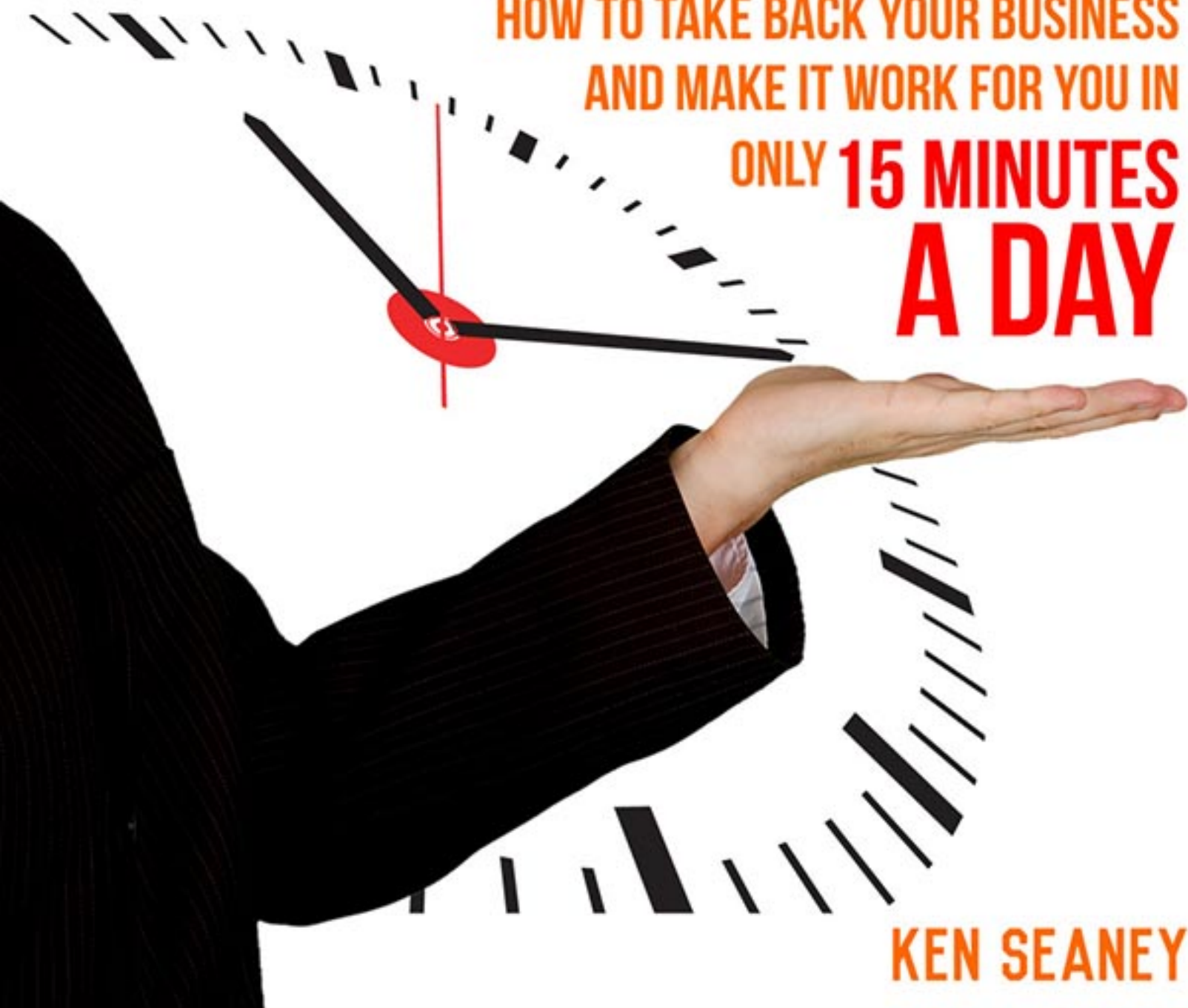


30-DAY TIME MANAGEMENT

EASY SOLUTIONS FOR THE BUSY ENTREPRENEUR & BUSINESS OWNER

HOW TO TAKE BACK YOUR BUSINESS
AND MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU IN

ONLY **15 MINUTES
A DAY**

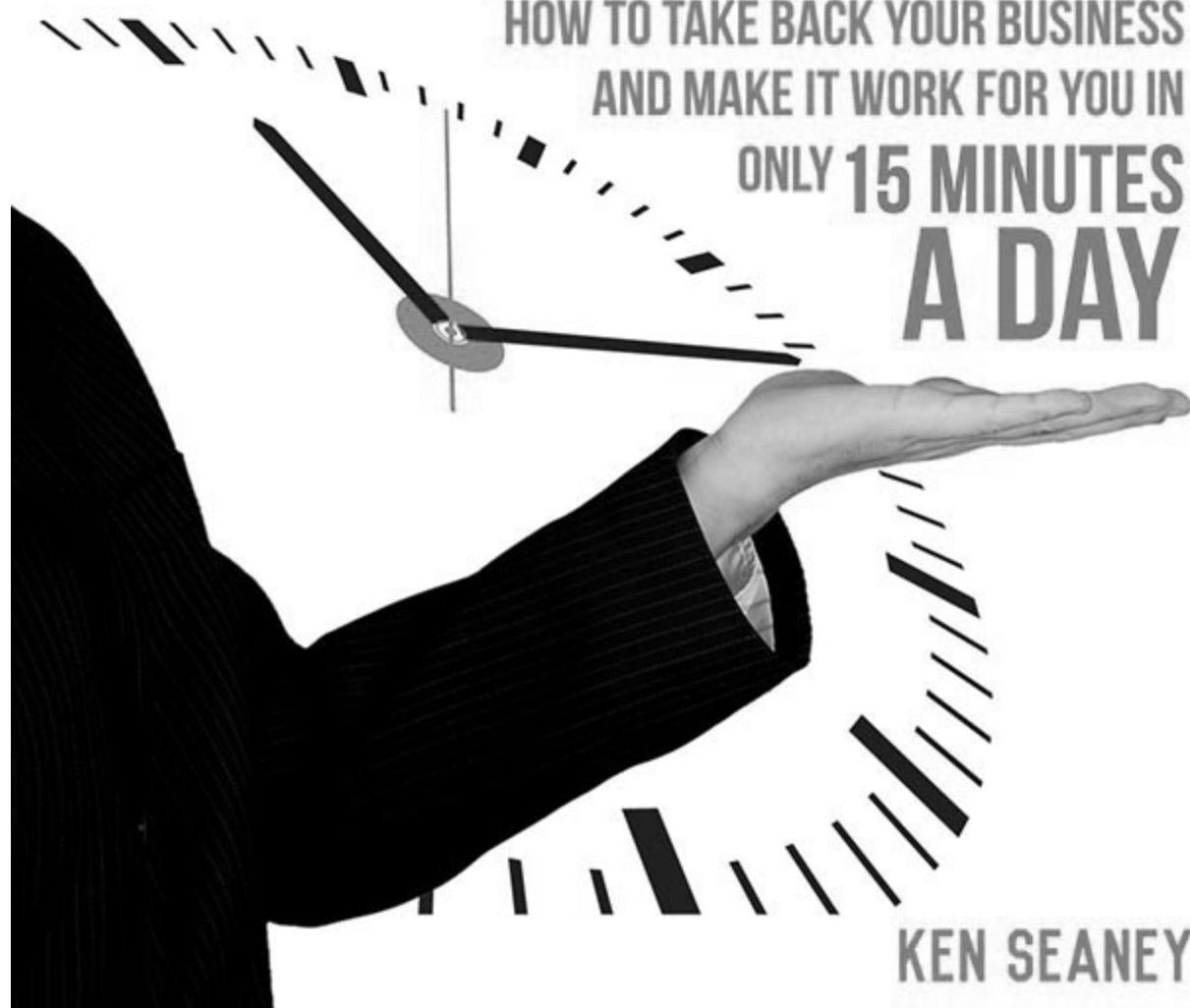


KEN SEANEY

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KEN SEANEY

30-Day Time Management

By Ken Seaney

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Introduction

As a self-employed small business owner or owner-operator, you have a huge dilemma: there are just not enough hours in the day. You are busy, busy, busy, and work very hard, but you never have enough time to get everything done. You are finding it harder and harder to get ahead or feel that you've got things under control with the business. Something has to change, but you are unsure what to do about it. The solution is pretty straightforward:

Either you work for your business or you make it work for you.

It's your choice, and it always has been. So you really need to decide that you need to change what you're currently doing starting today. Right now.

The good thing is that you're not alone. Many small business owners just like yourself are having troubles with managing their time and getting things done. And there is a solution to your problem that won't require a whole lot of work to implement and get results.

This book is not a list of neat tips and tricks to save time and do more. If you want that, there are plenty of *Top Ten Ways...* or *11 Weird Tricks...* lists out there on the Internet. If that's what you're looking for then this book isn't for you.

But if you're wanting to overhaul the way you look and operate your business, discover new ways of managing your time and make true and fundamental changes to your business and your life, then read on.

Successful time management is a complex problem and there is no single quick-fix or bandage to apply and call it done. It is an ongoing process. If you have an understanding of the problem and are motivated, you can make great progress in the short-term and long term.

But without sufficient understanding and motivation - the reason and purpose for why you want more time, this course would be no better than telling you that if you want rock hard abs to just do more sit-ups every day. While it's true, without a

real commitment, a strong reason to change, establishing the habits and doing the work every day, it's just not going to happen.

In addition, you'll need a specific plan with measurable results that works for your business and your unique circumstances.

If you do the exercises and follow the techniques, in 30 days you'll have a better mastery of your time and how to use it to your advantage. You'll be more efficient, productive and focused in both your business and personal life.

How is this going to happen?

- Short-term solutions: Things you can do right away
- Identifying your problems and your contributing factors
- Long-term solutions: Changing habits and perceptions
- Daily exercises and actions

Along the way you will also discover:

- Who is in charge of your business.
- Why you started your business and what it means to you.
- What "time management" or "have more time" means to you.
- Exactly what and who is most important to you in your life.
- Setting attainable goals and objectives.
- Delegating and leveraging your time.
- The importance of investing your time.

I know that time management is a real challenge for you and that it's something that you wish you had more control over. So think of how it will be for you when you have control of your business again. To have the ability to make the time to do the things that you want to do - in the business and in your personal life.

Without understanding what time management means to you - and then doing something about it today - you may be doomed to continue to be stressed, over-worked and frequently overwhelmed. You also run the risk of damage to your health, relationships, family and business.

I've seen people - no smarter than you are - transform their businesses through using these strategies. I also know that you can change, and that is essential that you start right away.

My Story

Not long ago I was in your same position. I was always stressed, worried, and downright unhappy because my business kept demanding more and more of my time. The harder I worked, the more work needed to be done. I would wake up at night with teeth clenched and fists balled up because of the pressure and stress. It had to stop. It had to change. I made a decision to get control of my time, stop being so “busy” and start getting the things that really mattered done. I also wanted to put the business in its place and make it work for me for a change.

It wasn't overnight change or success. A little forward motion became momentum, which led to renewed energy and excitement about the business. This resulted in leveraging that excitement and energy into making sound decisions and seizing opportunities that were all around me.

The business became a success, and I got what I wanted from it. Was it easy? No. Did everything work out perfectly? Absolutely not. But having a business is not for the faint of heart and you have to keep picking yourself up and moving on when obstacles are thrown your way. You know exactly what I mean.

Fast forward a few years. I sold my interest in my previous business to help other small business owners with their marketing and overall organization. Along the way, I asked them a lot of questions to determine their situations to help them solve and overcome their biggest organizational and marketing challenges.

But do you know what most of the businesses said that their number one complaint and challenge in their businesses was?

Time management and organization.

So I decided to write this course to help my clients and all of the many small businesses and entrepreneurs that could use some help in this critical area. The concepts and ideas here could be used by anyone, but I have written it to help the

people I know that really need it most: the self-employed “one-man-shows” where the owners are working very hard to do it all themselves.

It took years to learn and institute these principles, exercises and techniques that you are about to learn in a few weeks. Ways of looking at your life and business that put things in the proper perspective and insights into what you’re experiencing and what to do about it.

You have already made a positive move toward fixing this critical area of your business and personal life by taking action and getting this course. I commend you on your effort to change and encourage you to stick with it.

I have seen the techniques that you’re about to learn work wonders for business owners that felt *stuck*. Owners that just needed to tweak or change a few things to get the little bits of time back and begin to work on the business from the outside.

One of the benefits that I’ve noticed is that these same owners that were feeling a little *burned out* get a renewed energy and excitement about their business again - something that had lessened over the years of doing the same thing over and over again. Even if you apply just a few things from this book, you will be way better off than you are today. The approach and techniques are easy enough that anyone can learn and do them, by taking small steps at a time. Here’s a suggested timeframe and what we’ll cover in these lessons:

Week 1

Before You Start
Chapter One - Change Your View
Chapter Two - Who’s in Charge?
Chapter Three - Understanding Time

Week 3

Chapter Nine - Change Your Ways
Chapter Ten - Lose The Clutter & Noise
Chapter Eleven - Delegating
Chapter Twelve - Investing time

Week 2

Chapter Four - Change Your Mindset
Chapter Five - What is Most Important to You
Chapter Six - What Do You Want
Chapter Seven - Where You’re At
Chapter Eight - Use What You’ve Got

Week 4

Chapter Thirteen - Change Your Plan
Chapter Fourteen - Staying on track
Chapter Fifteen – More Advice for Success
Recommended Reading

While you can work through this at your own pace, I suggest small and manageable chunks to read and work on exercises. We are trying to establish new habits here, so consistent, daily effort is better than trying to do too much at once.

