author of  
**"Conversations With Black  
Millionaire Entrepreneurs"**  
BRO. BEDFORD



**JUST BECAUSE  
YOUR CELL PHONE  
RINGS, DOESN'T MEAN  
YOU HAVE TO ANSWER**

**TIME-SAVING TIPS TO SAVE YOU TIME  
WHICH WILL MAKE YOU MONEY!!**

## About the author



Bro. Bedford is founder of How To Be A Black Entrepreneur.com and President of G.B.I. Group L.L.C. a private investment firm

Bro. Bedford is considered by many to be a fresh new voice with new and innovative ideas for Black Empowerment particularly in the areas of Entrepreneurship and Investment/Finance.

He has been featured on **Radio One** and **XM Radio**. He has also appeared on several radio and television programs across the Country.

He is the author of several e-books:

Conversations With Black Millionaire Entrepreneurs: No Non-Sense Lessons From Those Who've Been There, Done That!  
[www.conversationswithblackmillionaires.com](http://www.conversationswithblackmillionaires.com)

Fall Of The Dollar: Are Black People Prepared for the Coming Economic Collapse [www.fallofthedollar.com](http://www.fallofthedollar.com)

Related Report:  
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Bro. Bedford's FREE e-zine [www.howtobeablackentrepreneur.com](http://www.howtobeablackentrepreneur.com) is read by over 3000 subscribers Worldwide.

***-SPECIAL REPORT-***

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FOR  
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**TIME-SAVING TIPS TO SAVE YOU TIME AND  
MAKE YOU SOME MONEY!**

**By Bro. Bedford**  
**<http://www.howtobeablackentrepreneur.com>**

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## Introduction

Greetings this is Bro. Bedford from How To Be A Black Entrepreneur.com. Welcome to this special report that I've put together to share probably the most important KEY to the success of some of the most famous Black Entrepreneurs of our time.

I recently had a brief meeting with Cedric 'The Entertainer' and I noticed something, I was taller than him. I noticed the same thing last year when I was standing next to Bob Johnson when he was giving a presentation in Detroit.

When I met Russell Simmons I noticed that he was taller than me. George Fraser is lighter than I am and Randall Pinkett, winner of Donald Trump's Apprentice Season 4 is darker than I am.

Cathy Hughes obviously is a woman and that is a BIG difference from me and the men that I mentioned earlier.

I have been feverishly attempting to interview Tom Joyner, Tyler Perry and Diddy, but we have not been able to secure the interviews yet. They have not declined my request; it is just that we have not been able to coordinate the appropriate time to get them done.

You are probably asking, "Bro. Bedford where are you going with this?"

I want to make it crystal clear that successful Black entrepreneurs come in all shapes, sizes and shades. Male and Female, tall and not so tall.

Some more articulate than others. Some more creative than others.

There are so many differences we could not possibly list them all.

But there is one thing that ALL successful entrepreneurs have in common. It is..

### ***"The Effective Use Of Their Time"***

The only thing that separates you and me from being the best we can be and achieve a similar degree of success that others enjoy is how we utilize our time.

After reading this report you will have some of the same tools that many successful entrepreneurs possess and put into practice.

So let us take a closer look at ourselves and how we understand time and how we value our time and then use some of the keys contained in this report to become more effective and productive with our time

STOP! Before you move on, PRINT this report out. I assure you that you'll receive much more benefit from STUDYING over the information, rather than just skimming through it on your computer.

Before you begin to read...PRINT this report out on paper. Then grab an ink pen and STUDY it. Circle or underline things of importance to you. Scribble ideas and notes in the margins. Write out your action steps.

The information in this report is just information unless you use it.

I encourage you to print it out before you read it.

## Understanding The Concept of Time

We are going to try and understand time in its many faces. No, I am not referring to the faces on watches or clocks. I am referring to the many meanings that time has. Oh yes it does! I hope you didn't think that time meant the same to everyone. Well think again; or maybe you could try to explain the logic behind the following cases.

Picture a farmer who plants a sapling of a tree that would probably take ten to twelve years to reach the stage when it would start to bear fruit, by then the farmer could possibly be under the soil himself.

Picture a person in jail counting on the bars of his cell waiting for the seconds, minutes, and hours, days, weeks, months and years to go by before he can be free again.

Now picture a young couple madly in love with each other cherishing the few minutes they get to spend with each other every day, and becoming frustrated with time because it flies so fast when they are together and never the other way round.

So what does time mean to you?

When was the last time you assessed the value of time?

Do you know what is **most** interesting about the concept of Time?

## **It Is Absolutely Uncontrollable**

**Personally I believe that there is something very humbling about this concept.**

Just imagine, human beings with all of our power are just like helpless babies before time. Time stands tall and strong before us and we remain vulnerable and weak before it.

Here is Man being able to tame rivers and seas, being able to reach out to the skies and beyond, being able to harness the wind and water and dig deep into the earth, but a *worm* before **Time**.

## **Can You Win The Battle Against Time**

Many have tried and the best they can do to win the battle against time is dyeing their hair and use some anti-wrinkle cream on their faces. In fact, the closest that man has gotten towards conquering time is those many history books that have been penned; they are of course chronicles of events that happened long ago and that is certainly not much to boast about.

