

"The Magic of Creating Time"

Sometimes there were days when I turned around, the sun was setting and I wondered where the day had gone. Almost as if I had just woken up, nothing seemed to have gotten done and if anything, there were even more projects to complete. I thought it was a curse that plagued me as I worked for myself from home, not having enough time in the day and feeling disappointed each evening as I had not achieved the goals I had set out to complete each morning.

For a long time I thought I was the only one experiencing these same issues, too much to do and too little time, then as I asked around, I learned that this was not the case....that there were others with the same problem. However, I was not interested in listening to others complain about their lack of time, I wanted the answers on how to change this situation; I wanted to know how to create more time in my days. So I changed my focus and began asking specifically those individuals who seemed to have a handle on managing their business while taking care of themselves and their families at the same time. From these individuals I learned a lot of valuable lessons, which I now share with others. It is very interesting to watch others as they set out to conquer the same time-management issues I fought so hard to overcome just a few short years ago. The changes I had to make within my life to allow for self-growth, growth in my business and of course to be able to take care of myself and my family, were not easy, but they were well worth it.

At one point in time I thought people who worked from their homes had it easy, until that work-at-home-person became me. On any given day, my desk was piled high with projects to complete, calls to return, emails to respond to and orders to ship. Add to this the lessons to be implemented for my homeschooled daughter, a variety of meals to prepare, housework, animals to care for, carpool for extra-curricular activities and somewhere in the midst, a shower and some "me time" and before I knew it, the day was over. I have now been a work-at-home-parent for 5 years and will admit my opinion is that it is much more difficult to be a work-at-home-parent than it is to drop the kids off at school, go to an office for eight hours a day and collect a paycheck, return home to supper and a short time later, bedtime for the kids. Yet, I would not trade working for myself, from home, for anything in the world.

What I learned from my experience and now share with others is that most first-time, non-coachable entrepreneurs who opt to work from their homes and for themselves will find themselves caught in the time-management trap; as it is much easier to sit around and do meaningless tasks for most of the day than it is to prospect, attend appointments, complete work-related projects, return business-related phone calls, enhancing the mind with trainings and most importantly focus on money-generating tasks. On top of this trap, there is also the ease in which people can fall into the trap of calling friends, hitting the coffee shop, mall or department store, wandering around town aimlessly doing errands and basically anything else that allows the entrepreneur to avoid those things that are related to business building and income generation. I was there, and found my business not generating anything, no new contacts, no income, nothing. It was a depressing place to be.

Then I began using the knowledge I had gained from those who were able to manage their time well and who were now prospering with a schedule that allowed for almost everything to be completed as planned each day. From this, something amazing happened. My life became more abundant, more enjoyable and my circle of friends

and business partners began to change for the better. All from a few simple tasks being implemented into my daily routine. A few simple tasks that anyone can implement and receive the same positive results from.

First, I get up at the same time each day, early enough to give myself some 'me time' before the rest of my family is up and about. (About 30 minutes).

Secondly, I spend a few minutes (5-7 minutes) of my 'me time' with our family pets. It is calm and relaxing for me to spend time just brushing the dogs coat or petting the cat. Animals love unconditionally and I feel it's a great way to start my day. The remainder of my 'me time' is spent stretching my body and eating a healthy breakfast (due to food allergies this is critical for me as the wrong food will cause problems for my body and my mind for days to come).

Third, my day is planned out in advance and in writing in my planner. I have blocks of time set aside for working my business, for lessons with my daughter, time for exercising the dog, time for exercising myself, family time, one-on-one time with my husband, for meals, for my daughter's extra-curricular activities, down-time for reading, relaxing outdoors, errands, time with friends, etc. The goal is to have the time set aside to allow myself the ability to work each task individually and not permit each task to overlap or distract me from the other tasks at hand. Interestingly enough once I started doing this I would find my daughter looking at my calendar to determine what was going to be done on a given day, where her mom would be and what her activities were as well. It made things easier for her too.

In implementing a detailed schedule, two of my big hurdles were emails and phone calls from friends. Allowing these two tasks to interfere with my day and distract me from the goals at hand, left me annoyed and frustrated at the end of each day. So I added a special system for handling both of these tasks and it works well for me. This "system" is what I am asked about most frequently as it appears others have the same issue in managing emails and phone calls. The system I use is very simple; I check emails during the day, only replying to the urgent matters at hand immediately. All other emails are replied to during a time set aside specifically for internet activities (networking online, emails, website updates). Phone calls are handled in the same manner. I don't answer the phone when it rings unless it is a call I have specifically scheduled with a client or a number I recognize and know to be business related. I check messages several times each day and have found that those individuals who are calling with something important will leave a detailed message. Others will hang up or leave a "call me when you get a minute" message. These general calls are replied to during some down-time, when I will take a few minutes to chit-chat with friends or relatives. Once I implemented this system, I found two things happened. First, some people got annoyed and just stopped calling. I thank them, as they decided themselves that they were not worthy of my time and removed themselves from my world. If I worked in an office with a boss who prohibited personal calls, they would not call me during the day, so why would they do it when my business is in my home? This is still a business and there are guidelines to be respected, the only difference I can see is that in working from home, I am the boss and I am the one saying "no personal calls during business hours." Any true friend who supports me and my endeavors will understand this and respect these guidelines. And that brings me to the second thing that happened. Those who supported me in my endeavors began to take my business more seriously and offer me suggestions of new avenues to promote myself and my work, sharing referrals, and being overall more supportive. It's been several years now since I began taking myself and my business

seriously. In those years, I have found that when I take better care of myself, I am able to take better care of my family, my business prospers and overall my life is more abundant.

I greatly encourage others to step back, re-evaluate their lives, their business and both their personal and professional goals to make the changes they require to create the lifestyle they desire, the few hurdles and frustrations in making necessary changes were well worth the outcome. Being a work-at-home-person/ entrepreneur is an amazing experience, one that allows for creation of a personally designed lifestyle, an unlimited income and the time freedom that many desire and by using proven systems, are easily achieved. Regardless of what one has been doing in the past, it's NOW time to move forward and live in the present.....it's never too late to CREATE!

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