Week One

Before You Start

What You'll Need:

- A notepad or a printed copy of the *30-Day Time Management Workbook*
- Patience and honesty
- 15 minutes per day

Also, before we begin, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present this information and congratulate you on taking action toward understanding and managing your time. This will be a frank discussion on your business, your personal life, your habits and the choices you make daily. The reality is that what you're doing may not be working and something needs to change. And that's okay.

I will be asking questions and make you think about things. For instance: your reasons for having a business and what is important to you. Without these reasons - the *why*, the *who* and the *what* you are doing this for, all the information here is just words on a page. The *how* won't make a difference if you don't have sufficient *why* to take action. So be patient as you go through the material, as there is a method to the madness.

The next thing you will need is honesty. I will make a promise that I will be honest with you. I promise that I won't do anything but tell you how it is. But in return, you must be honest with yourself. You can lie to me all you want, but don't sabotage your chance of success by not being really, really honest with yourself.

You're probably pretty good at lying to yourself. You know all the tricks. You know how to manipulate, rationalize and cajole yourself to do (or not do) anything. But to get to the issue at hand - to manage your time better - you will have to be honest with the person you see in the mirror and overcome the uncomfortable

feelings when you don't like what you see. Then you'll need to get over it and do something about it. To take action.

If you can do that, I think that you'll do fine.

I'm pretty sure that a voice in your head will pipe in about now, telling you what bullshit this seems like or what a waste of money this was for you. "Nothing's gonna change" you say, "and this guy is full of it!" or, "I don't have the time for this!"

To make real change you will need to have the kind of brutal self-honesty that tells the cynical little voice in your head to "Just shut the hell up!" and take the daily and weekly steps toward making the changes that you know need to made. If you can commit to as little as fifteen minutes a day to work on these issues, you will make progress quickly.

Even if you don't feel like you have the time right now, just by going through the first few exercises should give you more time right off the bat to continue and make it through to the end of this course. I know you can do it, and I want to give you the insight and skills that will help you to face the fear of uncertainty and stare it down with confidence.

Keep in mind that listening to "that voice" in your head is what keeps you right where you are today. Mired in in comfortable confusion and fear to change things up a little. So do some of the exercises and give it a good effort. I think that once you realize that the little voice has no power over you, there's no telling what you can achieve if you put your mind to it.

And that pisses the little voice off.

So let's get to it.

Chapter One

Change Your View

Right now you may have a view of your business from the inside looking out. You are in there working away and doing what has to be done every day. You do the technical work and fulfill some of the other functions as needed.

The first step in making fundamental changes in the way you are operating your business is to get an overhead or outside view. The ability to “step outside” and look at it as a whole will help you immensely because it will allow you to:

- Better identify problem areas
- Prioritize them
- Break them down into smaller components
- Come up with solutions
- Remove obstacles
- Make objective decisions
- Assign tasks
- Do them

Imagine that you want to solve a jigsaw puzzle. Would you be able to solve it if you look at from the edge of the table? Of course not. How about if all of the pieces were piled up and you were in the middle of them or underneath them? This may be the view you have of your business right now.

Your best choice right now to make this happen is to free up enough time, enough space, or enough breathing room for you to be able to look at the business in a new way. That’s what we want to work on first.

Second, when you do look at your business as a whole, you need to view it with yourself removed or detached from the picture. You need to view it with no emotions or feeling or ego involved. *This is important.*

I realize that you are your business, and your business is you, but you have to remove yourself from it to make clear and unemotional choices about what needs to be done. The fact is that there are functions that need to be done that aren't being done right now. And there are decisions that are being made that are made from your view of being right in the middle of the puzzle pieces. Or under them.

So what are your problems or challenges right now? What are the things that have made it where you don't have enough time? This will be your first test in honesty with yourself.

Write down on a piece of paper (or in your workbook) some of the things that are taking up your time or keeping you from getting enough done. You will need to write down where your time "goes" each day or what is getting in your way.

Observe what you are doing during your work day and pay attention to the routine, rituals, habits and activities that are harming your business and effectiveness. Write them down.

Identify interruptions and distractions that you cannot directly control that could be lessened, avoided, or eliminated by being more proactive. Write them down, too. Some people would call this a *time audit* and it can be effective at bringing your unique distractions into the light so you can deal with them.

Chances are there are many factors that are contributing to your particular situation, but I just want you to identify and write down a few that relate to where you are right now. Here are a few things that you may identify as challenges that you're dealing with:

Situations: Traffic or road conditions, weather, job cancellations, crises, emergencies, rework, repairs.

Tasks & Functions: Paperwork, administrative functions, bookkeeping or accounting, jobs you hate to do, tasks you're not good at.

Habits & Routines: Excuses, rationalizing, procrastination, wrong priorities, piling on too much work, expectations, getting distracted, a lack of focus, disorganization,

self-discipline, accountability, mindset, self-defeating beliefs and actions, self-sabotage.

Distractions: Some phone calls, phone notifications, some email, web surfing, personal errands.

Interruptions: Unexpected and unimportant calls and texts, long phone calls, chit-chat, phone notifications.

States of mind: Stress, frustration, worry, fear, indecision, anger, guilt.

Did you notice that the majority of the examples above are habits? As much as you'd probably like to blame other things, the majority of your time issues may be related to your own habits and your own discipline.

So I think you would agree that part of time management is really about *self-management*. The habits and rituals that you have, plus the way you manage situations and make decisions all lead to a feeling that you could have done more, or that you need to do more.

So how do you develop the discipline and self-management needed to be more effective or get more accomplished in less time?

You will need to:

- Recognize that there is a problem, and that it is probably you.
- Stop blaming circumstances and situations as the cause of your problems.
- Make a conscious choice to make the changes needed to get it handled.
- Make a plan and real effort to follow it.
- Check yourself often and recognize progress. Make adjustments if needed.

We'll get into these further later on, but you need to think about a few simple things you can do immediately to work to free up a little bit of time, and do them. Pick ones that are within your power to do something about *right now*, and not the ones with complex or convoluted solutions.

If you can do that right away, you should find it possible have the time to begin your *first new habit* toward managing your time and increasing efficiency:

You need to make regular appointments with yourself.

You wear a lot of “hats” in your business. If you are used to wearing the disgruntled employee hat most of the time, now you need to put on the CEO hat. Lay out plans. Go over your ideas, listen to your employees input, and work together more to get things done. It’s good to schedule time with yourself as the CEO who “calls the shots” and discusses it with the manager or employee who needs to make it happen every day. Meaning you - the person who works in the business.

Exercise: Beginning today, schedule time to have a short meeting with yourself every day. Most things that can be accomplished with a scheduled and structured meeting with others can also be done with yourself. A time to go over things with yourself: as the boss and as the person who needs to do the work, with no calls, interruptions or distractions.

It may seem strange at first, but playing out these roles can be a useful trick to make things happen. Use this meeting to tackle some issues, solve problems and get stuff done. I know that this works, and you can continue this habit even when you have employees.

Really try make these meetings a priority, and practice during these times to try to look at your business from the overhead view, detached and unemotional about things. Just like with a puzzle, you may need to set some corners aside and work on the blue areas but eventually it will all fit together.

Chapter Two

Who's in Charge?

In having this business, you know that you have many roles to play: The boss, marketing person, salesman, customer service department, finance department, errand runner, worker, custodian, and chief mechanic. You have to do a lot and cover much ground to get things done every day. It can be a bit much sometimes, and anyone who has not had a business themselves will never quite understand.

They call this a small business, but I know that it doesn't seem small to you. It is the biggest thing in your life and it is always hungry for more of your precious time, attention and life energy.

But who is charge? Does your custodian do the sales or dictate jobs to the mechanic? Does your worker tell the boss what he is and is not going to do on a given day? Or does the boss run around and micromanage situations, or put out the biggest fires by assigning your people to do jobs they not qualified for and have no training in?

In the early days, you could probably manage it all. You had stars in your eyes, and did things as they needed to be done. It was all new and fun, and you had time and energy to get it all done.

Things are different now, *and you do what has to be done only when it absolutely has to be done*. You have found the functions and jobs that you don't like, aren't good at (or don't know how to do properly) and put them off as long as you can. In spite of doing that, there's *still* not enough time to get everything done properly anymore.

I'll ask it again. *Who is in charge around here? What is the Boss, The Founder, the Big Cheese and CEO of your company doing about it? Where is he (or she) at, anyway?*

Although it is small, your business needs to operate no differently than a large corporation or any other organization. Depending on how you envision or structure your business, it could (or should) include the following functions:

- Strategy
- Marketing
- Operations
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Research and Development

Each of the “departments” in your business are essential, and each one has separate goals and needs. They must all work together reasonably well to make things happen, but there has to be someone who has the final say. That is the job of the CEO - the person in charge of all of the departments. Someone who has the title and responsibility to make things happen.

If the boss is not doing the work of providing the vision and direction for the others to go by, the company will go nowhere. And without goals or targets for the departments to work toward, the bigger goals of the entire organization will be difficult to meet.

For the purpose of getting you to understand what we are going to cover in this course about time management, I will use the analogy of envisioning, designing and constructing a house.

Let’s say you want a new house built, so what will you do? As the person in charge, you will have to write down the features and ideas that you want in this new building. The size, the number of rooms, floors, and anything else you want included in your new dream house.

Then you’ll hand these ideas off to your architect who will work with you to figure out the plans and blueprint as to how it can be done to your specifications. The architect may need to have some understanding of the importance of the things you want included, what can be done with the budget at hand, and what may need to be put off for now.

After the plans are drawn up and approved, you will hand it off to the construction workers to actually do the building of it. They don't really need to have a deep understanding of the why's and purpose of the features in the blueprints, they just need a workable plan and do the work as shown. They don't need to interpret, change, modify the plan unless it is approved by you, the boss. Hell, they don't even have to like what you want to have built. They need to shut up and cut and hammer and *build*.

If they show up late, ignore the plans, or flat-out refuse to do the work, what will happen? Hopefully, the person in charge will either get them back on track or fire them and get someone who *will* come in every day, *do the work as shown* and get the job *done*.

But what if the boss just ignores the workers not following the plans and not doing their job? What if he acts like it isn't happening? If they don't stay on top of things and lets everyone do what they want?

Think about it.

You would end up broke, with an unfinished house that is unrecognizable from the plans you had drawn up. Stairs that go nowhere and doors that open to brick walls. Crooked windows and plumbing that doesn't match up to fixtures.

Always remember that you are The Boss, The Big Cheese and CEO of this company. Have bold, clear ideas for your architect, a well-defined plan of what you are building for your construction workers, and a crew that shows up, follows instructions and gets stuff done.

Exercise: Take a few minutes to try and figure out the structure of your business. What are the departments that need to work together? What are the departments that you have been neglecting (or possibly not even considered)? Try doing the following:

- Write out a simple list of the *departments* for the business.
- After each one, write a few of the important *functions* they must fulfill.

- To the left of each department, write a percentage of how much time, effort or attention you currently spend in each.
- Then put yourself - as the CEO - at the very top.

This can be valuable to give you an idea of where you're spending the most amount of time at within your business. Recognizing the actual percentages can lead to then increasing or decreasing your efforts in those areas as needed.

Chapter Three

Understanding Time

Time is relative and we all see it differently. Depending on our age, experiences, and present circumstances it passes by quickly or very, very slowly. We spend it, we save it, we waste it, remember it or just watch it. We have good times and we have bad times. But we all want more of it, or don't think we're given enough of it.

The fact is that we are all given the same amount of time:

1,440 minutes in a day, and 168 hours in a week. No more, no less.

We cannot *make* more time. It will come and go whether we like it or not. Then it's gone and we regret (emotion) or feel guilt (another emotion) or feel happy (still another emotion) or sad (wow, there's another one) or satisfied (these things are like ants around here!) that we made good use of it. That we used it *wisely*. That we really *spent it well*.

So we could say that it's what we accomplished in a given space, and how we perceive that, which ultimately determines the emotion we feel with how our time was used. And for most of us this usually results in reaching the conclusion that we need to manage it, control it, or just have more.

You could also say that the state we are in at the point when we look at what was accomplished could also influence how we perceive our effectiveness. If you are unhappy or tired when you look at all that wasn't done you will probably become unhappier.

And, in addition to the above craziness, studies have shown that if we dwell or concentrate on time and the scarcity of it, we will actually feel that we have less of it!

Huh?

Have you ever thought about how slowly time seemed to pass for you as a child? Or how you were never able to wait 'til Christmas morning or a birthday?

Think about more recently. Have you noticed how, for each year you've lived, they seem to go by faster than the last?

We have times during our days that the hours seem to drag on and others where it just “flies by.” There are times where you are on a roll, and at other times you can't seem to get anything accomplished. The difference is your perception at the moment, because time didn't change at all.

So let me get this straight for you:

You are using a ruler that is always changing to then measure your results and receive an emotion.

Depending on your perception at the time, if you did “enough” you get a good emotion or feeling - happiness or satisfaction. But if you *didn't* do “enough” you get an emotion you don't like as much: shame, guilt or regret. Maybe it's dissatisfaction or unhappiness with yourself.