And so now we come to our subject that is *time management* because after the illustrations given above, I hope that I have made one point clear, that is that Time *cannot* be controlled, it can only be *managed*.

And that is what we are going to do. We are going to deal with the art of time management. In all the illustrations that I used above, I was referring to human beings in general and not to one particular person.

## **All Are Equal Under The Law Of Time**

So you can see that this aspect of time is applicable to every human being and there is no running away from it. Every person has only twenty-four hours in a day and no force on earth can alter that. So in order to get the cutting edge what you have to do is to be able to *manage your time in the most effective way possible*.

And that is what Time management is all about. It's about managing your time effectively and if I may I would like to add the word **efficiently** too.

## **Our Most Valuable Resource**

Now, when we talk about our resources, every one knows that we are referring to the resources like fossil fuels, forests, mineral wealth, and water bodies and so on. But surprisingly time is never included in this list.

When we talk about non-renewable resources, fossil fuels like coal, petroleum and natural gas top the list.

***But what about time?***

A point that most people tend to forget is that time is the most valuable resource that we have, and time once lost, is lost forever. We can think about alternate sources of energy for fossil fuels like electricity, fuel cells, solar energy and the research goes on. But is there any alternative for time that is lost.

Again I stress on the point that time once lost, is lost forever. You probably have heard the term, “time waits for no one.”

## **Where did All The Time Go?**

I have had conversations with many entrepreneurs who are baffled at the fact that even though “they may have 10-20 years experience in a particular field” or “that they work harder than anybody else” or “that they have a superior product or service”- they are not doing better.

Why?

Most of the time it is the ineffective use of our time!

We spend so much time, energy, and resources doing things that are not productive and hardly enough time on things that are vital to changing our businesses, which would also change our lives

As entrepreneurs we must focus on doing something everyday to keep our product or service or ourselves in front of the market that stimulates demand for our product or service or ourselves.

This is what I found critical to the success of many of the millionaire entrepreneurs that I spoke with.

Billionaire Bob Johnson calls it “**being involved in the deal flow**”

It is very important for successful entrepreneurs to **not** be in the same position on December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2008 than they were on December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2007.

Many unsuccessful entrepreneurs find themselves wondering how a ‘year passes and no meaningful progress has been made’? The answer is painful yet factual, it is the “*ineffective use of our time.*”

## How Do You Value Time?

In many time management books and seminars the presenters or authors love to present these colorful charts and graphs showing how one should calculate their time.

The majority of the advice surrounds the notion of an eight-hour workday and how much income you want to achieve. Based upon their systems if you want to make \$100,000 a year you take your 8 hr workdays, multiply them by the total number of workdays and this will give you your yearly income which tells you what each hr should be worth to you.

Blah, Blah, Blah.

If you believe this is the way to value your time then this report is definitely not for you. This is not about some corporate idea of how to get more effectiveness out of your job.

This is **Time Management For Black Entrepreneur**, with an emphasis on Entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs don't focus on 8 hr workdays. They focus on Productive Hours.

### Throw away the Corporate Seminar Crap

Don't get me wrong there are some things that are just universal when it comes to Time Management. You will see some of them in this report.

However, if you value time from the view of swapping hours for dollars instead of from the entrepreneurial prospective, your activities will not be effective nor productive enough to achieve the success you desire as an entrepreneur.

## Do We Really Have 24 hrs?

It is quite surprising when you sit and think about where all the time in one day goes. Twenty-four hours is really a lot of time. But on most days it scarcely seems enough. But this is because of certain misconceptions about time.

Let us proceed to carefully examine where all that time goes and find out if we truly have twenty-four hrs. For that I have listed out certain points which will help you to get a realistic view about how much time you really have in a day.

### **Point 1**

We do not really get twenty-four hours in a day. Maybe it's because we always talk about the twenty-four hours in a day, we get the feeling that we really do have twenty-four hours to finish our daily business and the fact is that we do not.

Assuming that you go to bed at least by twelve in the night and taking for granted the fact that you need at least seven hours of sleep; let me fix your waking time at seven in the morning.

That means that you have already lost seven hours, which we can deduct from twenty-four, giving us only seventeen waking hours. So let us get that straight, we have only 17 hours in a day. Now if you think that all those seventeen hours can be used for productive work, you are **wrong** again.

### **Point 2**

The seventeen waking hours cannot be used completely for productive work. There are many things that we should do in order to continue to live like a human being and some of these things do take up a lot of time.

Now the following list that I have drawn up is sure to vary from person to person. But I have taken the times for each action on what I felt to be reasonable times as far as any normal human being is concerned.

➤ **Taking a shower.**

Most of us take a shower or bath at least once in a day and the time I think we can put down for that is ten minutes. For those of you cleaner ones who shower twice a day put that as twenty minutes.

➤ **Answering the call of nature**

Oh yes, we are all very cultured people who have the best of manners and upbringing. We dress ourselves properly and conduct ourselves with the utmost poise. But there are several times in a day when we have to go back to nature and summing up all those things we do in the bath room I think a good half hour should be enough.

➤ **Getting ready and tidying ourselves.**

When we move about in society we definitely have to look our best and adding up all the minutes that we spend in front of that mirror, we get another ten minutes. For some people of course, this figure comes up to half an hour. But I think ten minutes is good enough.

