

Order from Chaos Productivity without Stress

On the following page is a week grid.

Map a typical week for you -
how you *normally* distribute your time.

Below are some example categories.

It is not expected that you will use all of them
or that you will not have any of your own not covered here.

These are intended as suggestions to jog your thoughts.

You have 15 minutes to complete the exercise.

Some Possible Categories:

Chores	Laundry	Shopping
Driving	Office work	Sleeping
Eating	Organizations	Socializing
Education	Reading	Spirituality
Family time	Relationship time	Time with friends
Hobby(s)	Relaxation	Watching TV
Hygiene	Research	Working out

Weekly Calendar

Week beginning Sunday, _____

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
5 am :30							
6 am :30							
7 am :15 :30 :45							
8 am :15 :30 :45							
9 am :15 :30 :45							
10 am :15 :30 :45							
11 am :15 :30 :45							
12 pm :15 :30 :45							
1 pm :15 :30 :45							
2 pm :15 :30 :45							
3 pm :15 :30 :45							
4 pm :15 :30 :45							
5 pm :15 :30 :45							
6 pm :30							
7 pm :30							
8 pm :30							

A Few Statistics to Consider:

- The average businessperson receives 190 requests for their time and energy *each day*.
- The average businessperson wastes 150 hours each year looking for stuff. Add 10 hours to that and you have an *entire work month*.
- We have created *more* information in the past 30 years than had been created in the previous 5000.
- 85% of the interruptions that occur during an average day waste your time. Only 15% are worthy of your attention.
- You can no longer do everything that is available to you.
- Few people have even 25% of their attention available to them at any point in time.

TIME LOG

	ACTIVITY				BUSINESS FUNCTION				NOTES
TOTAL									
7:00- 7:15									
7:15- 7:30									
7:30- 7:45									
7:45- 8:00									
8:00- 8:15									
8:15- 8:30									
8:30- 8:45									
8:45- 9:00									
9:00- 9:15									
9:15- 9:30									
9:30- 9:45									
9:45-10:00									
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3:00- 3:15									
3:15- 3:30									
3:30- 3:45									
3:45- 4:00									
4:00- 4:15									
4:15- 4:30									
4:30- 4:45									
4:45- 5:00									

TIME LOG

TOTAL	ACTIVITY										BUSINESS FUNCTION	NOTES					
	READING	DICTION	PHONE WORK	PHONE CALLS	MEETINGS	INSPECTIONS	TRAVEL	PLANNING	ORDER	SALES	PREPARING		EXHIBITS	TRAINING	RESEARCH	ADVISOR	RECORDS
7:00-7:15																	
7:15-7:30																	
7:30-7:45																	
7:45-8:00																	
8:00-8:15																	
8:15-8:30	X																CHATTING
8:30-8:45	X																INCOMING MAIL
8:45-9:00			X														MAIL
9:00-9:15	X																MISC. PHONE CALLS
9:15-9:30	X																READING NEWSPAPER
9:30-9:45																	READING TRADE JOURNAL
9:45-10:00																	COFFEE BREAK
10:00-10:15																	COFFEE BREAK
10:15-10:30																	ACME - WARRANTY PROBLEM
10:30-10:45																	SAW RICHARDSON
10:45-11:00																	"
11:00-11:15																	WORK ON SALARY SCHEDULE
11:15-11:30																	"
11:30-11:45																	WEEKLY REPORT
11:45-12:00																	SAW OFFICE MACHINE SALE PERSON
12:00-12:15																	LUNCH WITH RICHARDSON
12:15-12:30																	"
12:30-12:45																	"
12:45-1:00																	"
1:00-1:15																	RETURN TO OFFICE
1:15-1:30																	RETURNED MISC. PHONE CALLS
1:30-1:45																	"
1:45-2:00																	MET WITH BOSS
2:00-2:15																	"
2:15-2:30																	"
2:30-2:45																	PERSONAL ERRANDS
2:45-3:00																	"
3:00-3:15																	TRAVEL TO SEE JOHNSON
3:15-3:30																	JOHNSON MEETING
3:30-3:45																	"
3:45-4:00																	RETURN TO OFFICE
4:00-4:15																	CHAT WITH ROBERTS
4:15-4:30																	DICTION ON SALARY SCHEDULE
4:30-4:45																	READ PM NEWSPAPER
4:45-5:00																	SAW MURPHY RENEW PROCEDURES

Using Time Journal Data

- What am I doing that doesn't really need to be done?
- What am I doing that could be done by someone else?
- What am I doing that could be done more efficiently?
- What do I do that wastes others' time?