And who decides what was “enough” and what reward you get? Well, it's the referee with the bad glasses in your own damn head, that's who. No one else is judging and deciding how much you should get done in a day.

And if that's not enough - even if you do perceive that you got “a lot” done once in a while, you can always look forward to the voice in your head to point out what's up ahead that still needs to get done. Just to make sure that happy and satisfied feeling doesn't last too long.

At this point, you may begin to wonder what all of this has to do with you and your problem of time management or productivity.

“Just tell me how to organize my crap and get more done,” or, “I don't have time for this!”

Gotcha.

So... what would you do if you did have more time? Right now. *Today*.

To find a solution to the problem, you must first define exactly what the problem is *for you* before you can do something about it. The phrase “time management”

is quite vague and could be used to cover a number of real and fixable challenges in your life and business. It may be one or two things, or it may be a combination of many.

- It may be that you need *self-management* or discipline to stay on task.
- It may be that you need *better organization*: better systems that save you time.
- It may be that you need to change some of your *habits and perceptions*.
- It may be that you need *better focus* or *critical thinking skills* to make good decisions.
- It could be you want a *better game plan*, or someone to lay it all out and tell you what to do.
- It could be all of the above.

Whatever the problems are, realize that your feeling of needing more time or that time management is a huge factor in your business may be just a symptom of what's really going on. And what you will want to do is use a logical, unemotional way of measuring a quantity or quality of work.

So let's jump in right away and start gathering information: Write down exactly what you think time management means to you today. If you're not sure what I'm asking, here are a few questions to get you thinking:

- Does it mean that you want to use your time more wisely?
- Do you want to do more in your workday?
- Does it mean that you want to have more free time for things you enjoy?

Think for a minute, then write a couple paragraphs on a notepad (or in your workbook) so you have some clarity. Good. So now we know what your definition of time management is and what you would do if you "just had more time" in your day or week.

You may have written that you wanted to get more done in a day: you want to get more done, to accomplish more stuff. You may have written that you would spend more time with those people who are most important to you. Maybe you

wrote that you'd like a long vacation, to travel. You may have written something else entirely. There are no wrong answers here, and don't feel selfish or lazy that you may want to have the ability to work less and play or travel more.

Since we have determined that the ruler is flawed and that it results in a positive or negative emotion, the place to start would be to decide how you can always measure accurately for yourself. This means taking a look at your own perception. Are the "glasses" that you're looking through letting you see things the way they really are, or are they a little distorted?

This can somewhat be accomplished by setting achievable goals and objectives, and keeping yourself to a realistic timetable to achieve them. You also need an understanding of what is a realistic and repeatable amount of work that can be completed and still make progress without stress or just working *harder* or *faster*.

If you know that it would make you happy to earn a certain amount, and work a certain amount and have more time for leisure and family, then you should be working toward that. Even if it means a reboot or restructuring of the business. You can do that.

It could be that you just need more jobs, or to get more done in a day to sustain and support your business and yourself. If this is the case, (which is not what we are covering here) you may need to rethink the business model and figure out how to clone yourself (train and hire help) to do more jobs in a day. Hopefully, with the skills learned from this course, you will have gained the time and clarity of thought to consider this possibility and then to take action on it if needed.

Tearing the business down and rebuilding it or moving it into the next phase - if that is your desire - is not necessarily a bad thing. It's just another thing that you need to plan out and do as the CEO of your little empire. You may need to renovate or rebuild systems, processes and procedures in your business few times over. It's not a failure that something needs to be torn town and rebuilt. That is progress. That is growth.

You know what it takes to earn or produce enough to *just get by*. It may be what you are doing right now.

You should also know, what *more than enough* means to you and what you need to earn to keep it all afloat. If you haven't, then you really should. But can you earn your "more than enough" - and free yourself up to work on the business, in addition to having more leisure time? Of course you can.

Let me ask another question: Why did you start this business, anyway? For myself and many people it is a combination of freedom, self-determination, and providing a good value to my clients with my products and services. You probably didn't start it so you could work long days and nights with generous helpings of stress and worry.

What's funny is that you may look at others that work a straight 9-to-5 (and free weekends!) and feel that it's somehow easier for them. Know that they are on the other side, working their mundane jobs and wishing they had the "freedom" of their own business.... It's all a matter of where you are sitting, I guess.

Exercise: Let's start another exercise and have you write a couple of paragraphs. It can be on the same page or you can start another one. Title it, "Why I Started My Business and What It Represents For Me," or "What My Business Means To Me." Keep it simple and use your own words. These notes are for you, so you don't worry about grammar, punctuation or usage. It can be full structured paragraphs or a bullet list - whatever works for you.

The idea here with these first two exercises is to make a benchmark on how you define time management and your view of why you started your business.

Daily Actions

Going forward to the next few days, you need to gather more information about what is going on. Pay close attention to what is happening each day as you are working. Start a list and jot down the things *that you can control* that are getting in your way. It could be interruptions (calls, texts, updates), distractions, or even just trying to do too much.

If you don't have time during the day, use your 15-minute appointment with yourself at the end of the day to write what got in your way each day. By the end of this week you'll have a pretty good idea what these little time-killers are. I have a feeling many of you could sit down right now and list most of them right now. If you can do that, good for you! Do it right now, then.

Don't write down and worry about the distractions and obstacles that you cannot control. We will get to those later on. Just concentrate on the ones you can control and what you can do each day next week to minimize or eliminate some of them.

Get into a habit of self-checking and analyzing while you work. Make a game out of it, where you are the boss who is figuring out unique and creative ways to solve and overcome this for your frustrated and overworked employee.

Challenge yourself to take on a few of them, and then - as the CEO of your company - come up with some creative ways to limit (or eliminate) them from your worker's day. Don't try to tackle all of them at once - just try to work on a couple at a time. You wouldn't go from sitting behind a desk every day and then go run a marathon, either. It takes training yourself a little bit at a time to build up the strength and stamina to make to the end.

We are trying to start a little glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel for you, and get a little momentum and energy going by taking a few small steps in the right direction. Don't worry, we'll get to the other stuff soon enough!

Here are a few examples of little things that could be nibbling away at your time every day, and some simple solutions to keep them under control.

EXAMPLES:	SOLUTIONS:
Checking email / email notifications	Check at predetermined times. At beginning of day and end of day. Turn off notifications whenever and wherever possible.
Disorganization, Unorganized work area or desk	If you find yourself looking for notes, tools, etc, take the time to think of a better way to keep necessary things handy and available.
Personal calls, emails, messages	Only emergency calls and emails should get through to you during your workday.
Web surfing / browsing	Do this only at the end of the day, and limit your time browsing or reading news.
Personal errands	Don't do personal errands on your "company time".
Bookkeeping or data entry; paperwork, invoicing and billing	If you are slow or not effective in these areas, consider hiring it out.
Trying to do too much in a day	Know your capacity. Don't pile on too much. Finish one task before starting another.

So... what are your big time-wasters and what can you do about them? Where are the little distractions and interruptions are keeping you from accomplishing more in your day? Find some of the little monsters that steal away the little bits of

time and interrupt you from your work, and write down simple solutions that you can do right now.

When you look at your situation, try to remove the emotions and feelings that you associate to each of your challenges. You may feel guilty about procrastinating. You may feel unhappiness or shame for not doing more or being able to figure it all out. You don't do anything about it because it causes you pain or discomfort.

The key - when looking at your current situation - is to be detached and unemotional about the habits and actions you're currently engaged in. Be objective and practical in your approach and analysis.

Where you do want to apply the strong emotions and feelings is in your personal motives for making the changes. Think about the way you will feel when this area or situation is handled. Imagine the happiness you'll experience when you have more time to spend with friends and family. Also, think of times you have made fundamental changes in habits and routines to accomplish something before. This will help to get you started.

Week Two

Chapter Four - Change Your Mindset

Okay, now you should be making some progress. I hope you are seeing a little light at the end of the tunnel, and that it is not a train heading right for you. Good.

In this section we're going to talk about states of mind. More specifically productive and nonproductive states of mind. Have you ever noticed that sometimes everything clicks and you just seem to get more done? Have you ever had a day where everything was going good and then something happens that then sends you into a tailspin? It's like the wind goes out of your sails.

You're in a nonproductive state, and suddenly now you're having a "bad day."

Sometimes, something may happen to pull you out of it. At other times you just wallow in it, shoulders slumped, head down, etc. So what's the difference, and do you really have a choice whether to be happy or sad? Is it within you power to be unproductive or productive?

The short answer is yes, *sometimes*. I believe that you can put yourself into a productive state where cylinders are firing and you are making good decisions. And when something comes up that changes the state it's up to you to recognize, identify that it's happening, and do what it takes to get back into the productive state as quickly as possible.

Things are going to happen that piss you off. That's a given. But it's your choice how long that you stay in that state. You can let it ruin your day or you can acknowledge and move on. When something knocks you down you can pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get back to work, or you can stay down.

What you need to do is figure out how you can get back to a creative and productive state of mind after something happens during your day. For myself, when something happens I try to stop, think about it, and then react differently than what my first instinct may be to do. You can always look at something differently if you try.

For example, you can get irritated that you're stuck in traffic and it's *blowing your whole schedule* or you can stop, and think about it a life giving you an opportunity to slow down and *breathe*. You could look at the situation and say, "The universe just gave me an opportunity think of ways to reach new clients!" Or, you could use the time to think about how much fun you'll have at the park this weekend. Better to do that than to swear and hit the steering wheel and think how much it all *sucks*.

Try to acknowledge what is going good, and try to be a little grateful. Practicing gratitude can be an easy way of changing your state back to one that is more positive and productive. Don't automatically gravitate toward the *negative*.

We have many, many, choices and opportunities each and every day, it's how we use them, leverage them or change them to our advantage that makes the difference. While you may believe that successful and productive people are naturally positive and upbeat, I would argue that they have chosen that as their mind-set because it is more profitable and effective than the alternative.

Please do not think that I am suggesting that "positive thinking" alone is always the answer, nor do I want to suggest that any kind of clinical depression can be cured simply by having happy thoughts. That is absurd and not my intention.

I've seen so many people (and clients) that seem to think that they are a victim of circumstance and have no control at all. They believe they are like a leaf in the wind and go in whichever direction that life blows at them. In reality, we all have more control of our own destiny than we may think. Others are not responsible for our happiness. Each of us is responsible for our own.

If there is one great lesson to take away from this book it would be for you to recognize when your automatic reaction to a particular situation is nonproductive and unprofitable for you and then stop and quickly change it to one that is more positive and productive. The better you can perfect this skill, the more you can get done and accomplish in a given day.

Your usual reactions to situations and circumstances was learned, crafted, and honed over time to be what it is today. But I venture to guess that you can change it over time if you make the effort.

Let me give you another example: When you are swamped with work - busy, busy, busy - you probably think of all the things you would do and would accomplish if you weren't so swamped.

On the other hand, when things aren't busy, when your phone isn't ringing, instead of doing those very things you switch into a mode of worry and fear. Worry that jobs won't come, customers won't call, fear that you can't pay the bills. And instead of seeing it as an opportunity and using that time productively, you move into a state of scarcity, lack or desperation that doesn't allow for good decisions.

You may find that you go into “crisis mode” and overreact, frantic and worried. But then it gets busy again and you're back to thinking about all the things you'd do to work on the business if you weren't so busy working in it.

Desperation is never a productive state, and is usually driven by fear. It can lead to making hasty moves or bad decisions. What I have found is that there is no quick-fix for today's lack of business. Whatever led to this point is the result of something that happened a while ago.

Excessive worrying is another state of mind that can keep you from making good decisions and choices during your day. Many times you will find that your mind automatically goes to all of the bad things that could happen *first*. Most of the time all of these negative things and results never even materialize. It's up to you to switch your thoughts to what positive, good result could come out of a situation instead of focusing on the negative

Wouldn't it be better to have the ability - to train yourself to recognize when these states are happening and on to react as you've always done and just see what happens? To take some deep breaths and think it through logically without reacting as you always do? I would suggest that you try this the next time something is thrown in your way - to make a point of stopping before reacting, pause and think, and then react differently just to see what happens.

There are many ways to help get you there or to get back on track when you notice that you're starting to slip into a negative and unproductive state of mind, but the biggest one of all is *having an awareness that it's happening and making the choice not to stay there*.

Now, what you may need to do to pull out of it is your own preference and will probably involve some self-awareness and self-checking to see what works for you. (You are probably much more skilled at getting yourself *into* non-productive states than getting out of them).

But in addition to having the awareness, there are other things that you can do to help from getting into an unproductive state to begin with.

- Make it a point to have more joy and satisfaction by helping others, giving and generally practicing more kindness.
- Regular exercise can help your stamina, energy, mood and to stay in a more resourceful and productive state.
- Proper nutrition and eating healthier is a fundamental that can also help your energy and decision-making.
- Shutting down the eternal, infernal, internal dialogue so you can get a good night's sleep. Some people have success with simple meditation or self-hypnosis recordings to help them with relaxation. Shut it down and get good rest.
- Participating in hobbies and finding new interests is another way to get yourself in a more resourceful state.
- Learning something new can be stimulating and exciting.
- Taking time off or a relaxing weekend trip is always great for recharging your batteries. Allow yourself to have a little time off to reset. Don't be a martyr.

These may all be great things to do after you are off work, but what about during your workday?