➤ **Eating**

We need to eat to live and though I accept the fact that people have different eating habits and times, and we don't want to rush to eat that is not healthy. So lets allocate 30 minutes for food.

➤ **Time to relax.**

Please do not raise an argument now. I promise to deal with this a bit later on. But right now I would like to put down one hour as the time to relax, and this includes the time that you get to yourself for prayer or meditation or just to stare out of your window or perhaps the few extra minutes that you spend in your bed after waking up, waiting for the last traces of sleep to go away.

➤ **Time with family and friends.**

Please, we are human beings, aren't we? And we certainly cannot get along with our business of life without chatting a few minutes every now and then with our friends and the family too. So with your permission, I would like to deduct another hour from your waking time.

So now what do we have left?

We started off with 17 hours of waking time. And we proceed to add up all the time that we accounted for in the above mentioned points; let us see how much time we have left for productive work provided we still want to exist as human beings.

The activities mentioned above would take when put together a good three hours and twenty minutes. That is 3 hours and 20 minutes. I put it down in both numerals and words so that you can get a real taste of the figure.

Now if we proceed to subtract this figure from our 17 hours of waking time, what do we get? We are left with just thirteen hours forty minutes. In figures that is 13 hours 40 minutes.

And that is a fact. That is all that we get. So from now on don't you think that it would be more realistic to say that we have just thirteen hours and forty minutes to accomplish a day's work and not twenty-four hours? For if we continue to believe that we have twenty-four hours, then we are in effect deceiving ourselves.

But wait there is more to this story than meets the eye. I hate to disillusion you but these crucial hours that we have painstakingly added up are not really put to constructive use. There are certain things that will suck up all of your time, which you have to look out for and that is what we are going to deal with later on in this report.

## It's All About Lifestyle

It is our life style that decides how much time we have for each thing. The way we live and what we do decides how we spend our time and how much time we have to spend.

We choose our life styles and that decides what we do with our time.

So what kind of life do you live?

We, that is most of us live in a world of aero planes, and jets, and fast cars and supercomputers and elevators and escalators, and electric trains and a thousand more contraptions and machines that are all intended to save time and do things faster.

Yeah, yeah we talk about convenience, but the fact is that all these machines were the result of man's endeavor to get things done faster. And the result is that life moves so fast that we could get dizzy if we were to take a minute break and just look around at all the people whizzing around in the daily business called life.

### **24hrs is Not Enough**

Twenty-four hours is hardly enough for us to finish a day's work. And so what most working people do is that they start compromising on the other seemingly not so important things like eating and getting enough rest at night. And so we have such a large number of people suffering from stress related diseases like ulcers, high blood pressure and heart problems.

Most people are stuck in the life style they have chosen. As an entrepreneur you have chosen to construct a life unlike the average person.

So does that mean, we are doomed to suffer as ulcer patients and blood pressure patients? Far from it; if we are able to manage our time effectively we can live a life that is enjoyable and comfortable. And that is the purpose of this report.

But that is not all. The main purpose of this report is to help you manage your time better so that you can become more productive and bring a lot of organizing into your life. You will be surprised to find out how much you can do provided you have the time for it and you can have the time only if your time is organized and managed well.

## Leeches of Time

I recently saw a trailer for the movie 'RAMBO'. It is a re-release of a movie from the 80s starring Sylvester Stallone. Please do not think that I am plugging this movie I am not. There was just a part of the movie that I have never been able to forget.

It is when Rambo was submerged in water that he accumulated on his body a bunch of leeches and he had to cut them off with a knife to get rid of them.

### Definition

**Leech-1)** Any of various aquatic bloodsucking annelid worms of the family hirudinea, once used by physicians to bleed their patients. **2)** One who preys on or lives off others; Parasite.

Just as leeches suck the blood of whatever it is attached to, Time Leeches suck the time out of whomever they are attached to.

These Leeches of Time will suck up all of your time and energy, leaving you weak and drained if you let them. Once they start sucking, they never want to stop. Even after you have replenished yourself, they come back and suck some more.

In the movie when Rambo started removing the leeches it appeared to be painful, at least it looked painful. It may be painful for you to remove some of your Leeches of Time, but you have to if you want to be successful as an entrepreneur.

The key is being able to recognize these **Time Suckers**. There are plenty of them and the better you get at recognizing them, the more productive you will become.

I will give you a few of these time killers to be on the look out for.

- 1) The person that always wants a few minutes of your time.** He or she always has a quick question to ask you. Of course you don't want to be rude or unreasonable so you always give in to giving "*a few minutes of your time*" which turns into more than a few minutes.

The truth is this person that is always lurking to suck up just a few minutes of your time is telling you that your time is less valuable than theirs.

I have been there before. Always willing to give my time to answer and deal with very trivial things and it cost me my most valuable resource "MY TIME".

Cut this leech off quick. The sooner the better, because when people fall into the habit of interrupting your time the harder it is to stop it

- 2) **The meeting.** It has become fashionable to “be in a meeting”. Many people use meetings to feel important. I have also learned that people use meetings to hide from making and taking responsibility for decisions.

You need to ask yourself do I really need to call or be in this meeting? Is there a better way to handle this such as a memo or a conference call or an email?

Anything but another meeting. Ok one more..