Decide Now!!

Decisions must be made now, because there is no later.

- If you put things off, they simply pile up, and you create the same cycle over and over again.
- The mail will not stop being delivered
- The phone will not stop ringing
- Email will not stop appearing
- Faxes will not stop coming through
- Clients/bosses/friends/family members will not stop asking you to do just one more thing

Why do most people not make decisions now?

- Many folks use the "I'll leave something out to remind me" method. That is not a decision, it is an un-decision
- Most piles are simply unmade decisions - "I don't know what to do with this..."
- Not being able to "remember" what you have already committed to (the average brain can only keep 7 things in short term memory)
- Not having a system. When you have no system, each piece of paper requires you to devise a place for it and THAT CONSTANT DECISION MAKING IS EXHAUSTING! Making decisions is much easier, faster, less frustrating and less time consuming when you have a complete system consisting of:
 - A home for everything
 - A workspace set up based on frequency of use
 - One place to record tasks, appointments, notes (paper or electronic)

How do you Decide Now?

- The first time you have a piece of paper in your hand 99.9% of the time you have as much information as you will ever have regarding the decision of what to do with the paper. It will not get better if allowed to "age"
- You are looking for the answer to one question only. "What's the task?" Many of the 190 you receive are purely informational. You are only looking for the ones you must do something about.
- As you identify the task, you must record when you are going to take action on it -- that is part of the decision. Having everything on one place will also keep you from over committing yourself. Normally people decide on the spur

of the moment if they want to do a certain task, without deciding *simultaneously* WHEN they will do it. If you keep a running list of everything you are committing to, you begin to see when you cannot add even one more thing, and then you begin to think about committing to it differently!

Reality Check

How many things can you reasonably do on a good day? 10? 20? 30? Subtract that number from 190 (the average number of requests for your time you receive each day). Now, how many times do you say "NO" each day? 10? 20? 30? Subtract the number from the previous total. The result is the number of times you say "later". How stressful is that?

190
- ____# you get done
- ____# of no's

= ____# of times you say "maybe," "later," "this evening," "this weekend" ...

- Create sticky notes that say "NO 170" (or whatever your number is) and stick them on your door frame, phone, computer screen, calendar, task list, in basket, wherever you get requests from to remind you to say "NO"

Checklist: Decide Now

- Make and post your "NO XXX" sticky notes
- Each time a piece of paper, task or a personal request comes your way, ask yourself "What's the Task?"
- If there is not task - file it if you must or better yet throw it away!
- If there is a task, look in your calendar. Review each day's radar screen and decide when you can reasonably expect to get this done, then...
- WRITE IT DOWN
- If it takes more than one hour to complete, schedule the time like an appointment
- If it requires preparation, schedule backwards in your calendar so you are not caught short, creating yet another panic.
- If you do not have time to write each thing down as it comes to you, put it in your in-basket (which you empty every day, yes?) then do it when you have a chance, but never any later than by the end of the day.
- When you make a decision about something and have no place to put the accompanying paper, ask yourself why? Is there a hole in your system, or are you thinking too specifically about that one item.

Prioritize Ongoingly

Why Prioritize?

- All things being equal, we will do first the tasks which are fun, quick or easy, and leave the unpleasant tasks to last. This is seldom representational of their importance.