The point here is to realize that - even if you had unlimited time - it is very hard to make bold maneuvers and decisive actions in your business (and your life) that you need to make unless:

1. You are in a productive, positive state or mindset.
2. Have the energy to think clearly and to take decisive action.
3. Have the *proper motivation* to follow through.

Here is a big one that can really help maximize your energy:

Do the important things and work when you are most effective at them.

There is proof that not only are there a finite amount of good decisions that you can make in a given day, but that your ability to make them - and the effectiveness of them - decreases as your day goes on. It would stand to reason that if you have more energy and more stamina throughout your day that you will naturally increase the number, and the quality of those decisions that you need to make.

The time of day that you make critical choices, do your planning, and make business decisions may need to be altered or adjusted also. You wouldn't drive a car when you're tired, so why would you do it in your business?

For myself, I know that starting earlier and planning my day in the morning works for me. To get more done you may need to experiment and change your routine to see what is more effective. You could try taking a little time on a Sunday evening to plan out your week, or start regular work a little later on Mondays to get some big decisions and planning done.

Whatever you do or try, don't give up and keep exploring how you can innovate, improve and invigorate yourself and your business!

Exercises: Try to practice switching or changing your state of mind and focusing on being grateful this week. See if you notice any difference in how your day goes.

Also, think about what you will change in your daily routine to be more effective and practice doing that this week. What was the result? Was there any change in how things got done?

Chapter Five

What Is Most Important

You now know what time management means to you personally and how you'd use your time if you had more of it. You've also identified why you started your business and what it means to you. You should also have started making regular appointments with yourself to go over business matters. You have identified a few time-killers and have not only figured out easy solutions, but are committed to implementing them this week and saving a few little bits of time each day.

If not, you should go back and re-read the earlier chapters do the exercises. The idea is to get a little momentum and new habits going each week that should free you up to take on some new ideas, new concepts, new exercises and new habits.

Now we are going to start exploring what is most important to you in your life. Your personal happiness and life satisfaction. This is crucial to making big changes and strides in your growth. When you can identify clearly what motivates you and focus on that, you can easily change your habits and thinking. Otherwise, without the motivation you will risk going back to the same old habits and actions.

What motivates you, and what will motivate you to take action and change what you're doing today?

It is very important to know what is most important to you. But even more critical is *how you think about what's most important to you*. Many people would say that family, kids, or significant other is most important to them. But if you dig a little, I think that their personal happiness or satisfaction is behind this. It is almost automatic to say, "my kids are important to me" or "family is really important."

But what they may really be saying is, "I'm really happy when I provide things for my kids and get spend quality time with them," or, "Going on long drives across country with my wife makes me really happy."

Why does making someone else happy result in our own happiness? Because making a difference in other people's lives enriches our own lives. Because generosity and giving is part of human nature. Because people generally want to help other people.

So in business, it would seem that exceptional service and great customer relations is not only a sound business practice but also lends to your own personal happiness and satisfaction. This is great leverage to get you through a crappy day.

Maybe by always putting your customer's needs first it could help you in feeling better about your day with everything you are dealing with. Maybe by exceeding their needs you feel satisfied and have an exceptional day.

And just maybe you could take it one step further and treat customers or clients like family and make a real difference in their lives. You would see that it makes you happier as a result. And you would probably have customers for life. The kind that give raving reviews, referrals, and repeat business.

Research has also shown that trying new things or learning something new makes people just about as happy as practicing kindness and generosity. So while we grow and expand and improve ourselves it is just as important to try new things and learn new things for the business, too.

By aligning the things that are most important to you and making a commitment to make that an absolute priority - in addition to adopting new, positive habits that maximize your time and efforts you will be more equipped to put the business where it belongs and handle it accordingly.

And when you do spend the quality time with your family and friends you can leave work at work and really be there. And be quite a bit happier, to boot.

Exercise: So what's most important to you? It could be one single thing or person, or maybe a few things. Write a couple paragraphs on a new page that explains what is the most important thing or people in your life, and why they are important to you. Don't write too many, just write the ones that are really, really important to you.

Chapter Six

What Do You Want?

Just moving faster and doing more does not equate time management or mastery. Quite the opposite; it just adds stress and chaos to your day. Think of those guys that spin the plates on the little sticks. They run from one to another, trying to keep them all going. Don't be that guy. It is much better for you to finish a single task all the way through than to end your workday with numerous half-finished projects. You will have more satisfaction that a few things were done all of the way.

No matter how much you run around to keep all your plates spinning, as soon as you fix the wobbly one over there, two more are wobbling behind you.

You can work toward these things starting today if you put your mind to it, even if your business has never been operated in this way. Even if yesterday was organized chaos, and today wasn't much better.

If you have done the exercises up to now, you should be starting to get a different picture of your business and how it could be in the future. It may be vague, but don't give up. Even if you have an unfinished picture in your mind, all you need to is keep your head down and concentrate on the next two or three steps ahead of you. Just glance up once in a while to make sure you're heading in the right direction.

In this chapter we will start looking at how you want your business to be. What it would look like if it was *squared away* and running smoothly. What it would allow you to do if it was operating at top capacity. *What you want it to do for you.*

The idea here is that if you have a clear idea what you want it to look like - which should include enough time to get things done and enough time away to not go crazy - you can then begin to take the next few steps to get there. And then the next few, and the next few, and so on.

Remember that you have already determined who and what you are working for, and starting to identify and move obstacles in your way. If you've done your homework, you should have a little more time to work on the business. If not, either

go back and free up some time, or start a little earlier in the morning (or stay up a little later in the evening) to get this next part done. The idea is to experiment a little and try something different to figure out what is most effective.

We are going to explore and think about the possibilities. The “what-if’s” and “what-could-be’s” of your business and your life. Toss out the way it may be today and what it was yesterday, because that’s not what is important.

What you need to realize is that what you did yesterday has no bearing on what you can do today or accomplish tomorrow.

Soon you will get to the action steps of exactly what needs to be in place and how you can make it happen for each of the things you’d like to see in the business. But for now, just imagining them and getting it down on paper is enough.

Yes, you will need to dedicate, dictate and delegate to get where you want to be. You will also need to free your mind to think and come up with creative solutions to your challenges. It will take thought, work, and some trial-and-error. So what? What is the alternative? Without doing the work now, the chaos will continue and you’ll need to just get better at spinning those plates.

Author Stephen Covey, in his best-selling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People* discusses the idea that most of the things we need to do fall into four “quadrants”. This is very similar (or may be based on) the Eisenhower method of productivity. The four quadrants are:

- I. Urgent & Important (Necessities)
- II. Not Urgent But Important (Quality Productivity)
- III. Not Important But Urgent (Distractions)
- IV. Not Important & Not Urgent (Frivolous and Wasteful)

Here are examples of each so you get the idea of how tasks and activities are classified:

- Quadrant I: Crises and projects with deadlines;
- Quadrant II: Prevention, planning, organizing, improvement;
- Quadrant III: Some mail, email, meetings.

Quadrant IV: Web-surfing; some email and calls;

The idea is that most of your business and daily activities will neatly fall into one of these boxes. The majority of business owners spend too much time in I and III (or I, III, and IV), and they don't do enough activities, focus enough attention, or focus their efforts in Quadrant II - The not urgent, but important. His solution and advice is this:

- Manage and reduce crises and pressing problems.
- Focus and increase strategies and values. Prevent crises by planning.
- Avoid interruptions and busywork.
- Limit or eliminate the trivial and the wasteful.

In addition, if you work more in Quadrant II doing good planning and prevention, you can keep some activities from becoming Urgent & Important ("fires" and "emergencies") in the first place, so you don't have to drop everything or put other things off to get them handled.

Many activities and habits in business are very cyclical. It's up to you to break the cycle. To say, "I've had enough!" and stop doing those things that continue to harm the business, slow your momentum or strangle productivity.

If you understand the above and grasp the significance, try an experiment: As you think about your task list of things you did last week, including all the interruptions / distractions, the emergencies and crises, how many of those things were Quadrant I, III and IV activities? How much time or effort was spent on planning, prevention, improvement or strategies - the Quadrant IV - Not Urgent But Important Stuff?

This could be very helpful to you if you used these quadrants as a filter or way to prioritize your activities and tasks when planning what you will do in the future, too. The idea would be make a conscious effort to work towards increasing the Quadrant IV's and reducing the others. The positive result of doing more activities that fall into Quadrant IV will be increased discipline, control and balance in your life and business. Think of the impact of that both in and on your business.

Think about where you're at right now. Take a minute to think about how your business could be. Could it be operated in a way that problems were handled more easily and things went more smoothly? Of course it could.

So...what exactly do you want your business to be? What do you want your business to do for you and allow you to do today that it isn't doing? How would it look and operate if it was finished, done and operating at peak capacity and efficiency?

As the CEO and chief architect of this company, it's all up to you. It's your choice. I know you may have written down what you wanted with the company when you wrote your business plan. But when was the last time you addressed what's currently going on or where the company is going and actually put pen to paper and wrote it down? A lot has changed since you started the business and your understanding of how things work is very different now.

You need to take responsibility of where it is today, make peace with yesterday and move on. You know that things need to change and you're working on them. Figure it out and help the architect draw up the plans.

Don't beat yourself up over the "coulda, shoulda, and woulda's" in your business or life. If you are doing this on a regular basis, then just stop. Thoughts like this lead to nothing productive and just drain your energy and slow your momentum. So stop.

There are no medals for how hard you have worked, and nobody cares how much of a martyr you are for the business. In the words of Tom Waits, "come down off the cross; we could use the wood."

Instead, you should congratulate yourself that you're still here, the doors are open, and the bills are pretty much paid. Be grateful. Be proud of what you did get accomplished and don't waste time on thoughts of regret, guilt or shame over what did or didn't get done.

Okay, back to the work at hand. As the CEO you need to provide the vision for the company so the architect can make the blueprint or plans. So figure it out.

As a graphic artist, one of the things that would make me absolutely crazy was a client that would say, “I don’t know what I want but I’ll know when I see it.”

Great. So I need to sit here and throw darts in the dark until I magically hit on something that you like.

What’s even funnier is that at one time I used to actually try to do that. Now I would (politely) laugh and explain that I really need something more that I could work with: an example, a direction, even the smallest idea of what they are wanting. *Something.*

So again - as the CEO of your company - you need to have a clear vision, based on what is important to you of what you want it to do for you. What you want to get out of it. What it must provide for you that it just isn’t providing today.

Exercise: Write a few paragraphs on a new page about what you want to get from the company and where you’d like to take it going forward from now. What you’d like to see the company like in the next one to three years. Be ambitious, but realistic, too. Here is a very narrow, specific example:

“In the next 18 months the company will be stable and secure enough financially that I can shut down for a month and take a cruise to the Bahamas with the family so we can spend some time together this summer before Johnny goes off to college.”

Alternatively, you could make it a checklist of stuff you want to accomplish, as long as it includes why you’re doing it, and who you’re doing it for. As you’ve noticed, there still is no “how” it will happen. We will get to that a little later.

Don’t be afraid to be ambitious about your goals or objectives for the company. If you decide to make it happen and can make it “pencil out” by planning and execution, you can make big things happen.

Years ago, the decision was made (for many reasons) to move my company from California to Oregon in twelve months. The challenge was to move not only a printing facility with all of the machines and office stuff, but two families (with kids) and all that house stuff too. Moving away from friends and family to a town in

another state was a big thing. It was planned out and timelines had to be met, but it all happened. It was a very busy year and there were many, many things that needed to be accomplished.

There were many times it would have been easy to give up. To toss out the plan and keep doing the same old thing. That's when I went over the reasons for the move, remind myself the many benefits for my family and the business, and plowed forward.

Then one day a diesel truck arrived out front, we loaded it up and we moved. And it started with an idea that had important reasons that made it a priority which became a viable plan that was followed. I had made many lists. I had lists of lists of what needed to happen.

Think back to a time when you did something you didn't think you could do, something that was very hard for you personally, and how you overcame it. Remember you felt when you achieved or accomplished that thing. It felt good, didn't it? Of course it did.

Time management is a complex problem. It has many pieces that need to be considered, and many contributing factors that need to be addressed. But when you figure out what you want from your company - how you want it to work for you - it will be another piece of the puzzle. Soon you can begin to craft the new concept and ideas for the immediate future.

There are more pieces to put together before you can draw up the complete plan with your unique goals and objectives, but your initial statement (based on your answers to the previous exercises) could look something like this:

I am committed to better time management in my business every day, so that I will have much more time to spend with my family and friends. I will do this in the following ways, starting right now:

I realize now that not only am I the CEO of this company, I am also the architect and the construction worker that can and will make this happen.

You can create your own future, your own happiness, your own story. You just have to believe that you can, figure out how, and then just do it. I have heard it put this way: “If you want something, figure out the price you’re willing to pay. Then pay it”. It is a simple phrase, but ask yourself, “How much am I willing to pay to get what I want out of this company?” And then decide to plan it out, do the work, *and pay that price*.

If you start *paying the price* and doing the work, you will be quite happy with the results. Others will be astounded at how fast you seem to be moving and the changes you’re making. Some may even try and discourage you or convince you to stay where you’re at. Don’t listen to them, keep taking action every day. Who knows, maybe the next sound you hear outside will be your own diesel truck taking you to your new future.

Chapter Seven

Where You're at Today

There are probably many ways to survey and assess your current situation, but we're into keeping it simple so we will use a simple process to gather some information. You'll want to do this so we have a benchmark or a "spot on the map". You need to know where you're at before you can leave for your destination.