- 3) **Drama King or Queen.** This is the person that turns everything into an emotional crisis. Emotion moves their every reaction. They turn every thing into a serious “*Drama*” and if you are not careful you will become one of the cast members.

The main problem with this type of time sucker is that you have to give up your productive time to put their emotional selves back together again.

If this type of person is allowed to stay in your circle be prepared for a long drawn out period of nonproductive activity.

As I mentioned earlier there are many more Leeches of Time to contend with and the better you get at recognizing them and cutting them loose the better your entrepreneurial life will be.

## **Organizing is the key to Time Management**

Now this is fact that I think would not raise any arguments. If you are better organized you have a better chance of managing your time effectively.

So what is this art of getting organized?

There have been enough and more books written about the art of getting organized. And I do not want to give my modest contribution to this much hyped about topic.

Instead of working on somebody else’s definition let me ask you, how organized do you want to be? When we talk about getting organized people generally get an impression of a spick and span office with not a paper out of place. But my experience has taught me that a neat office does not necessarily have to be a very organized office. If you throw away every single piece of paper that comes to your office, certainly your office will be neat but not organized. I believe that organizing is a relative term. It is all a matter of convenience.

- In an organized office/home office there will be a place for every thing and everything will be in its place. But at the same time you should be able to lay your hands on the object you need the moment you need it. And in this respect a little bit of clutter is ok.
- And it is not enough that you know where every thing is; somebody else should know it too. In case you are not able to come in person and get something, somebody else should be able to do the job for you. It is here that labels and tags can prove to be vital. Every single file should have a nametag and every thing should be filed properly. It is not enough that you name things according to your convenience. The names should be intelligible to others as well.

Often we tend to use codes like ARCS, CRBER, and WHOSH, which might make sense to us but may sound like double Dutch to every one else. Now that's enough about office organization.

Let's now move on to getting yourself organized.

### **Tips on self-organization**

The best way to get organized is to find out the loop holes where you usually end up in a mess and see whether you can get around them.

For every entrepreneur, the following are often pitfalls:

- Forgetting Appointments
- Forgetting Deadlines
- Being Unable to meet deadlines
- Being late for meetings and Appointments
- Forgetting Names
- Forgetting Telephone Numbers
- Forgetting to take important documents and things along
- Misplacing Objects and so on

I have used the following tips in my life and they have proved to be quite effective. Maybe you too could try them out and see whether they work for you.

## **Nine hints to become a more organized person**

- Accept the fact that we cannot rely too much on our memories.

The human mind is exposed to a hurricane of information every day. As a result the mind does a very nice filtering process and very little of what we see and hear is retained in our minds. So instead of depending on our very selective memory why not depend on a piece of paper.

- Carry a tiny scribbling pad and a pen with you all the time. The moment you fix an appointment or are asked to attend a meeting, jot it down in the scribbling pad. Do not worry about others laughing at you. You will have the last laugh in the end.

- It is a good idea to write it down orders in your book. Each time you tell somebody on your team to do something or when someone on your team asks you to do something write it down in your book along with the date and the time. Do not be afraid of being thought of as a person with a very poor memory. It won't be long before people start thinking of you as a highly organized person.

- If you have an electronic pocket organizer be sure to use it. Each time someone gives you his or her telephone number, immediately enter it into your pocket organizer, along with the person's name of course.

- Use the backside of business cards to help your memory. Usually we get a lot of business cards as we go about our daily business of life. The business card of course contains the name of the person, his or her telephone number and probably the name of the firm for which the person works. But the problem is, the next time we meet the person, the face may seem familiar but we won't have the foggiest idea as to where we met the person. The best thing to do would be to jot down a few points about the person and probably the reason for meeting him or her and the place as well. This will certainly lessen the load on your memory center. However, do not do this in front of the person.

- Put away the business cards properly. As soon as you get back to your office take care to put away the business cards you collected properly. Don't just stuff them into your card folder. Take care to read them properly and perhaps keep the cards of important clients separately. If you do not find much use for a person's card, toss it.

- Prepare a to-do list everyday. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of **to-do lists** in getting yourself organized. It is probably the most sensible thing that an entrepreneur should do. In fact I thought of devoting an entire section for to-do lists and I think that is just what I will do.

- Plan what you have to do well in advance. It is a good idea to have daily, weekly and monthly plans. No this is not about expanding your business and things like that. I am not referring to a strategic plan that involves takeovers and mergers. Those things are beyond the scope of this report. I am referring to having plans about the daily, weekly and monthly activities of your business and yourself as well.
- Have a fixed timetable. It may seem kind of mechanical but it would be wonderful if you could have a fixed time for everything and try to stick religiously to the timetable. Believe me it really helps because in that way you will have time for everything and everything can be done in the time you pick for it.

And so you are now moving towards becoming a more organized person.

But there are still miles to go before mastering the art of time management.

### To-do Lists

I had mentioned earlier the importance of 'to-do' lists and I thought that I should dedicate a section completely to highlighting the advantages of a 'to-do' list.