No priority		Priority
_____	Wash the dog	_____
_____	Call Brother	_____
_____	Do Taxes	_____
_____	Call Irate Client	_____

- Procrastination lives in the emotions. To stop procrastination, take the emotion out of the decision of what to do when; replace the emotional system with a logical system

How to Prioritize

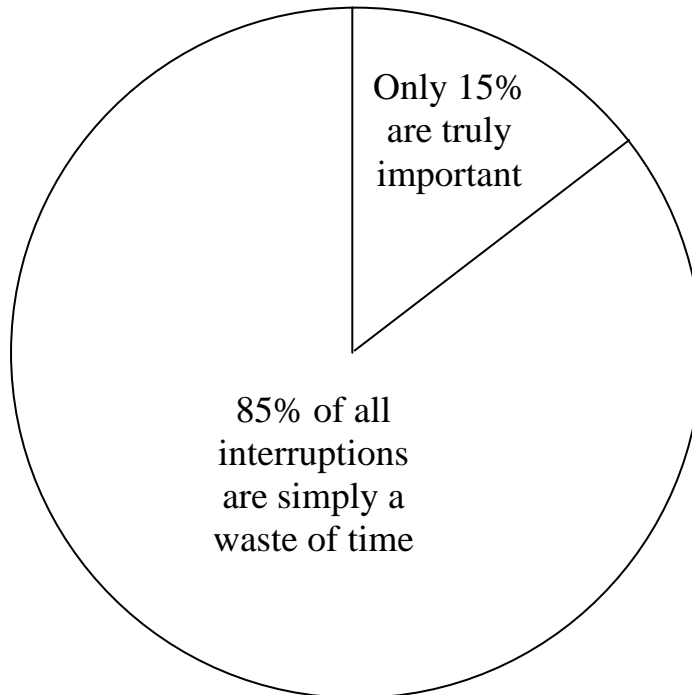
- Know your priority (priority cards from previous class may be useful). Your work priority should be in the mission statement of your company, or your job description. Your priority is your yardstick that you use to measure every demand made of you. Otherwise we simply respond to adrenaline. Your priority at work and at home are probably different.
- Prioritize your day – chose a system that works for you
 - ABC123 method is a common one
 - My system:
 - Highlight everything that will make me money (I use green; its my favorite color and it is the color of money)
 - Add a yellow dot next those tasks I must do it today between 8 and 5
 - Add a purple dot next those tasks I must do it today, but not between 8 and 5
 - I look at all the green tasks with yellow dots and put a 1 next to the one that will make me the most money, 2 the second most money, etc.
 - I look at all the green tasks with purple dots and put a 1 next to the one that will make me the most money, 2 the second most money, etc.
 - Last things on my list will cost me money
 - Your own system - invent it.
- Prioritize task list at beginning of day

- Identify the 7 most important things each day. That is your goal (not the whole list). If you get those 7 done each day you are in the 3% of humans on the face of the earth.
- Measure incoming tasks against your priority yardstick and against your progress on today's list. Example: if you have reached task C5 - Wash Dog and someone comes in and says they have a problem with a memo they are writing, helping them is probably more important. If, you are on task A2 – Contact irate client, helping them with their memo is probably less important.
- Don't forget the non-work priorities. They are often the ones believed to be self-maintaining. Perhaps a regularly scheduled "date night" that is the same day every week NO MATTER WHAT. Or a "family night" that is equally sacred. Maybe an organization you belong to requires regular commitments from you, or some other leadership role you have taken on. They need to be scheduled and honored as well or when you get to where you want to be the cost may have been too high.

Treading Water vs. Changing Scenery

- Accomplishing everything on your list each day is still just treading water - just taking care of business. If all you do is take care of business, the scenery will never change. How do you change the scenery? With one baby step each day. In your calendar system, highlight the top line of each day's list with your favorite color. Do not write on this line before you prioritize that day. Then and only then, write in an activity that meets one of the following criteria.
 1. It takes you closer to a larger goal or vision (your leadership goals)
 2. It is bigger than you (as in a charitable activity)
 3. At the very least, something that makes your heart sing.
 - This task must be small enough to check off at the end of the day. If your goal is to be a novelist, don't put "Write Great American Novel" on the line, because there is no way you can finish that in one day. It will simply overwhelm you and have the opposite effect of what we are trying to do. Instead write "Find adult fiction writing class." The next day you might write "Enroll in adult fiction writing class." Get the picture? Eventually you will get there (how do you think I wrote my book, found an agent and found a publisher? One baby step at a time each and every day.)
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Interruptions Chart



Human Beings respond to urgency! But...

