

## *How to Get Unstuck* (Matt Perman)

### Personal Management (The Clock)

1. Process of managing yourself
  1. Analyze and consolidate time
    1. Plan doesn't come first but rather how you are spending your time, time wasters to get rid of and time you have left
    2. So assess the way you are currently using your time
  2. Determine chief areas of need
    1. Where do you need to spend majority of your time
    2. Determine core strategy and values proposition
    3. Find chief categories of your job (can't successfully use your time if you don't know *how* it should be used).
  3. Create time plan
    1. Chart with key categories of your job and how much time each gets
  4. Create task management system
    1. Mission statement
    2. Your role plans
    3. Project and action lists
    4. Calendar etc.
    5. Don't worry about the small, low priority stuff. Don't stress.
  5. Goal
    1. You want to get into the zone as easily. This is when best work done and most efficient.. Operate at highest capacity.
    2. Required for high-performance
    3. We feel less in control and more stressed when out of zone too often for too long.
    4. Zone is fulfilling
    5. Goal: be completely absorbed in your task; giving full attention
2. Why start with time?
  1. Tasks are unlimited
    1. Time is limited
    2. Thus, contain tasks to most essential. Won't be overwhelmed because most important things dealt with first.
3. Track your time
  1. Do this once a year for a week
  2. Constant management of time key to help from drifting into old habits
  3. Do it now. Old school, pad and paper, or use Word, or app (Hours or Hours tracker)
  4. Don't rely on memory, not accurate
  5. Record every 15 minutes how you use your time
4. Eliminate time wasters
  1. Personal time wasters (DEAD)
    1. Delegate – assign tasks to others
    2. Eliminate – scrap tasks that don't need to be done (Ask: “What would happen if this activity wasn't done at all?") Often, 25% can be scrapped.

Also, ask others what are things *you* do that waste their time and doesn't contribute to effectiveness.

3. Automate – have computers do as much as possible
4. Defer – schedule tasks that can be done later
2. Careful of bad meetings. Meetings important but not excessive meetings. Purpose is extract collective wisdom. Meetings done well are crucial and invigorating. Always define purpose of meeting. Always have agenda.
5. What are priorities
  1. Priorities are not everything you need to do. Not same as responsibilities, but CHIEF responsibilities.
  2. Rare area where superior performance will produce outstanding results.
  3. It is not a priority if not a task that will result in high concentration.
  4. Why focus your efforts on low-value tasks? Priority is high-value task.
  5. **Priorities are the key to effectiveness.**
  6. **“If there is a ‘secret’ of effectiveness, it is concentration. Effective executives do first things first and they do one thing at a time.” – Peter Drucker**
  7. If you practice prioritizing your day, over time you'll develop pattern of effectiveness.
  8. Setting priorities not just nice idea. Essential to effectiveness, getting unstuck and falling in trap of constantly busy but unproductive.
6. Why priorities are key to effectiveness
  1. Must chose between low-value tasks and high. Can't do all of both; former steals from latter.
  2. Concentration: doing one thing at a time, and making sure that one thing you do is a “first thing.”
  3. Prioritizing: doing a “first thing” (important thing) and dong that one thing only (one thing at a time).
  4. Why do only one thing at a time? (1) Nature of work. No matter how well you manage your time, you'll always have more to do. So you must prioritize. (2) Human nature. Mozart was freak, but most can only do this. Bach, Handel etc. composed only one major work at a time.
  5. Important work requires large chunks of time. Lots of small chunks not as effective as fewer larger ones. At least 2 hours each.
7. Consequences of not setting priorities
  1. Busy but not productive. Millimeter progress in million different directions. Majoring on minors.
  2. Get more done by fewer things of higher impact, not more things at lower value
  3. Anyone can *set* priorities. Easy. But must learn what *not* to do.
  4. **Core principle of effectiveness is exclusion.**
8. How to determine priorities
  1. How many?
    1. Choose one major responsibility in job and one major goal at a time.
    2. 15 hours a week on top two priorities, lets say.
  2. Process for choosing
    1. Explore: space to think, observe, get sleep, pray
  3. What to do with your priorities
    1. **Create time leverage chart** (write 5-7 responsibilities of your job and top current goal; brief statement of what success looks like in that area;

percentage of time requires (also in hours); key activities to make this happen

CH. 11 – START WITH YOUR TIME, NOT WITH YOUR TASKS

CHAPTER 12 – SET YOUR PRIORITIES: Make importance truly work

Responsibilities	Success	Time (hrs.)	Activities

CH. 13: DEEP WORK, PART 1, The New Superpower of Knowledge Work

CH. 14 – DEEP WORK 2, Put deep work into your schedule and overcome distractions

CH. 15. RENEWAL: The Power of Preaching to Yourself

CH. 16. A BASIC APPROACH TO GETTING UNSTUCK FROM PROBLEMS

CH. 19. MAKING YOUR WORKSPACE CLUTTER-FREE

- Train Wisely
  - Train TK
  - Train Gwegwe
  - Train JS
1. Progressing with your priorities
    1. Focus on priority till its done. Then the next.
    2. Each time you complete priority, don't immediately go to next but reevaluate. Circumstances change.
    3. Concentration gets more done better.
  2. Set priorities and do one at a time. Lend entire focus to one or two priorities at a time.
  3. Create a "stop doing" list
2. Intro
    1. Secret to effectiveness: concentration. Concentration means focus.
    2. Maximize time if in high state of focus. Not enough to protect our time. Must protect mental focus.
    3. Deep work is state of high concentration.
    4. Deep work is a super power. Makes you stand out because most people can't engage in deep work. But there are obstacles to this.
  3. Busy is not the same as being productive.
  4. Understanding productivity equation
    1. High quality work produced= time spent x intensity of focus