#### **The 6 advantages of maintaining a to-do list**

- A to do list helps us know the different things that have to be done so that we do not miss anything.
- A to do list is more dependable than our memory.
- Once we have a written list of the things that we have to do, we can prioritize and decide which jobs should be done first.
- Sometimes one or more jobs may require that we go to another office or section. A to do list helps us to avoid repetition of labor. For example, if we have to deliver a document at an office and collect a document from another office, which is on the same block as the first office, both these tasks can be done together. It saves us the time energy and effort of going to the same place twice. But only if we have a 'to-do' list can we know in advance that there are two jobs at the same place. This is the way postmen operate when they deliver mail.
- A to do list enables us to cross out the tasks which we have finished doing and towards the end of the day when we see the list of things that we have crossed out, it certainly will give us a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. It also has the effect of **shocking** us if nothing at all has been done and crossed out.

- If anything remains on today's list, it can be carried over to tomorrow's list and that is an excellent way of preparing a to-do list for the day, by examining the 'to-do' list of yesterday and carrying out any task that has been left without completion.

Now, when we talk about preparing a to-do list, the two important points that should not be missed out.

- The 'to-do' list should be realistic.
- It is not enough that only daily 'to-do' lists be prepared.

We say that the list should be realistic because it should include only things that can be accomplished in a day. There is no sense in preparing a list that includes items that can only be done over a week. And it is here that it becomes relevant to prepare a 'to-do' list for a week and a month and even a year.

It is best to pin up weekly and monthly lists instead of carrying them around. And then a very crucial point that you should bear in mind is that *a weekly list is not something to be done on the last day of the week and a monthly list is not something to be done at the end of the month*. I have put that down in italics because that is what most people do. If it is a task that has to be completed at the end of the month, it is on the 30th of the month that they take up the task.

So your daily to do list should include an item on doing a little bit on the task that is to be completed at the end of the month.

Does this help towards meeting deadlines?

### **Prioritizing-Key To Meeting Deadlines**

It is not once or twice in the course of our work that we have to meet deadlines. They pop up often. And that is ok. It is only the way we approach the deadline when everything goes haywire and there is a mess everywhere. The things we do daily are thrown completely off gear and meeting the deadline becomes a big head ache.

Is there any way out of this? Of course there is. For one thing, if we are well organized and an urgent requirement, like the submission of a project or something like that crops up, there is nothing to sweat about. All we have to do is to compile the material that we already have with us. Sounds easy enough!

But in real life we are not just called upon to submit reports of already completed projects. We usually get projects and fewer days than required to complete those projects.

Then what do we do? The only way out seems to be to work extra hours. That is not altogether harmful. It never hurts to work a few extra hours once in a while.

But another alternative is to *prioritize*. See whether you can arrange your work in such away that you get to do the more important tasks first. If there is some daily work that doesn't call for too much urgency, keep it aside. Concentrate on the more important tasks.

Similarly, while you are working there may be a thousand and one distractions at your work place or office.

You will have to decide which is more important, attending to those distractions or *focusing* on your work. If you can afford to turn off your cell phone, go ahead and do it. Similarly, you could even keep your land phone off the hook if that won't create a ruckus in your office that is.

Another thing you could do is put up a do-not –disturb sign in and around your work area to ward off those disturbances.

You might also have to remind yourself to stay put at your workstation and not linger around either mentally or physically.

It is not necessary that you do all the jobs yourself. If you have a secretary or subordinates, it is about time that you started trusting them with not so very important jobs. The word over here is 'delegate'.

## **Delegation Can Be an Entrepreneurs Best Time Saver**

**The three advantages of delegating are:**

1. Delegating gives us more time to concentrate on more important issues.
2. Delegating is a very good method of giving practical training in the real situation to your staff or team members.
3. It is a good method of fostering decision making among subordinates.

But at the same time all tasks cannot be delegated. There are certain criteria to be taken into consideration before delegating a task.

The criteria for deciding whether a task can be delegated are.

1. If the task is repetitive, by all means delegate.
2. If the decision can be reversed quickly and easily, it is safe to delegate. For example if is rearranging the furniture in your office or deciding on celebrations at the office, then it is quite safe to delegate.

3. Check and see if the impact is not too much on others in case the decision they make is wrong
4. Check and see if there is too much money or physical resources involved in the decision.

In this way, if you prioritize you can decide which jobs should be done first, who should do it and what should be done when. Before you know it, meeting deadlines will stop being such a headache.

## 5 More Techniques

There is not a secret formula when it comes to time management. Everything in this world has something to balance its existence. If there is white, there is black; if there is darkness there is light, if there are poor time management strategies, there are good time management strategies. So now let us focus our attention towards a few techniques because they are our best friends when we talk about Time Management.

These are just a few techniques. These are by no means the only time techniques in the world. They may not even apply to you. However, all of the seminars and books no matter how they put it really boil down to a few simple things you can do to be effective.

- 1) **Slay the Phone.** Who said you have to answer your cell phone every-time it rings? The cell phone is the number-one source of distraction and interruption for most people. I have said it earlier and often you must do all you can to free yourself up from the phone. You must minimize accepting incoming calls and strive to organize your outgoing calls.
- 2) **Control Meetings.** I have wasted more time in meetings than I care to remember. We touched on this earlier. This is where people like to hang out and feel important. If you have to lead meetings, keep them focused and short. Keep a strategy available to exit unproductive meetings.
- 3) **Keep Your Goals In front of you.** We have tremendous opportunities to be successful. We just don't give ourselves enough reasons to be successful. This is why we must have goals and do all we can to link all of our activities to our goals.