- **15% of interruptions are Urgent and Important** - Most of us do these tasks because they are important and somebody is usually bugging us to complete them. We should do these tasks.
- **85% of interruptions are Urgent and NOT Important** - These tasks are the thieves of our time. These are usually "somebody else's emergencies" but we can be easily caught up in the adrenaline. Unfortunately human beings are pre-programmed to respond to urgency, and we do not stop to evaluate if it is important to us or not. We should **not** do these tasks!

If we waste our time with the 85% that are not important, what happens?

- **Goals and Visions** - These are the most important tasks on your list because they are what make life worth living. They are your life's goals. The problem is they are silent - nobody is calling us and bugging us to complete them, yet if we do not do them, the scenery will never change. We **MUST** do these tasks - at least one every day! (This is the line with a heart on it if you have an Air Traffic Control System.)
- **Beware the other time thief...** some tasks are neither important nor urgent, but sometimes we do them anyway, such as watching mindless TV, or mindless reading, or puttering to avoid doing something we need to do but are avoiding. Treat each moment as precious.

Checklist: Prioritize Ongoingly

- Start each day by prioritizing your list based on YOUR priorities.
- You are only looking for the 7 most important remember
- Write one leadership based baby step on the top line each day. Make sure it is part of a larger goal, bigger than you or at least makes you heart sing. It is the most important thing you do that day!
- Each time a task comes our way, evaluate it. Watch out for the 85% time wasters.
- As you evaluate each new task, decide if it is more important (based on your priority) than what you were already planning to do or less important. If more, do it! If less, say "no thank you"
- Do not be fooled by other people's emergency energy, or you will end the day saying, "What did I do today?"
- Always be very clear what YOUR priorities are. Is it making money, getting a promotion, supporting your family, getting your degree? Whatever the priority, be consistent and **you will achieve it!**

Daily Habits

Increasing productivity and decreasing stress requires daily discipline to maintain. The good news is that it should require no more than 10-15 minutes each day. But you must be religious about those 10 minutes. You cannot save it all up and do 50 minutes on Friday - it doesn't work that way.

Plan your day

You would not build a house without a plan, or sew a dress without a plan, but most folks tackle their days with no plan at all. Planning will get on your side your greatest ally - your subconscious. Your subconscious can accomplish anything you tell it to. Unfortunately, most of us give our subconscious negative images, conflicting requests, no clear picture. Planning your day gives your subconscious marching orders that are clear, concise and positive.

- Prioritize your daily task list
- Make sure there is at least one "leadership" baby-step each day
- Check appointments -- do you have what you need
 - Files, notes, phone numbers, keys, etc.
 - Will you see someone today you need to give something to:
 - A file, an article, a book
 - A piece of information
 - Assemble it all in one place ("going outside the office" box, the "things to take with me tomorrow" box, "upstairs" or "downstairs" box?)

Work your plan:

- Assemble files/supplies needed for TASK 1
- Complete TASK 1
- Put away files/supplies from TASK 1
- Assemble files/supplies needed for TASK 2
- Office layout can enhance this effort ("U" shape with an area for task work and an area for interruptions)
- Focus time scheduled each day will improve productivity as well. A task that would take 1 hour if you were not interrupted will take 4 hours if you are. Imagine a schedule such as this
- As new activities come in, measure them against your task list

8	open door
9	focus time
10	focus time
11	open door
12	lunch
1	open door
2	focus time
3	focus time
4	open door
5	go home

End your day

Nobody leaves work at the end of the day because they are done anymore. They leave because they are late for another appointment, they are exhausted, the sun is coming up, some other reason than because they are done. Therefore, we don't get closure, we don't stop, we don't end. Our minds and attention stay tied up in what we left undone. We need a way to get closure and give our families and friends 100% of our attention. That is why we need to end our days.