We'll work on the business first and then your personal situation. Be honest, focused and brief. These notes are for your reference anyway and I promise you won't be graded! I want you to acknowledge and recognize by writing down these things as the CEO of your company and life, so you can use it to work on the vision for your architect so he can make the plans that the construction worker follows and get this damn thing built and done.

Step 1. Write five positive things that are going well with the business. Areas that are under control and running smoothly.

Fill this out as best as you can and don't take a long time to jot them down. You are brainstorming here and need to think quickly and write what comes to mind. You know what's working and what isn't.

Step 2. Write the first three to five negative things with the business and some possible solutions. Things that are ongoing or chronic problems that you know that you need to fix.

Follow this by quickly assigning a priority number to them on the left in order of importance, with #1 being the highest priority. If time management and productivity is one of them, put it in there too.

Step 3. Next, write a few areas of improvement for the business. This could be sales and marketing, better training, or some other area that needs a little work. If you can't think of anything else, just move on to Step 4

Great job! Take a break and get ready to move on to some things in your personal and home life.

Step 4. Write at least five positive things that are going well in your personal life. Things, people and areas of your life that you're grateful for.

Step 5. Write the first three to five biggest areas of improvement you'd like to make, improve or fix in your personal life. They could be habits, situations, or even relationships that could use some work, attention or need to be fixed right away.

Just like before, quickly assign a priority number to them on the left in order of importance, with #1 being the highest priority. It's okay if time management is one of the areas that needs improvement in your personal life, too.

Take a look at all of the things you've written and get a feel for what it all means, and what it would mean if you were making some changes and improvements in all of these areas. Also take a minute to recognize what is going well in both your business and personal life and how that makes you feel when you see it all in one place.

Now you should be ready to compile it into some high priority goals and objectives that are important and necessary for you.

Step 6. Take two or three of your priority items from both Step 2 and Step 5 and write them below. You could also include something you wrote in Step 3. These are your most important goals and objectives for the next few weeks or months to be working on.

Step 7. If there are some other goals or objectives that you need really want to work on that didn't get listed into the above, write them here. These would be items or areas that aren't of the highest priority or necessity, but you'd like to work on or achieve for your personal satisfaction. Things you would really feel great about if they were finished, done and off the agenda.

You should now have a list of high priority items, plus your time management or productivity items that you have identified and determined to work on right away. You cannot get all of these things done at one time, but you can use this list as a reference as to what you need to do for the near future. We will break down some of these items into actionable steps that you can take in a later chapter.

Great job on making progress toward getting a handle on some business, personal and time management issues! Being impartial and honest about the good, bad and the ugly in our business and personal life is tough, but is necessary to bring these things out into the open and acknowledge all of it.

You also have a snapshot assessment of how you see things today. Think of it as a line in the sand to measure your progress and results in the future. There is still some work to do, and we will get to it. But in the meantime - since you have it all written down - try and think about how you want to start working on some next few days. Remember that this is your agenda and your priorities - not someone else's. It's a very good thing that you have identified, recognized and written it down.

Let's keep moving.

Sometimes you really need to get all of the stuff out of your head and put it down on paper.

I have heard some people call this a "mind dump." While I'm not sure that I like the term, the idea is very valid. If you could clear the jumbled array of deep thoughts, misguided ideas and weird schemes all out on paper to eventually sort, classify and arrange - that would be a really good asset and a skill to develop.

For example, you could write out all of your ideas and then figure out which department within your organization is responsible for executing it: Marketing & Sales, Operations, etc. Alternatively, you could start with the departments for your company and fill your ideas for them: a few areas of improvement, attention, or some goals and objectives for each one. And while you cannot do all of these things at once, by writing it down it will be more real and concrete to you. A tentative commitment to put on the agenda and consider for action at another time.

I used to have a ritual where I would go to the desert to the east of San Diego by myself to gather my thoughts and generally get my head together. I called it *going to the mountain* and it was very effective. I would camp at the base of a mountain where the Butterfield stagecoach line used to go through on the way west. Completely silent, there were no distractions, noise or people to get in my

way. I could plan things, make lists and sort out ideas and priorities that just wasn't possible back in the city.

It can really help to do this sometimes, especially if you are at a crossroads or dealing with some big decisions and critical circumstances. If this will help you sort things out for yourself, I would encourage you to do something similar because it really works. It can be a desert or beach, mountain or river - even a motel down the way - as long as you are isolated from the day-to-day distraction at home and business and prepared to get some quality work done without interruptions. It can take a little planning (don't put it off too long!) but everyone will understand that you need to get away and figure stuff out.

Chapter Eight

Use What You've Got

There is a very important mindset and skill to acquire and develop that we have not discussed yet that is absolutely critical to the owner-operator business owner. When I think of all the books, seminars and classes that I have studied, very few authors, instructors or business mentors even mention it:

Using what you've got right now. Making use of the resources, skills and unrealized potential of what is all around you.

Successful business people use the resources that they have at their fingertips right now. They use what's at their disposal and squeeze every bit out to get them where they want to be. They recognize that they have skills, ideas or ways to get things done right now. And they use them. They don't make excuses; they make stuff happen.

Yeah, there is always something they could learn or buy that might make it easier, but they focus on what they already have to just make it happen. Today. Right now. They work toward getting those other things when funds or time allows, but they do not let the lack of something keep them from taking action today. *Be resourceful and creative.*

Highly successful people are resourceful. They use resources: people, systems they have perfected, styles they developed and ways of hacking their own minds to get things accomplished. They *do* when others sit on the sidelines and wait until everything's *just right*.

Since you know the tricks your mind does to stop you from doing stuff, consider finding new ways of tricking yourself to get stuff done. That's called "getting out of your own way".

When you realize that you are usually the biggest obstacle that keeps you from getting something done, you can also decide to change it. When you practice and implement this skill, you will accomplish many great things. It's a no-brainer.

Suppose there are two people that want an apple pie.

Person A starts the process of what it would take to make a pie. They would need a recipe, apples, a few ingredients, dough, and an oven.

So they research apple pies and recipes. Reading and sorting until they finally decide on a great recipe that has a review with seven stars online. But the special apples needed don't grow in their area so they will need to go to that one market across town.

Also, the recipe calls for a special ingredient that makes the recipe perfect that needs to be ordered online and shipped which will take a week.

And, to top it all off, they remember that they don't own a glass pie pan, and lately the oven doesn't work properly or get hot enough. Frustrated, they decide that they just cannot have apple pie until they get all of these things gathered and taken care of first.

Meanwhile, *Person B* who wanted apple pie finds an easy recipe - one that requires ingredients they mostly have already. They get some apples from a neighbor and then make the dough. They don't have a nice pie pan so they use a cast-iron skillet. When they warm up the oven it's not working properly, so they ask another neighbor to borrow their oven.

And, within a couple of hours of deciding they wanted a pie, there is a hot apple pie being shared with all of the neighbors who helped out. Is it the "perfect pie" with seven-star review online? No. But it was a pie that could be made with the resources available and in spite of the challenge of a broken oven and no pie pan, *the pie still got made*.

I think you can see the point.

How many times have you talked yourself out of doing something that could really help your business? That you can't do this because you don't have that. Or that you make it so damn complicated and convoluted that you convince yourself that it just won't happen before you even start? Have you ever sat on the sidelines as an opportunity came up, passed you and disappeared on the horizon? Of course you have. Don't do that.

Use the resources skills and opportunities that you have in front of you right now. Right this second. Don't look around and think you need more money, more this, more of that before you can do the One Big Something that could help your business: a better computer, the latest gadget, a newer program, or whatever.

Use what you've got right now, what you can find nearby, and figure out what you can do with it right now to get you farther down the road. Closer to where you want to be.

There are umpteen ways to get things done, but you may focus on the one that is not possible, practical or doable - and using that to be your reason for not doing it.

Stop doing that. Just. Stop.

Focusing on lack is a momentum-killer, and pretending that you cannot do this until you have that. Don't think about all that you *don't* have. While you may not have as much as some, in the whole scheme of things - *you probably have more than many*. What are you doing with it?

If you stop moving your business forward, and take a good look around, I guarantee you this: There is someone breathing down your neck that is using the resources and skills that they have available to them to get stuff done. If you don't watch it, they may overtake your business and pass you by.

Exercise: Every day this week, look for opportunities to use the skill of using what you already have and making good use of it to get ahead. Write it down if that helps, but what's important is to be aware and recognize what's around you.

It may sound simple, but this can really have a big impact on your business and life.

Week Three

Chapter Nine

Change Your Ways

Change is hard.

Or that's what you've been led to believe. In fact, the actions needed to change are not that hard. Change is just a series of small movements that lead to a result. It's the *getting started* - doing the first tiny thing - that can be tough for many people. This comes from within a person and can be categorized as **resistance**.

Fighting resistance is what's hard. Overcoming it. Pushing through it. Eliminating it.

There are many reasons and factors that cause your resistance. You can have fears and doubts. It could be a self-confidence issue. It could be self-sabotage or pain avoidance. It can hide as insecurity, and it can lead to excuses. But no matter the form or the cause, it does accomplish one great thing: making entirely possible that you don't even get started. Therefore, you don't make the small movements that lead to the end result that you really wanted.

I would challenge you to fight resistance - in all of its forms - whenever possible. Recognize it and don't give it the power to keep you from doing what you know you *need* to do, what you know you *must* do to get what you want out of your business and your life.

With the new ways of looking at things, the new ways you are doing things is can be scary and uncomfortable. I get that. To step out of your "comfort zone" and make hard choices, decisions and plans will be uncomfortable, and that's the point. If it's uncomfortable and a little scary than it's probably good for you. It's resistance whispering in your ear, "Don't do this... it's a scary and uncomfortable!"

The hardest thing about getting up in the morning when the alarm clock goes off is pulling back the covers, throwing your legs over the side of the bed and getting up.

Think about that when you start adding new habits to your routine, or even eliminating old ones. Just decide to do it (or stop doing it) and see what happens. Pretty soon that is part of the routine, your daily ritual. And I bet it's not nearly as uncomfortable and scary as you thought it would be.

Find what truly motivates you and use that to get things done. Chances are that it's pain, pleasure, or pain avoidance that gets you to take action. So use that knowledge to help you get your time management under control.

The fear of the unknown or fear of change is a very big thing for many people. It's good to shake things up and get out of your comfort zone as much as possible. I tell my clients that if it feels uncomfortable then it's probably worth looking at a little closer. If there is positive outcome and low-risk, then they should probably do it.

I am not suggesting that you make risky or crazy moves in your life or business, but to sit in one place and not change, or grow, or learn new or even try is a sure recipe for disaster and could lead to stagnation and unhappiness. To talk yourself out of things before they have even happened is a real shame. What you're doing isn't working, and a break in the routine is probably what you need to set you back on your heels a bit and take notice.

Starting New Habits and Routines

There is a school of thought that says it takes four to six weeks to set a new habit to where it is automatic. There are others that say it only takes a minute. All I know is that it only takes a minute to make the decision to make a change. Then the hardest part is to get started each time it needs to be done.

For example, the hardest thing about getting out of bed in the morning is to put your feet to the ground and start moving. Once you do, you go through the processes and steps it takes to take a shower, get ready, make coffee or breakfast, start the car, and so on.

Why can't a new, positive habit or routine be any less automatic than say, taking a shower? There are specific steps that need to be completed in a certain order to accomplish it. You've done it so many times that you don't even think of the steps consciously anymore, they have become automatic to you. You don't ponder them; you just do them.

You wouldn't stand in the shower and have an internal dialogue about turning on the water, convincing yourself it's not worth it or it's too much trouble, would you? Or argue that you shouldn't use soap, to leave the water running, or not use a towel when you're finished... right?

The point here is that you know what needs to be done with your business and your time. You know that you know. But you continue to make conscious decisions every day not to do the important things... and it's time that you stop.

Stop doing the trivial and unproductive, and do the things that matter most. Don't make the things you need to do any bigger, harder or more complicated than they really are. Try to get to the point where they become automatic and unconscious actions that you just do because they need to be done. Nothing more, nothing less.

Make the things that need to happen a high priority or necessity. Let's say that your car breaks down. You can't just ignore it, can you? You need to get it fixed or you won't be able to get around. Even though you may not have the extra money to spend, it's an inconvenience to get it to the shop and you have to find alternate transportation it is a necessity and a priority to have it fixed. You make the arrangements, have a few days of discomfort and you get the vehicle back. You find a way and you make it happen.

How is this any different with your business? Your business is your vehicle to getting what you want out of your life, isn't it? If that's the case then you want to put good tires on it, fill it with good fuel and keep it maintained and running in tip-top condition, right?

Chapter Ten

Lose the Clutter & Noise

Many people say that they want to be more productive, *but what does that really mean?*

In trying to tackle the broad subject of productivity - something that goes hand in hand with time management - you need to break it down internally for yourself. Determine whether you are trying to:

- a) Get more tasks and work done in a given timeframe.
- b) Be better at identifying priorities.
- c) Be more thorough and effective when doing the tasks that you need to do.
- d) Reduce or eliminate the distractions that get in your way.

As with many things, you may look at the points above and think that you want all of it. That's okay, with learning some new skills and some practice it is entirely possible. We are making progress here but we still need more information.

What exactly are distractions and interruptions that you are wanting to eliminate from your day?

For some it might be email, text messages and the constant interruption of your mobile devices. Social media updates and notifications mixed with important messages and things related to your work. Remember that your inbox is usually someone else's' agenda and not yours.