This is how we get goals achieved. It is difficult to waste time when you are accomplishing benchmarks and goals.

- 4) **Use Block Time.** This is a real special technique here. Do all you can to use a calendar to schedule your time? As you look at a task or engagements on your

calendar if you can start to group similar task or engagements together, you will find yourself being able to accomplish so much more.

Quick Example. If you have a weekly communication to write to clients, employees, etc... Try to arrange time to write 4 to 8 of them at once. Now if your communication is time sensitive this may be difficult to do, but if you can plan out the communication this can save you a tremendous amount of time on a weekly basis. And that leaves you more time to be productive and advance in other areas.

- 5) **Do Away with unplanned activities.** This is hard for most people. This society has trained us to just wing-it. If you study closely you will find people who just show up and react.

So many wonder how so much time just goes by and nothing gets accomplished and if you can't say where your time went you will always be unproductive. Simply by reducing unplanned activities and unscheduled time you will automatically reduce waste and improve productivity.

### **Just Say “No”**

Another key that might sound strange or rude is being able to say ‘no’. This is fundamental to any scheme of Time Management.

Yes you have the master plan for time management, you have everything worked out, you have a time table which you stick to religiously, and you have a ‘to do’ list as well. But just when things are beginning to work out fine, a colleague or friend comes your way and asks you to help them out by doing certain things, which are really not your responsibility.

The person smiles very sweetly at you and showers sugar coated words on you, and before you even know what hit you, you have said yes and agreed to do the work for the person. Now what is the relevance of your well thought out timetable? Where is your scheme for time management? Your work is waiting in the pantry while you are sweating over somebody else’s work. And it’s because of the simple reason that you could not say no to the person. How many times have you had a similar experience?

I’m not saying that you should not be civil. If you find a colleague in distress and have the time to spare, by all means help the person. Who knows, tomorrow you might be in that person’s position and you may need somebody’s help.

But that does not mean that you should let yourself be taken for a ride. If you are going to help a person at the expense of your work and schedule, then you are going to end up in hot water. It is human nature to shirk work and if word gets around that you are a very

helpful person (read that as **s-u-c-k-e-r**) then before you know it, requests for help will be coming from all sides.

Unless you want to take up from where Mother Theresa left off, you had better put your foot down and say “sorry, but I just don’t have the time.” Behave like a diplomat. I remember reading somewhere that a diplomat is a person who can tell you to go to hell in such a nice manner that you will actually start looking forward to the trip. I also came across the definition that a diplomat is a person who can say the nastiest things in the nicest way.

So that is just what you have to do. Wear the mask of the diplomat and the next time someone approaches you with sugar coated requests to help them out, smile back at them. Eventually they will get the picture.

Then you could try telling them how much you love them. Extol at length what you think of the person and your relationship with him or her. And then tell them that what you are going to say is going to be a life long sorrow for you. It is something that will plunge you into the depths of despair and all that. And then put it painfully across, “no, I’m terribly sorry but **N-O.**”

And then when the person leaves your presence with a sobbing and fallen face, wait till he or she is out of hearing range and then you can start that silly dance you do. .

Common let’s be real, in today’s world of cut throat competition your very existence may depend on your ability to say “no.”

And trust me, it is much better to be considered selfish than to be a sucker for everyone to take a lick.

## **Procrastination-The Final Enemy**

Now let’s get something straight. I have been preaching, moralizing and waxing eloquent about Time Management for quite sometime. But before I began this discourse, I forgot to ask you, what kind of person you are. No I’m not bothered about your physique or your eating habits. Nor am I concerned about your interest in fish flies and strange rock formations. I just want to know if you are a procrastinator, because if you are, then there is no point in talking about time management.

### **So, are you a procrastinator?**

Indeed this is a very silly question because we all are. Procrastination is as fundamental to human beings as the insatiable appetite for sex. No, you are not going to admit that either, but it’s the truth. The appetite for sex and the habit of procrastination are as old as man himself.

Now, before you start thinking that the word ‘procrastination’ has a sexual connotation, let me proceed to explain what the connection is between procrastination and time management.

Procrastination is simply the habit of putting off for tomorrow what you can do today. Does it ring a bell now? The fact is that nine out of ten of us have this habit. We tend to postpone jobs and tasks. And procrastination is the villain, the unsuspecting sneak that upsets every plan connected with time management.

The interesting thing about procrastination is that we tend to put off only those tasks that seem unappealing to us. If the task is boring, or monotonous, or involves too much hard work, then it stands a very good chance of getting postponed. It is not because of the lack of time that we do not do the task. On the contrary, we might have plenty of time to do it but we tend to postpone it and justify ourselves saying that we do not have the time for it.

Take for example a visit to the dentist. How many of us go for monthly checkups to the dentist? The answer would be almost none. Over here the reason is pretty simple. Since childhood, dentists have been associated with physical discomfort. It’s not just the physical pain that we associate with a dentist’s clinic.

There is also a lot of stress involved. It certainly is an uncomfortable experience to spread yourself in a completely vulnerable position on the dentist’s chair with your mouth open. The dentist, at such moments seems to have a sneer on his face as he approaches you in his spotless, white attire and contemplates on which of his shiny pointed instruments displayed before you he should use first to prod and poke.