- Every task will have one mark next to it at the end of the day. Options are:
 - ◉ Dot = **pending** i.e. you have “served the ball” and are waiting for a return (return phone call the most common). At the end of the day, dots turn into check marks or arrows, most likely.
 - ④ Check mark = **done**, complete, dampen not my bathmat again (the goal is to get as many checks as possible.) Putting a check mark next to a completed task **releases endorphins in the brain**, so if you need a little pick me up, complete something and check it off!
 - ⇐ Arrow = moved **forward** to another day.
Move tasks consciously, not automatically. For example, don't just move an incomplete task to tomorrow. Look at your future days, both tasks already scheduled and appointments made, and decide when you can **realistically** complete this task.
WARNING: never Never **NEVER** make the arrow, then rewrite the task. ALWAYS write the task, then make the arrow.
 - ⑧ X = **remove** it from my list!
Sometimes when you get there, the task has become a moot point. In that case, cross it off and move on
 - **NOTE:** if you have moved a task **five times** you are facing a 95% chance that you will never do it. It will be one of these situations:
 - It is way **outside your comfort zone** and you are avoiding doing it. If this is the case, make it task #1 tomorrow and just do it. If you don't do it then, mark it off and get out of it regardless of the importance.
 - The task is "**important/not urgent**" and because there is not deadline or anybody harassing you to do it, you are not getting around to it. Ask yourself why you are not doing it and how important it is. If it is truly important, reschedule one last time as #1. If you don't do it then, mark it off and get out of it regardless of the importance.
 - It is something you feel you **should** do. Your mother is not here, and you don't have time for "should", only "must" and "want to." Mark it off and move on!
- Draw line through day, move marker/turn page

- Glance at tomorrow to be sure you will not be blindsided

Clean off your desk at the end of the day

It seems like a little thing perhaps, but essential to ending your day, getting closure, freeing your attention is cleaning off your desk. It is most critical the next day when you come in. If the desk is clear, you will work your plan. If it is messy, your attention will be sucked right back into whatever is on top, like it or not. Unfortunately, that is how our brains work.

- "Clean off your desk" includes **every carrier you use daily**. For example your:
 - briefcase
 - backpack
 - purse
 - car seat
- If you cannot summon the discipline to clean off your desk daily, do not allow it to accumulate for more than **three days**

The final and most important step, **shut off your brain**, drink a glass of wine, relax and watch your brain waves flatten and your blood pressure drop. When you go to bed you will enjoy the sleep of an innocent child.

Checklist: Daily Habits

Before you begin...

- Write "plan day" on the line beneath the heart line on each day for the next month. Put a 1 in the square next to it.
- Write "end day" on the second to the last line on each day for the next month. Put a 6 in the square next to it.
- Write "clean desk" on the last line on each day for the next month. Put a 7 in the square next to it.

Plan your day

- Prioritize your daily task list
- Write one "long term goal/make your heart sing" task every day
- Check appointments -- do you have what you need, i.e. files, notes, reports, things to deliver. Will you see someone today you need to give something to, i.e. file, article, book, information, etc.
- Assemble it all in one place ("going outside the office" box, the "things to take with me tomorrow" box, "upstairs" or "downstairs" box?)

- Begin work:
 - Assemble files/supplies needed for TASK 1
 - Complete TASK 1
 - Put away files/supplies from TASK 1
 - Assemble files/supplies needed for TASK 2
 - Continue as above till you are done.
- As new activities come in, adamantly evaluate them against your progress on today's task list

End your day

- Every task will have one mark next to it at the end of the day.
 - Dot = I've done my part and waiting for someone else to do theirs
 - 4 Check mark = done - hurray!
 - ← Arrow = moved forward to another day.
 - Move tasks consciously, not automatically, to where you may realistically accomplish them.
 - never Never NEVER make the arrow, then rewrite the task. ALWAYS write the task, then make the arrow.
 - 8 = remove it from my list! Remember, if you have moved a task five times you are facing a 95% chance that you will never do it
- Draw line through day, move marker/turn page
- Glance at tomorrow to be sure you will not be blindsided

Clean off your desk at the end of the day

- Desk top
- Briefcase/backpack/purse
- Car
- Shut off your brain**

Until one is committed
there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back,
always ineffectiveness.

The moment one definitely commits oneself,
then Providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one
that would never otherwise have occurred.

A whole stream of events issues from the decision,
raising in one's favor all manner
of unforeseen incidents and meetings
and material assistance,
which no man could have dreamt
would have come his way

W. H. Murray - Scottish Himalayan Expedition