You may be interrupted by robocalls and telemarketing calls mixed in with actual clients wanting to hire you. Unless you figure out a creative way to filter out the BS and only get reached for the most important stuff, there is only so much you can do.

For myself, I know that it is a detriment to my accomplishing a lot of things if I spend time on the phone chatting with clients. *I will talk all damn day.* In my last business we took a lot of questions by phone and people placed orders for printing. While these calls were important and I was effective at sales and customer service,

other stuff that I needed to do wasn't getting done. So I had to set it up where my calls were screened by someone else in the office first, which helped somewhat. I also set a time limit on calls so I could get back to what I was doing. Even with doing both of those things, a simple, quick call could derail my thought process and the distraction would take away from what I had been doing.

Some business owners see their walk-in customers as a distraction, too. They are in the middle of working on another customer's job and someone walks in and monopolizes their time. While you shouldn't ignore the phone or messages and walk-in customers (they are the ones that give you money!) you can try to limit the effect of them as distractions and interruptions in your workflow, too.

But the most effective thing I did for myself, was to simply get into the office earlier - before the calls and interruptions began. I did my most important work first with no distractions or interruptions at all. Depending on how your business is, this may not be entirely effective (or possible) for you. I know that. But I encourage you at least be open to the idea of trying different things and exploring possibilities to find what works best for you.

If you have a service-based business, chances are you are not going to people's homes at 6AM to perform your service. You probably have appointments between the normal hours of say, 8AM and 4PM or something like that. Think about if you started at 6AM to get important business tasks and some critical thinking and planning done and out of the way first, and then went on with your regular schedule and routine.

If you complete something really important right off the bat - even if the rest of the day went haywire and into crisis-mode – that *Very Important Thing* you've put off for a while will be done, and no one can take it from you. You would be able to say to yourself, "Even though everything didn't go the way I wanted today, at least I accomplished that *Very Important Thing!*"

And you'd feel pretty good when you have a week or month or year of many *Very Important Things* completed, wouldn't you? And think about how much further down the road you would be.

It could be that you have been putting all of these that *Very Important Things* at the end of your day - a day full of stress and crisis - and then you put it off again, because it's easy to do after a long day. Or maybe you do buckle down and get to it, but it's harder and you are less effective because you're mentally and physically exhausted.

But if you are like many people, you put it off until tomorrow. Or later in the week because something came up that needed attention. Maybe you do actually get to the that *Very Important Thing* and make some progress on something important for the business before the weekend, which is great. Unfortunately, you have five or six *Very Important Things* that need work and now you may feel like you're behind, which adds to your stress (or guilt that you didn't get more done). And the cycle continues.

By starting your day and working on or completing important tasks and projects first, you can accomplish a lot and make progress quickly. Hopefully by the end of your work week you will have accomplished some good things to help your business grow. And you have helped expand, streamline, organize and are moving closer to your vision and destination.

I am sure that your little voice is saying that you can't do that because of this or because of that. You have to get up and make the kids lunch and get them dressed and fed and off to school, and on, and on, and on. Tell the voice to, "Shut up!" and get up an hour earlier than usual. Get your coffee going and work an hour on getting some super-important stuff done and then get the kids off to school. Done.

The point here is what you are doing is not working right now, and there are always more efficient and more effective ways to do things. Always. You may just be too overworked or overloaded to consider them, or them, but there is always a way to take something further and make something better. You may have to try some new things and they may feel uncomfortable. That's good. Learn to accept that uncomfortable can be good. Learn that comfortable and familiar means that you are not growing or changing.

It's easy to make excuses and find reasons not to do just about anything in your life. *The hard work is finding a way to just get it done.* When I encounter an obstacle, I consider it a personal challenge that been handed to me and I need to find a way over it, under it, to the sides, or just find a way to break it and get it out of my way.

Have you ever seen the things they put on horses to keep them from seeing things? Many times we are so busy in our business that we wear blinders, too, and cannot fully see everything the way it is (or the way it could be). Take off your blinders. Find a way to make just one important thing happen each and every day.

What are your *Very Important Things* that you should be trying to do each day? They should be the strategic and important things - the steps that have to happen - to move closer to your visions and goals. This could be thinking and planning for a new system or process. Strategic planning for your company's future. Figuring out how to expand or provide new services.

It is not doing busywork. It is not paying bills or doing any automatic processes that can be done at any time. It is not doing crisis management or emergency repairs. It is the stuff that you may think about while you are doing the busywork. The stuff you told yourself you wanted to do if you "just had more time." The stuff that will get your business "down the road" and a little closer to your dreams.

The reality is that you have the time, and you always have. You have just chosen to do other things. I'm not picking on you or saying you're wrong. I am saying that from now on, make time for the very important things and do a little each and every workday. Make it another one of your priorities.

Exercise: Make a list of a few of your own *Very Important Things* that need to be done right now. Pick three or five that can happen, and work on them first thing in the morning each day this week, *before* you start your usual work.

Remember that productivity is not necessarily getting more things done in a day. It is consistently getting the important things done every day. The list of important things will never go away, so get over it. Just chip away them and see how far it takes you.

You may be thinking, “Okay, so now you want me to add another hour to my day *and* make regular fifteen minute appointments with myself? Now I have even less time!”

You could do this a couple of different ways: You could try your new morning habit of working on one important thing every day right after your meetings with yourself.

Personally, I would do the meetings with myself at the end of the day to go over what did and did not get accomplished, and then plan out the next day. That way I would know what needs to happen when I get up and would sleep better. I would wrap up the day, put a bow on it and get a good night’s rest.

But you must find out and do what works for you. Do what is most effective and what you can learn to do consistently every single day. If that doesn’t work, you can try something else ‘til you find what’s good for you.

If you are finding that as the CEO that your manager (meaning you) is not getting this stuff done, then you have a staffing/employee problem. Imagine if you gave an employee a direct order and they refused to do it. Would you tolerate that? Of course not. It’s not good business and starts a bad precedent. Hold them accountable for their actions or inactions. Don’t tolerate the behavior and tell ‘em to get it done.

A Word About Accountability

You may have started your business to be free of a boss, but there's always a boss and there's always a worker. The worker is accountable to their boss or manager; the boss is accountable to their boss or manager; the manager is accountable to the owner, etc.

If you have to, then fire Mr. Do Nothing and hire Mr. Get Stuff Done. (While you cannot technically fire yourself, you can threaten to do it without too much repercussion of a wrongful termination lawsuit. He [or she] had it coming).

If you know that you are having some problems with accountability, maybe you should consider hiring a business coach. Think about it as a business fitness trainer that can help you dig deep, do more than you thought you could, and stay on track with your goals. It can be a good thing - and well worth the money spent - if you are more likely to knock down those barriers and help you quickly and easily get the big results you want.

Chapter Eleven

Delegating

You probably have tasks and functions that you have on a list and mean to get to, but they still aren't getting them done or handled. You keep putting them off, again and again.

You are committed to getting the result: it's on the list, it needs to happen and you do want it done. But maybe is not a high enough priority for you. Maybe you don't have the skills or budget for it right now. It's not an emergency, either. And it sits there on your list.

Consider this: Is your time and effort better spent doing other high-level work and much more profitable activities? Is there someone who can do it, or some way you can get the result without actually doing it yourself? If the answer is "no," then move it up on the priority list and then do it.

Even to get the business where it is today you needed to get help in some areas and in some ways. You really can't do it all yourself anymore. So really think about the idea of leveraging your time by passing off some lower-level work or functions that need to be completed that can be done by others at a lower rate than what your time is worth. As long as you paying that person less than what your per-hour time is worth, you are doing OK. If the function or job costs you more than your hourly worth, then you should take part of a day off or do it on a slow day.

Jim needs to get his customer data into his database. He has been meaning to do this, but keeps writing things up by hand and filing them in a folder. He needs to get this handled but there are more important things in front of him right now.

So Jim has a few choices:

- a) Keep putting it off and waiting for the day that he magically has the time and can get it caught up.
- b) Chip away at it on nights and weekends until it's done, or
- c) Pay someone who types faster than himself to enter the data.

If Jim takes a hard look at this logically and breaks it down, he might find a good reason or motivation to move it up on his priority list. So he starts to figure it out:

He has 150 customers that he needs to enter the data for.

He types pretty slow and he can enter one customer's information in about ten minutes.

His working time when he's on a job is worth \$65 per hour.

Someone that does data entry is 3x faster than Jim and will do it for \$15 per hour. Or maybe they look at the project and say they will enter it all for \$125

So if he does the work himself it will take two days straight. If they were work days where he usually brings in an average of \$300-\$500 a day, the job will cost Jim \$600-\$1000. If he does it for an hour each night, it will take three weeks. If he does it himself over a weekend, it will take an entire weekend to complete.

Or, he can drop the invoices to the data entry person on Monday and the job will be done in 2-3 days and cost him \$125-\$150. For the cost of two hours of his labor, an entire year's customer data would be done.

Now this may be a simplistic way of looking at things, and you can always twist the numbers any way you want, but I think that you get the idea. In this example, Jim's time is worth way more than the cost of delegating and paying someone else to do it.

It could be that Jim just hates data entry and finds it tedious, and that's the motivation to get it done by hiring it out. That would work and the job would be done, too.

But it also could be that Jim has a problem with letting go, or letting someone else do things he knows he can do better. He knows how he wants it done and he's the best at it. This is a whole different problem and one he may want to work on.

I can tell you from having many employees and subcontractors over the years, that it will never, ever, ever get done as well or exactly the way that you would do it (even if you had the time to do it all).

Get over it. If the job or function got done and you were freed up to do higher-level work, then you should be happy. *Be thrilled.* Trust me on this one.

What you need to realize in business that you need to always strive for success and not perfection. It doesn't need to be perfect. If you are a creative-type like myself, it won't ever be perfect anyway. Be okay with it.

In doing graphic design and working with clients, I realized quickly that *my satisfaction was not required to finish a job and get paid.* I am not suggesting that I did crappy work for people, what I'm saying is there was always something else that could have been done, another way to do this, a layout that could have included that....

But all of that really doesn't matter, does it?

To me, a design job is a success if it is:

- Completed to the requirements of the client.
- Finished in the time specified, and for the agreed price or rate, and
- The client is thrilled with the finished work.

What *I* think of how it was done, or what *could have been done* just doesn't matter in the whole scheme of things. Call it pride, call it ego, call it perfectionism, call it whatever you want. But if you require perfection and believe that no one can do anything to your standards or up to the level that you require, you will be continually unhappy, stressed and disappointed. Get over it, move on, and get back to the really important things in your business or life. Be okay with delegating to get stuff done.

Even if it costs a little more to the business to pay out for something, at least the project, job or task got done and you were free to do something else that will pay off - literally or figuratively - in the short term or long term. After the dollars are spent maybe you will have a little more peace of mind and satisfaction that it's off the list and finally done.

And that is worth something, too.

Exercise: List some tasks or objectives that you have had hanging around for a while right now that could be handled by someone else. Figure out what it's worth to you to have them done. Try to budget a little money or effort to throw at some of them and see what happens. See if there are some things that you keep meaning to do yourself, but aren't set up, have training or supplies to get done. If it's going to be a while or take time away from other goals, hand it off to someone for now.

Chapter Twelve

Investing Time

In this chapter we are going to explore the concept of investing your time. While I briefly mentioned it early in this book, it is important to reconsider now and look into it further.

In understanding time investment, I invite you to think of it in terms similar to money. What are the differences in spending money, saving money and investing money?

Well, first off you cannot save time like you can save money. You cannot put it in a jar or into an account and use it later. It comes and goes whether you use it wisely or frivolously. You don't really have to work for it to use it, and you don't earn time, either. It just goes by.

Another thing is that we are given an unknown quantity of time. Some of us will get more, some will be given much less. Many people's time here will be cut too short, and others may seem to outlive their usefulness. It's the way it is.

Can you invest time? You can invest your money - meaning you put it into something and expect to receive something in return at a future date. And, yes, you can (and should) invest time into something and expect some return later on. You won't receive more time, but hopefully by making proper investments you will receive something beneficial and worthwhile in the future. Investments should always grow.

You have invested time in your business, expecting a return of some kind, haven't you? Of course you have. You worked hard and invested a lot on the business to get it where it is today. Make sure your efforts have potential of a dividend over the long-term.

No investment you make with money would have an immediate result or instant return, and neither should you expect it for investments of your time.

What are some things that you can do to invest your time - inside and outside of your work - that will yield the returns expected and the rewards deserved? You

are doing one right now: investing time to learn and grow your business through knowledge and learning. Of course there are many more and it would be redundant for me to go over what you probably already know: In addition to education and learning, investing time in relationships, and personal connections, health, your children, and so on.

But just like an investment portfolio, it should be reviewed regularly to see how it is performing. How often do you look at the investments that are working and the ones that aren't? How often are you critical enough to reduce the poor performers and switch efforts to the better or more important ones? I think one needs to review their time investment portfolio periodically and make adjustments.

Recognize and develop good networks and good business relationships.

If there are negative business relationships around you, then get rid of them. Nothing personal, it's just good business. Don't be dramatic or burn any bridges, but you are not required to tolerate it, either. This means any vendor, subcontractor any other provider of goods and services to your company that seems to always lag or let you down, misses deadlines or makes excuses for poor work is, "outta here!"

Invest time in yourself.