As a result, a visit to the dentist, as far as I am concerned, is something that sends a shiver down my spine. It’s because of this that I keep avoiding visits to the dentist’s clinic.

That’s something that I think a lot of others as well tend to procrastinate. Let’s see if we can think of some things that are likely to get procrastinated in our professional lives. I know that for most people, cleaning up clutter is an unpleasant task. Over time, a lot of clutter gets collected in our areas of work. Our drawers get stuffed with a lot of odds and ends. There will be piles of papers on our desks or perhaps under our desks so that no body sees it.

Some people even have a difficulty in clearing their mailboxes until a warning message pops up on the screen. Visiting your cardholders is another such area that gets neglected.

We stash so many cards into our cardholders, most of these cards belonging to people who may have migrated to another part of the world for all we know. And though we know that it is a god thing to dump half these cards every now and then we never get down to doing it until the cardholder literally starts bursting in the seams.

These are some of the jobs that we put off for tomorrow, a tomorrow that never comes. Now, there are some problems that arise out of procrastination that are detrimental to Time Management.

### **The 5 bad effects of Procrastination**

- ✓ A feeling that work has been left undone is bad for our morale
- ✓ Unfinished work leaves a lot of clutter around which affects our efficiency.
- ✓ Putting things off means accumulating work and urgency could crop up on the same day.
- ✓ Procrastination when it comes to the notice of other people maybe branded as laziness and lack of interest in the work that needs to be done.
- ✓ Your work becomes more unpleasant the more you postpone it.

The only thing that you need to get straight is that you have to do the work any way so why not do it right now. Do not wait for that day when-you-will-have-more-time. It will never come. The chances are that you will be busier tomorrow than you are today. Most of the work that we procrastinate doing is the-sooner-done-the-better kind.

All it takes is some will power, make up your mind to do a task and then do it while your mind is made up, and believe me, the human mind does not stay made up for too long.

But then, there is a chance that you might be confronted with a strange feeling, you might start finding your work to be monotonous and boring and that is what we are going to deal with in our next chapter.

### **Plan for Success**

Before you are going to do something, there is nothing as sensible as a plan. A plan as we know it is something thought about and chalked out in advance before the real action takes place.

But then, the word ‘plan’ does not need much of a definition. It has been used so much that it has become quite common. So, we all know what it means, but how many of us really resort to planning before we start a course of action.

No, I’m not referring to a mental picture that we cart out in our minds that is in one word VAGUE. I mean a real plan in black and white, that is, put down on a piece of paper. Please do not underestimate the importance of a written down plan. Once we write down something it clears up a lot of hazy areas and opens aspects that we probably overlooked.

And the most important of all is that with a plan and only with a plan can we get a rough estimate at least of how much time the course of action would take. Plans should always be time bound and there we get the relation between time management and planning. In fact planning is as fundamental to time management as organizing and prioritizing.

The advantages of planning are given below

### **The 8 advantages of planning**

1. Planning helps us to have a better idea about the course of action that we propose to take.
2. Planning better defines the course of action that we propose to undertake.
3. Planning gives a rough estimate of the time required for a project.
4. Planning gives us a fairly good idea about the expenses involved in the project. In fact a budget is only a financial plan.
5. Planning helps us to get prepared for emergencies that may arise during the course of the project.
6. A well thought about plan gives us a clear idea about what is to be every day, every week and every month.
7. Planning helps avoid *duplication of labor*.
8. If a plan is followed every one will have a clear idea about his or her role.

A point that I would like to add while we are talking about planning is that we should have both short term plans as well as long term strategy plans. At the same time we should also try to draft out contingency plans to deal with a crisis if it arises.

I thought it would be useful for you to have a brief overview of the different steps involved in planning.

### **The six steps in planning are**

1. Set objectives
2. Assess you present situation
3. Survey your alternatives
4. Decide on the course of action
5. Provide for control
6. And Implement the plan

**But whatever the plan I again want to stress the point that a plan should always be TIME BOUND.**

But as the project moves along, the plan should be flexible in the sense that it should incorporate any changes that might prove necessary once the project is put into action.

### **Planning the work in your office**

You have to understand that there is nothing like a very routine work that doesn't require any planning. The belief that it will go on by itself is wrong. Even tasks that can be done on an everyday basis can be improved if there is good planning involved.

Everywhere there is scope for improvement, better methods that are yet to be implemented and problems that have to be solved. And for all this you need proper planning. Let's take a look at the different steps involved in planning for a week.

The best way to plan the work for a week is to maintain a planning sheet. Now, please remember that this is apart from the routine work that is done in the office.

The following steps will help you to make a planning sheet.

1. Take a fairly big sheet of paper and divide it into the number of working days in your office.
2. The column for each day should further be divided in to the morning and afternoon sessions.
3. Divide the job to be done and assign each part to a concerned person.
4. Decide on which part of the task is to be done on each day and at which part of the day.
5. Put a cross mark followed by the concerned person's initials on that section of the day on which you propose to do the decided part of the job.
6. At the end of the day, if the job is done put a circle round the cross.
7. If the job is not done, carry over the cross and add it to the next day's cross.