2. Power of focused attention
  1. If low degree of focus, you'll have to spend more time for same results.
  2. High degree of focus, same amount of work in less time.
3. Flow state
  1. Flow is total absorption in the task. Alert, strong, and peak of abilities. Effortless. Sense of time disappears. Working deeply and efficiently and work is highly fulfilling.
  4. When a task is too difficult, you get anxious. You want the happy medium of matching challenge level with skill level.
5. Deep work
  1. The practice of focusing 'without distraction on a cognitively demanding task.'
  2. Working in a state of distraction-free concentration that pushes cognitive capacities to their limit, per Newport.
  3. We focus entirely and without distraction on the work for extended period of time.
6. "The ability to concentrate intensely is a skill that must be trained." Newport
7. **Strategy 1: put deep work into your schedule**
  1. Monk (simply, radical, hard; all deep work; cut off from others mostly)
  2. Bimodal (stretches of deep pursuit; or, three days a week to deep pursuit and two for other things)
  3. Rhythmic (e.g. PhD student who works full-time gives 5:30-7:30 daily for PhD work, then on to job)
  4. Journalistic (wherever it fits)
8. **Strategy 2: protect energy for deep work**
  1. Creative work first, reactive work second
    1. Don't try to get little stuff out of way.
    2. "The trouble with this approach is it means spending the best part of the day on other people's priorities. By the time you settle down to your own work, it could be mid-afternoon, when your energy dips and your brain slows." McGuinness
  2. Four hours of deep work a day is enough
    1. Parkinson's law: work expands to fill the time available.
  3. End your day at a specific time
    1. Best way to preserve energy
    2. Remember: High quality work produced= time spent x intensity of focus
    3. So, important to protect energy. If you work longer tonight, less effective tomorrow.
    4. Deep work needs deep concentration. Need time to replenish mental energy reserves. We need time away
    5. A decisive end to your work day helps you recharge.
      1. J. Edwards often took walks and went horseback riding.
      2. If you try to cram in work between dinner and family, you are robbing body's need for rest and restoration.
      3. "Only the confidence that you're done with work until the next day can convince your brain to downshift to the level where it can begin to recharge for the next day to follow."

4. Even if you plan a little bit of work in the evening, it often steals from getting more work done the next day.
  6. Hard end of your workday forces you to cut waste and be more efficient. If you postpone things each day because you know you can do them at night, you'll be less rigorous in prioritizing during day.
  7. Wrong to think success is working extensively (12+hour days) and continually.
  8. Productivity is the issue. Must consider energy levels and decision making practices. Working longer doesn't mean more getting done, often it means less.
9. **Strategy 3: Fight distractions** by understanding brain science
1. Distraction is one of biggest obstacles to deep work.
  2. Focus is underrated mental asset.
  3. We can't just avoid distractions, we must understand them.
  4. Why are they so bad?
    1. They take us out of the ultra-productive state of concentration for deep work. "The more distracted we are, the more shallow our reflections; the shorter our reflections, the more trivial they are likely to be."
    2. If we want deep work, we must avoid distractions/interruptions completely. They kill flow state.
    3. Attention residue
      1. They prevent time it takes to focus. If it takes 12 minutes, little seconds of distraction ruins the process.
      2. Glancing at emails kills this.
      3. Staying focused on single project for long time reduces attention residue
    4. Zeigarnik Effect
      1. The ability of incomplete tasks to dominate our attention.
      2. If you stop task in middle, unresolved obligations keep battling for attention. This depletes energy, creating nagging feeling.
      3. To fix, you don't have to do all tasks, just plan how you'll complete them.
      4. These can be good, helps against procrastination. But if too many, stress builds.
10. We're often stuck because we're tired.
11. Ps. 43:5 – he preaches to himself.
12. Questions
1. What's the problem?
  2. Where do I want to be?
  3. If I have a hard time defining this, why?
  4. Why am I stuck?
  5. What might help me?
  6. Who could give insight on this problem?
13. Getting unstuck from bad habits (end of ch. 18)
1. Determine which bad habit you want to eliminate
  2. Find the cue that is triggering the bad habit
  3. Define the new habit you want in its place.
  4. Create new cues to trigger new behaviors
  5. Start the new habit
  6. Keep going even when tempted to divert, which builds endurance.

7. Enlist others to help.
8. Don't try to change too habits at once.
14. Clutter sucks creativity and energy from your brain.