Never stop learning new skills, or practicing the ones you have. Whether it's for work or for your personal life, practice something daily to get better at it. Be okay with yourself but strive to be better.

Invest in business relationships, networks, and making new connections.

Meet new people. Join a business group. Ask questions and listen. You don't know it all and can learn much from others' experiences and expertise. Be friendly and you'd be surprised at how many people will be willing to help you with a problem or issue you're experiencing.

Invest more in the personal relationships you already have.

It's quantity and not just quality. Increase the actual length or amount of time with the ones that are most important to you.

Invest time in helping others.

Charity, volunteering, teaching something to others. We learn and form better connections in our brains if we have to simplify techniques and show them to someone. That's good stuff.

Invest time in things that have value to you and that are really important.

In addition to the above, I would also add to not be afraid to “un-invest” your time or efforts into the things that are not working. If too much technology is making your life confusing, then simplify things. Reduce clutter and things.

Invest in returning some balance in your life.

I have noticed a trend lately of young people learning traditional skills and recognizing the value of handmade and hand-built things. I think they are trying to find balance in a world of instant gratification and mass technology by also embracing simpler things made with their hands, too. They love their mobile tablet *and* blacksmithing, or they love their smartphone *and* knitting. That's cool.

By seeking out ways to balance yourself, you can minimize or reduce the effects of the ever-busy and hectic world we live in today. This may explain the popularity of yoga and forms of meditation these days: they are looking for balance in their frantic lives.

Other ways of finding balance in your own life could include making it a point to laugh more, play a board game with friends, even going camping or on a nice hike. Simplifying and reducing the number of things we have and collect can help, too.

In conclusion, we are bombarded daily with instant notifications of every bad news story or event as it's happening, the-sky-is-falling predictions and a gloomy outlook for the future. None of it is positive, uplifting, or has any redeeming value whatsoever. On the contrary, it runs the gamut of depressing to downright scary. Make an effort to recognize when there's too much negative around you and do something about it. Be aware of what's going on in the world, but don't be dragged down by all the bad news, either.

Although it goes back to something we have already covered, finding balance between your work and your home life may be the most important form of balance to work on. Separate them as much as you can and don't bring your work home

with you too often, which can be hard if you work from home! Don't be a martyr for the business, and know when it's appropriate to turn out the lights and call it a day.

Exercise: Write down some ideas of some things that you would like to invest your time in starting right now that would have a positive impact in your life and others. Make this one of your priorities and include some of them in your plan in the next chapter.

Week Four

Chapter Thirteen

Change Your Plan

Well, you've made it this far... great job! You've done some exercises and learned a few things. But now it's time to write *your* plan. Your story. Your vision.

You should now be able to write out what you'd like to accomplish in the near future with your business and why you are doing it. So here's where "the rubber meets the road" and you write out what you plan to accomplish in the next six months to a year, and what steps you are going to take to start moving toward your destination.

By now you should by now have a pretty good idea of some of the things you need to improve, too. With the exercises and activities that we've covered, you should be able to "step outside" of the business a little, observe and break down the inner working a little bit easier. You should understand your roles and the importance of keeping them separated and distinct. And if not, maybe you should invest a little more time and re-read, take a couple more notes and absorb some of the concepts here. It's okay.

I'm not bailing out on you now, and I will be here to help you write it all out. After all, you are the CEO and I am just the friendly advisor. As such, I cannot do the work any more than a personal trainer can lift the weights for you.

As the CEO of the company you should be able now, with some direction and a little encouragement, write the First Edition of your personal plan for success. You provide the vision and idea to the architect to come up with the plans and blueprint to deliver to the construction workers to build the company into something better than it is today. Hopefully with a stronger foundation and a direction for the future.

The reason to get this written down is to make it more concrete and real than the random thoughts in your head. In addition, I encourage you to consider writing

your company core values, mission statement and your company policies and procedures onto your agenda.

It is important that you have defined set of values that you or your employees can follow and grasp onto. If you (and they) know exactly what the values and principles of your company are it will help guide the daily decisions that need to be made.

It's much easier to tell yourself or a client, "Sorry, I can't do that because it's against company policy" when you *actually have a written policy*.

Do not begin to think that what you will soon be writing will be set in stone. Just like a book that was written a few years ago, you may find the need to rewrite and revise your plans as needed. This is not only expected, but is highly encouraged.

How are you going to put all of the knowledge learned into a simple plan that you can follow? It took you a long time to get here, but this should be quite easy for you to write and implement now.

Don't make lists and look at them as stuff that needs to get done all at once. Think of them as notes and ideas that may be changed revised, renegotiated and overruled by you - the boss and CEO of this company. For me, most of the time it's on a list so that I just don't flat-out forget something. I call these "broad strokes" and they are big ideas and concepts that I will flesh out details on later.

If you're not sure where to start, how to begin, or it all seems too convoluted and overwhelming... I understand. And sympathize. But it's your business and your life and you need to pick a direction and just start moving toward it.

Start simply with some small goals and some habits that need to change, and just work on them. When you see that you can make big changes with little steps, then you can get a little more ambitious and bold. I know there was a time when you completed something that you didn't think you could do, right? Keep it simple and do the obvious.

Goals and Objectives

Do you know the difference between goals and objectives? Even if you think you do, I will explain the definitions so it's a little easier to understand and apply.

Both goals and objectives can have steps and parts that need to be completed along the way, but the main difference is:

Goals are intangible. They do not have a well-defined end or completion. An example is the statement, "I want to be better at cooking." Better than what? When would you know you are "better" at it? Is it after you have learned to make french toast, or when you can whip up a great Hollandaise sauce?

Objectives are much more tangible, and finite. "I want to learn to make clam chowder this week" or "I want to learn to make fresh pasta noodles on Friday." You would know it was completed when you made noodles on Friday, right?

In relation to our discussion, your goal may be to manage your time, but an objective would be the specifics what you will do to get closer to managing your time. It has to be something pretty concrete and finite and can be measured. This means there is a way to tell when it is done.

Example: *My goal is to work less in the business so that I have more time to work on the business. I will accomplish this by:*

- *Getting one important thing done each day, before I start my regular work*
- *Answering email only at the beginning and end of my day*
- *Limiting all calls to less than 7 minutes*
- *Removing social media and text notifications from my phone*
- *Regular 15-minute appointments with myself at the end of each work-day*

These are specific, ongoing good actions, but would there ever be a day when you thought you were done with it? Not really. It goes on and on. The result may

be that you are freeing up the time by doing number 1 through 5, but it a continuing and ongoing process.

If your goal is to work less and spend more time with family, write that in your statement, followed by specific steps you are taking that will support and allow it. It may be that a goal statement is followed by some “broad stroke” things that would need to happen. Then you can take those - one at a time, or maybe a few at a time - and break them into action step and things you can do each day. Some will be ongoing, like a change in habits, and others will be handled and done (like a better machine, or time-saving process).

Vague: Another goal of mine is to have more time to spend with my family.

Specific: My objective is to take a two-week trip to Arizona with my family this summer.

I will do this by August 15th by completing the following:

Working one Saturday a month and save the extra income

Letting my clients know I will be available on Saturdays

Booking the flights in July

Not scheduling work for the last two weeks of August

Buy sunscreen

You get the idea, and I think that you can see the difference. If it is too vague and not specific enough, it is a little hard to picture when finished or completed. My point here is to have ideas and concepts and things that you may want to do, but that you also refine it with action steps to make it more concrete, real, achievable, with a timeline. Something that can be enforced by the boss to keep the worker on task.

Writing Your Plan:

By using the information that you have learned, exercises you've completed and written in your workbook, it should be fairly easy to complete all of this quickly.

To begin, we will take a single goal from each of three areas: time management, business and personal and break them down into small steps that you can take action on right away. After you understand and have done the process, it should be quite simple to prioritize more personal and business goals and do the same with them.

Here is a brief overview:

- A statement and commitment to your definition of time management that included your reasons and motivation.
- A goal you've identified as an effective way to better time management.
- The next three steps to complete it.
- Obstacles keeping you from doing those next three steps.

For your business and personal goals or high priority items the format will be similar.

- A single high-priority item from your list.
- The results or benefits of completing it.
- The next three steps to completion.
- Obstacles keeping you from doing those next three steps.

Time Management & Productivity

Start by writing a brief statement of your commitment to your unique definition of time management, and your reasons (motivation) based on the exercises you've already completed: the results and benefits of managing your time better, how it would impact your life, or how you would benefit. This can be a single paragraph or a few, as long as it summarizes your *whats* and your *whys*.

1a. What time management means to me:

Make sure that you include how it will feel, and what you will do when you have more free time to do what you have determined is very important to you.

Follow your statement with highest priority, most impactful thing (that you are not already working on) you can do to get more time or productivity out of your workday. It could be as simple as a habit, or a solution that has many steps.

1b. The way I will achieve effective time management and productivity is by:

1c. The very next three small steps necessary to complete the first milestone are:

1d. The things that are keeping me from completing these three small steps are:

If you wrote something here, these are obstacles keeping you from completing your action items and thereby reaching your goal. Don't go on or write any more until you can get these resolved.

If you didn't write anything, those three action steps should be on your to-do list right away. Write them on there with a deadline (to make them objectives) for yourself and get them done! If there are many steps to achieve what you wrote in 1b, add more to your weekly task list after completing the others.

If your goal has key steps that each have a number of steps, your basic outline would be slightly different and look like this:

A statement and commitment to your definition of time management that included your reasons and motivation.

- A goal you've identified as an effective way to better time management.
- Key steps or milestones to complete it.
- The next three steps to complete the first milestone.
- Obstacles keeping you from doing those next three steps.

The difference is that there is another step: key steps or milestones

Okay, now we will do the same thing for a business or personal goal you have. This should be a high priority item from your workbook. Copy an item from the list you made in Chapter Seven to the box below, and then add what the result or benefit would be for yourself or the company when it is completed. This can be a single sentence or a few bullet points as long as it summarizes your reasons and motivation.

What is the high priority business or personal goal?

2a. What are the main benefits or result of completing this?

2b. What are the very next steps that I need take?

2c. What is keeping me from taking these steps right now?

If you wrote in some items that need to be done in 2c, these are obstacles that must be removed, and they are your absolute highest priority. These obstacles are keeping you from completing your action items and thereby reaching your goal. Don't go on until you can get these resolved.

If you *didn't* write any obstacles keeping you from taking the next three steps, those should be on your to-do list right away. Put them on your agenda with a deadline or due date (to make them objectives) for yourself and make a commitment to get them done this week.

As before, if there are more than three steps needed to complete something only add the *next* steps to your weekly task list after completing the others.

Just like with the time management outline, if your business or personal goals have milestones that have their own steps, your outline would look like:

A single high-priority item from your list.

The motivation, results or benefits of completing it.

The key steps or milestones to reach the goal

The next three steps to complete a milestone.

Obstacles keeping you from doing those next three steps.

Wash, rinse, and repeat as needed. You can do the same kind of breakdown for any of the business or personal goals that you may have. As you get better at doing this, you can go ahead and figure out all of the steps for new goals and objectives - but for now - don't overwhelm yourself with details.

Don't try to do too much at once. Work on very few goals at a time until you are used to handling more, or when you free up blocks of time to work on more. Take

it slow, and be happy with little victories and small steps. Besides, with the work you did earlier you have nice list that should keep you busy for quite a long time.

Always keep a few small steps on your daily or weekly to-do list. This way you are always making little progress. Steady and consistent progress is much better for your chance of getting your goals and objectives completed. Remember that it is more like marathon and not a sprint.

Try to delegate when possible to work on multiple fronts at once. Then all you need to do is manage and make decisions or approve work that others are doing and can get much more accomplished.

Always be aware about what you are trying to accomplish. You are drafting a plan that is going to give you free time to do the things you love to do with the ones you love to do things with.

In summary - for each project or goal that you have - you need to write a simple statement of what you want to achieve, followed by a good motivator - the who or why and the benefits of achieving it. Insert some emotions or feelings of how it will feel when completed if needed.

Break your projects down into their *simplest form* and *only concentrate on what is right in front of you at any one time*: the next few little steps with a deadline. Transfer these to your daily or weekly to do list and start working on them right away. Don't make it complex or set it up with all sorts of things that need to happen before you start - this is resistance and must be avoided at all costs. By starting and doing something small you will defeat resistance and gain momentum.

Some things may not need a statement or a motivator - it's up to you to decide if they do. But if the goal has a high chance of not being completed or getting put off (again), you must find *a reason why it needs to be done* soon, or *what will happen if you don't get it done*. Sometimes the motivator is simply that it's been hanging around too long on your list and you're sick of it hanging around unfinished. That's okay, too... whatever works.

Getting projects done that you have “been meaning to get to” for a long time is great for the momentum and energy to complete other things you have put off or neglected.

Once you have followed this method of getting stuff done it will get easier to decide to do something and just jump in and start doing the next steps toward getting there, but make sure you are still writing out your broad goals and plans to have something to work from and measure your success.

Your Plan

If you did all of the exercises, and followed it for the last few weeks, you have designed and written a custom blueprint and game plan for the near future. You have identified and discovered a whole lot about your company and yourself, including:

- Your thoughts and ideas of what time management means to you.
- You now make regular appointments with yourself to go over things.
- You’ve made progress to identify and eliminate the little things that get in your way.
- You have identified the essential parts of your company and what their functions are.
- You have written about what your company means to you and have identified what you’d like to get out of the business.
- You have learned to change your mindset and the impact of a positive mental state.
- You have learned to be grateful for the things you have.
- You have identified what’s most important in your life.
- You have learned to how to make a self-assessment of your business and personal life.
- You have explored creative solutions to your problems and challenges.
- You have listed your highest priority goals and objectives.
- You now know the importance of using resources you already have.
- You have started new, positive routines and habits.
- You know the importance of investing your time.