In this way, at the end of the week, you can find out how much of the work was done each day and subsequent plans can be made for the following weeks

In this way you can plan for a week or a month, depending on your requirement.

While you are drafting your plan and estimating your expenses, you must never forget the fact that time means money. But your plan should be realistic as well. In order to finish the task at the earliest possible date, there is no sense in chalking out a schedule, which would mean that you would have to break your back in order to meet the deadline. Planning should help you avoid backbreaking deadlines.

## The Malcolm X Principle

Throughout my life I have heard and read so much about Malcolm X. Obviously, there are many things that he will be remembered for. But those who truly study Malcolm X go beyond what he said and begin to look at what he did and what made him the man he was and what led to his effectiveness.

And there is without shadow of a doubt a discipline that he exemplified that is the model for everyone wanting control over your life.

It is also interesting to find that the successful Millionaire Entrepreneurs that I interviewed displayed the same discipline to some degree. In fact many successful people in life adhere to this discipline.

Those who ignore this discipline seem to fail miserably at some point in their careers.

The discipline that Malcolm X exhibited and many successful entrepreneurs is the discipline of *punctuality*.

Being punctual, being where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there as promised, without fail, without excuses, as promised, all the time is *powerful*.

Malcolm X always appeared to be in a **dominant position**. Entrepreneurs who practice this same discipline of punctuality position themselves in a leveraged position. When you show respect for the time of others you compel them to respect your time.

## You Will Be Judged

Here is the big and powerful “secret of success” regarding this subject. Influential and successful people use this discipline to determine whom they will do business with or not do business with, whom they will help and whom they will not help.

You will be judged on your punctuality. Like it or not. Think about it, would you trust and conduct business with someone who was constantly tardy.

Successful people are very protective of their time, so if you appear to be a person that is going to become a LEECH to their time they will cut you off before you know it.

## Tardiness

It goes without saying that tardiness is a no-no in any professional establishment. Most of us cannot tolerate slowness. Sometimes even if the person who is taking a long time is a senior citizen and is incapable of making haste we produce a range of sounds to show our exasperation.

So we have so much impatience with others, how much patience will others have with us? I believe that there are three groups of people in this world. They are:

1. The people who always are on time
2. The people who make an honest effort but more often than once fail to be on time
3. The group of people who make a living by selling used toothpicks.

Actually there is no group like the third group. The people who really come in that group are the people who do not make any effort at all to be on time. Some would say that they cannot be considered as people at all and are better off selling used toothpicks. I won't go that far.

I used to find it very difficult to believe that there could actually be people who didn't care at all for time. But there are! I don't know about you, but I really believe that anyone who consciously waste their time and the time of others as well, are being criminal.

While the rest of us are struggling so hard to make the maximum use of the time that we have, there are people who don't care a damn about things like being late or making others wait.

I suppose most of us fit into the second category that is the group of people who do make an honest effort to be on time and do things on time but often fail mainly due to reasons beyond our control. So is there any way out of this? Of course there is and that is what we are going to talk about.

The first thing that we have to do is to develop a deep concern for the time of others. Of course we have the liberty to waste our time. (I consider even that wrong, but opinions may be different). But we have no right to waste the time of others. It is just very, very bad manners to keep a person waiting. It shows inconsideration and selfishness on our part.

Once you instill this thought deep into your mind there is a lesser chance that you will keep another person waiting because we all want other to think and speak good about us.

The second thing that you have to do is understand that if you are late for something that involves more than one person than the severity of the situation is raised several fold.

Like for instance you are late for a meeting that involves 12 people and they are waiting for you to begin the meeting.

You might be just five minutes late. That seems ok enough because five minutes is not such a big deal. But a crucial point that you may be missing out there is that it not just five minutes that is wasted. Since there are 12 people who are waiting for you, you are in effect wasting

**12 times 5, which is 60 minutes of productive time!**

Now that looks bad doesn't it, wasting one hour of productive work?

These two thoughts are enough for any normal person to make some haste and see that there are no unnecessary delays.

But still in the course of our daily life, we come across what we call emergencies. Unforeseen events take place, like your car might refuse to start, or some guests might walk in just when you are leaving. Hey, we are only human and catastrophes are bound to happen. Just see to it that others are not kept waiting because of a slight misfortune that you encountered.

## Conclusion

Well we could go on and on about the subject of Time Management. That would mean that we would be reading this report from now until eternity. That would not be good Time Management.

Time management is not such a big deal. It's just because we tend to take time for granted that everything becomes such a big mess.

We only get one life in this world so shouldn't we try to live it to the fullest.

***So where is the time to waste?***

Time management is essentially a part of, or should I say the result of self-management. If you are well organized and your life has a definite order then the chances are that time management will come naturally for you.

I would like to sum up everything that we have talked about in the following poem that I read.

Take time to work-  
It is the price of success  
Take time to think-  
It is the source of power  
Take time to play-  
It is the secret of perpetual youth  
Take time to read-  
It is the fountain of wisdom  
Take time to be friendly-  
It is the road to happiness  
Take time to love and be loved-  
It is the nourishment of the soul  
Take time to share-  
It is too short a life to be selfish  
Take time to laugh-  
It is the music of the heart  
Take time to dream-  
It is hitching your wagon to a star.

Anonymous