You have also learned how to take a goal or project and break it down to lots of small steps, remove obstacles and make actionable items that can be done quickly and easily.

Lastly, you have made a concrete list of real objectives to work on right away that will positively impact your time management, business and personal life.

Wow! That's a lot of stuff that you have done up to this point. But just like any tool, it only works if you continue to use it. Make sure you put these things into practice often and make the habits become natural and easy for you keep doing. Some exercises may work better than others that you tried, and that's okay. Build on what works for you and change what doesn't.

Since you have already have the habit, I encourage you to continue to write your ideas, concepts, and plans whenever you can. Getting these things written down will help you understand them for your own use, but it will also be easier to articulate them to others when needed for training or delegating tasks.

Optional (but important) actions to do for your business:

Writing out a basic list of core values. Write the things your company believes in or stands for. This one is first because it's the attitude of the company and what is important to it as a whole. This can help in hiring like-minded individuals that "get" your company or when going into joint ventures or cooperative partnerships. This can also be particularly useful to have when making decisions for the company.

Writing a company mission statement. This is usually a one-sentence statement that sums up the company vision such as, "A better world through kindness to animals." I don't find this very useful, but some people do like to have a short phrase or statement that defines their vision.

Writing a simple set of company policies. Usually enforced for legal issues or recourse; something you can fall back on when needed. They can include codes

of conduct, benefits, entitlements, etc. but should include terms of payment, forms of payment, and clarification of guarantees or warranties.

Writing a simple operations manual for the procedures in your business. How you do things or and expect them to be done. It will help understand the process you use to complete functions and make improvements (even for yourself). Plus, it will help when you hire employees. Write job descriptions that include specific functions under that title - even if you do it all yourself right now.

Your best chance of success lies in your continued ability to free up enough time to do the high-level thinking needed to formulate your thought and concepts, get them written down and implement them.

You as the CEO and boss:

Know your vision, goals and why they are important to you and the company. Always make it crystal-clear to yourself and any others what you're doing, why, and exactly what you are trying to build.

You as the Architect:

Design the specific plans for the worker to follow. Write the steps and the deadlines.

You as the Construction Worker:

Follow the steps and hold yourself accountable for completing them on time with no excuses.

There is a saying that goes, "there's no easy way to eat an elephant," and it can be especially true for the busy small business owner. You can start at the tail or you can start at the head. You can plan all day long, deciding the technique and best method to do it.

But at the end of the day you just need to dive in and start eating it.

Chapter Fourteen

Staying On Track

In making any kind of fundamental changes to your personal or business life, there is always the threat of sliding back to the old ways of doing things. Your best hope in overcoming this is to constantly remind yourself why you are doing these things and who or what you are doing it for. What it will mean to you when you accomplish them - or even make some progress toward your unique aspirations.

Keep having regular meetings with yourself to check in and check progress on how you are doing. Be proud of what you have accomplished and keep trying to be better each day, each week. Acknowledge your progress and the positive steps you've taken, and then go back to work.

Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't make the progress you wanted on a certain timeline. You should not be discouraged by little setbacks. If you get a little sidetracked or even stall out once sometimes... it's perfectly natural, and bound to happen. Pick yourself up, and get back on the path. It's more than many are doing.

Know that your vision or goals will not turn out exactly as planned on paper, either. It doesn't work that way. Priorities change, necessities change, and circumstances change. But that's not a reason or excuse to not to strive and try to build a better business and life for yourself. Some things may go better than expected, some not as well. But it's better than sitting where you're at and settling for less than you deserve.

Another thing to consider is that people - no smarter or richer or more important than yourself - have built very successful businesses. I'm not talking about overnight successes - the business "lottery winners" where everything blew up and made them instantly rich. I am talking about the many, many quietly successful people that worked hard, learned and adapted, reset and tried again until they got it right. Be like that.

Along the way there may be people in your life that do not like the more aggressive, assertive or focused person that you are becoming. They may not like that you are not sitting still. That you are working hard at getting stuff done. This is also

perfectly natural, and you will have to find a way of handling this internally for yourself.

Sometimes, people will react to your changes because it scares them or possibly points out how much they are not getting done in their lives or their business. Like somehow your successes are spotlighting their failures. It happens.

Don't be disappointed or surprised if people don't want to hear about all the good things you're doing to improve yourself or your business. That's okay, too. Be humble, stay focused on your path, and maybe by your example they may come around. When they see your results, *the proof* of the progress you've made, they may be interested to find out your secret.

And most of importantly of all, **DON'T EVER GIVE UP!**

Even if you pick up a couple tips from this book which leads to you to searching out other skills and information to improve yourself, I will be satisfied that I have done what was intended all along. I'll say again that I do not have all of the answers.

Hopefully, I have asked you some good questions. I would hope that you have found the answers to that fit your particular situation and circumstance. If not, then it's up to you stop, think about it, and to ask yourself some good, hard questions from time to time. You will - with practice - develop the skill and ability to ask questions and find the answers that work best for you.

Sometimes being in business for yourself can be a real roller-coaster. If that's the case for you, then try look for the fun in it, be a little brave *and just enjoy the ride*. The pressure (whether real or imagined), the many responsibilities, and the amount stamina required is more than the basic working class person will ever know... but it should still be *fun*, too.

Being self-employed and building a business can be very rewarding - if you can imagine how to make it work for you, set it up that way and what it takes to make it happen. Make it a goal that your business will add to the value of your life as well as others' lives. It's your business and you are the CEO, so go out there and make

it happen. Soon you can look at what you accomplished, say to yourself, “I built that!” and smile.

But there’s always more to be done and the phone is ringing again...

Now get to work.

Chapter Fifteen

More Advice for Success

Here are a few more things that may help you in your journey toward better time management, productivity and a rewarding, successful business. Some of these are pretty basic and fundamental, but others may be something for you to look into and work on.

Always engage in profitable activities. This does not mean that every action always results in more dollars coming in, but that the activity improves or benefits the company (or yourself) in some other way. If it doesn't add value to the company or your services, either don't do it or don't put too much effort or energy into it.

Know your limitations. Understanding your natural strengths and weaknesses may seem hard, but being objective about what you're good at and doing those things is critical to becoming really effective. If you're not suited for a certain activity it will either frustrate you or be done poorly. Surround yourself with people (sub-contractors, joint partners, and vendors) that are good at what they do.

Know your capacity. By understanding the (average) amount of quality work that can be completed in a given day or week, you can then determine if that supports your business (and personal) financial goals. Don't pile on too much or take on work with good intentions that may not be possible to complete in a reasonable amount of time.

Learn to say, "No." This is an important one. You want the work and want to please others - but do not be in the habit of taking jobs that have unrealistic deadlines or unrealistic expectations. It's never worth it. Bad planning on their part should not become an automatic emergency on your part.

Lose the problem clients. This goes along with number 4 above. Don't feel the need to keep problem customers that are unreasonable or have unrealistic expectations. The 80/20 rule says that you have 20% of you customers taking up 80%

of your time. Concentrate on getting more customers like the other 80% and make them really happy with your products and services.

Know your customers. Understand and know them inside and out. Work to not meet their needs or expectations, but to exceed them. Market and sell to your services them directly in a more personal way *because you understand them*.

Know your worth. When you know what your time is worth to your business, you can then decide if some jobs or functions can be subcontracted or delegated to someone whose rate is less. Then you can do more profitable and important things.

Be cautious. Know that there may be a better way to get things accomplished, but look for evidence and proof. Look around for solutions that will be effective in the long-term. Easy and quick fixes may not be the answer. Research, study and look for reviews and testimonials that something works. While there are always better mousetraps, they may not always be best for *you*.

Be flexible. Even though you may have made concrete plans or efforts into an area or activity, it's ok to cut losses and stop doing it. While there is a time in business to be hard-headed, don't be so stubborn that you drive off a cliff.

Be proactive. Try to anticipate and head off potential problems before they start. In doing so, you can minimize or eliminate emergencies or crises before they happen. While this requires a little looking ahead or foresight, it is always better to fix the pipe before it bursts and causes a flood, right?

Be focused. Don't let little things deter you from the path of getting what you want accomplished. While it is inevitable that you will get waylaid, it is imperative that you get back to what you were doing as fast as possible.

Be generous. Help someone that may be struggling with *their* business. Or, donate your time, services or have your company sponsor a worthwhile cause that will make you proud to be involved with.

Be active. Don't be tempted to "sit on your laurels" too long in business. Keep improving, innovating and growing. There is always a "further" or "better." Always.

Keep asking yourself (and answering!) good questions and constantly improving the way you do business. I believe some of the qualities you perfect and acquire in your business will be useful in many other areas of your life, and vice versa.

I also encourage you to continue striving, continue learning and continue working toward your goals of time management and productivity. If this material has helped you in some way, please let me know. And if you'd like to learn more about a custom program for your business, 1-on-1 coaching or other business services - please don't hesitate to contact me. I'd love to hear from you!

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Additional Resources & Reading

Here is a list of recommended reading for you to look into when you get the chance. Some of these may be books that you've read, and others may be new to you.

The E-Myth Revisited by Michael E. Gerber.

The War of Art by Steven Pressfield.

7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey.

Unlimited Power by Tony Robbins.

The 80/20 Principle by Richard Koch.

PROJECT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

SECTION I

1. Project Name or Description	How urgent is the project?
2. What is the purpose or intent?	
3. What is the outcome? or What will it look like when completed and finished?	
4. List the main benefits of completing this:	
a.	e.
b.	f.
c.	g.
d.	h.
5. What is the result if you don't do this?	

SECTION II

Do you have the resources to apply or time to invest to complete this?	Y	N
Do you have the special skills or training you'll need to complete this?	Y	N
Is this project profitable for yourself or the company?	Y	N

If you answered NO to any of the above, you should not proceed with this until you do have the resources, skills and know that it is profitable or advantageous to do this.

SECTION III

List the major steps, milestones or checkpoints here:	
1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

SECTION IV

List three or four small steps, to complete the first milestone or checkpoint above.	List any obstacles that are keeping you from completing the small steps to the left.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Transfer obstacles (if any) or your small steps to a to-do or task list. Include a due by date or deadline to make it an objective (action item). Take action and start working these right away.

When completed, break down each **major step** into **smaller steps**, **obstacles** to be removed and **adding a deadline** to make them into action items for your task list.

Print this page only if a project has many parts or sections to complete.

SECTION IV

List three or four small steps, to complete the next milestone or checkpoint above.	List any obstacles that are keeping you from completing the small steps to the left.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

SECTION IV

List three or four small steps, to complete the next milestone or checkpoint above.	List any obstacles that are keeping you from completing the small steps to the left.
1.	
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List three or four small steps, to complete the next milestone or checkpoint above.	List any obstacles that are keeping you from completing the small steps to the left.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Marketing Fitness Questionnaire

Online Marketing (local)	Y	N
1. Does your website clearly state your company's USP (Unique Selling Proposition)?		
2. Does your site provide benefits and solutions to the visitor or is it focused on you only?		
3. Is your website mobile-friendly (views properly on desktop, tablet and smartphone)?		
4. Does each page of your site have a single focused objective?		
5. Does your Contact Us page capture visitors' names and email addresses?		
6. Do you have a Google business page with photos and links to your website?		
7. Do you have an auto-pilot system to capture and follow up with leads on your site?		
8. Does your site convey trust and authority to your visitors?		
9. Are you using multiple online strategies to generate targeted, local visitors?		
10. Are you taking advantage of social media opportunities like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google+?		
11. Do you know the weight and importance of online company reviews, star ratings, and testimonials for your business?		
12. If you visited your website, would you want to do business with your company?		
For every "yes" give yourself 1 point; for every "no" answer, give yourself zero. TOTAL:		

If you scored 11-12 points, congratulations! You're doing things well. If you scored 9-10 points, you are only missing a few things that could make your business more profitable. If you scored 5-8 points, you're not alone – many businesses in your area fall into this area. With some improvements you can have a major advantage in your area. If you scored less than 5 points, you should consider making major improvements to your site to increase sales and profits *immediately*. Give us a call today to help.

General Marketing	Y	N
1. Are you spending between 6-12% of your annual sales on marketing and promotion?		
2. Are you happy with the results of your current marketing efforts?		
3. Do you know the top three ways that your customers want to be contacted?		
4. Do you have a customer profile or avatar that represents the perfect target customer?		
5. Do you have a detailed, written marketing plan with ways to measure results?		
6. Do you split-test your ads and marketing materials whenever possible?		
7. Do you ever follow up or reach out to customers after the sale or service?		
8. Do you actively seek referrals, testimonials and reviews from happy customers?		
For every "yes" give yourself 1 point; for every "no" answer, give yourself zero. TOTAL:		

If you scored 7-8 points, congratulations! You're doing things right! If you scored 5-6 points, you only need to work on a couple things. If you scored less than 5 points, you're not alone! With some effort and attention in these areas you could have a major advantage over many businesses. Consider making the improvements needed to enjoy repeat business, increase your overall sales and profits easily. Give us a call today for a free consultation – we're here to help!