

Enhanced Efficiency and Productivity Through Better Time Management

Carrie Tibbles, MD

In our busy lives as physicians and educators, time often seems in short supply. A full email inbox, looming deadlines and frequent interruptions are just some of the pressures we face on a routine basis. In this seminar, we will share with each other some of our specific challenges and practical strategies for dealing with them.

Specific Topics we will cover in this session:

- Planning your day and week and year to be productive
- Learning how (and when) to say “no” and sometimes “yes”
- Confronting procrastination and dealing with interruptions
- Discuss how to make the most of meetings and working with your team
- Discuss strategies to more efficiently manage communication including your email inbox
- Learn how and when to effectively delegate to others

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Enhanced Efficiency and Productivity Through Better Time Management

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Education is at the heart of patient care. —



Time management

- Self Assessment Exercise
- Basic approach for getting things done
- Strategies for the Common Time Traps
 - Tyranny of the urgent / unimportant
 - Email
 - Meetings



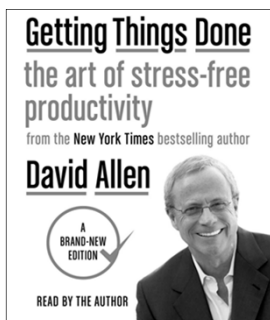
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Recommended Resource



Thank you to
Dr. Eileen
Reynolds
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What are the specific challenges today?



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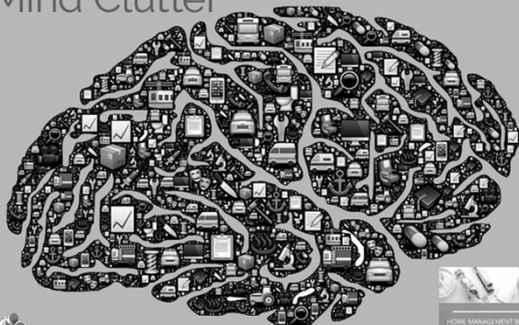


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Mind Clutter



Professional Organizers Blog Carnival



Mind Clutter equals Stress

- *"A task left undone remains undone in two places- at the actual location of the task and inside your head. Incomplete tasks in your head consume the energy of your attention as they gnaw at your conscience."*
– Brahma Kumaris



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Why is clearing your mind so important?



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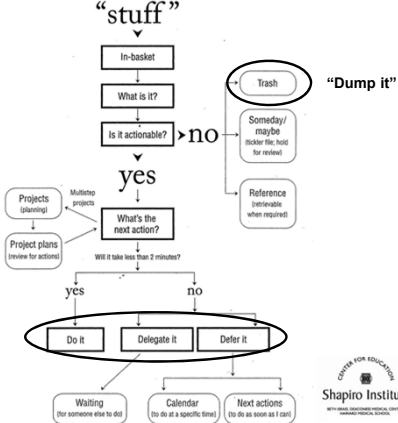
Because our mind is much better at having ideas than capturing them



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The 4 D's



Beth I. Medic

What is our "stuff", exactly?



Anything that captures our attention that we may or may not need to decide about or act on.



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Mastering work flow

- **Capture**- what has your attention, get it out of your head
- **Clarify**- what each item means
- **Organize** the results
- **Reflect** on the options
- **Engage** with what we choose to do



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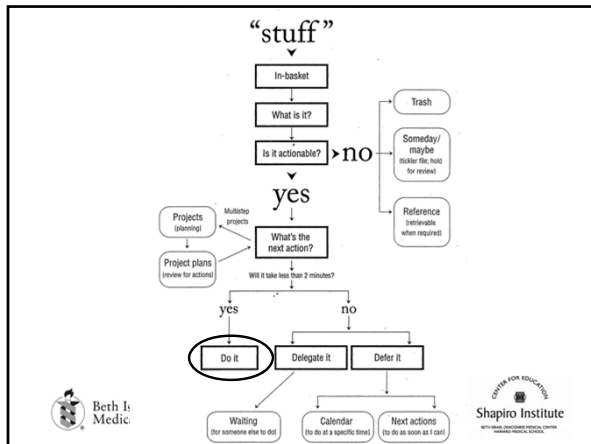


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Do it

- In order to do it, you must know what the next action is
- Think about your current to do list
 - Are they actions?
 - Will the next action take less than 2 minutes?
- Examples?
- This applies particularly with emails and responses, automatic recurring things



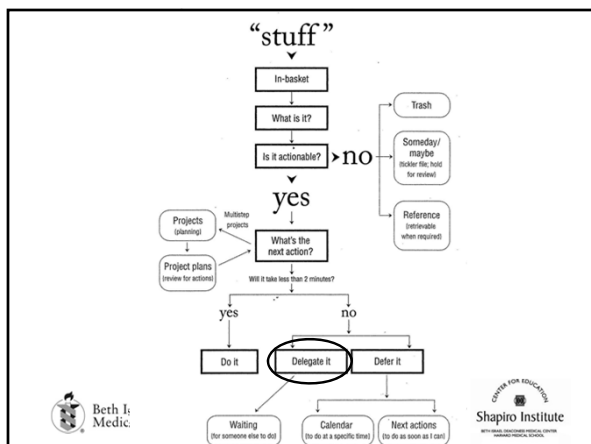
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Delegation

Consider 5 areas:

1. Tasks that are routine.
2. Tasks that you don't have time to do.
3. Tasks that involve problem solving.
4. Tasks that will build an individual's capabilities.
5. Tasks that represent a change in job emphasis.



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Delegation needs a strategy

- Need to follow up to make sure the work is done, and done right
- Need to do this regularly to decide which staff you can trust
- May need to educate staff, resident/student, etc.
- What if you are always the person getting delegated to?
- Need "waiting for" category in your organization system



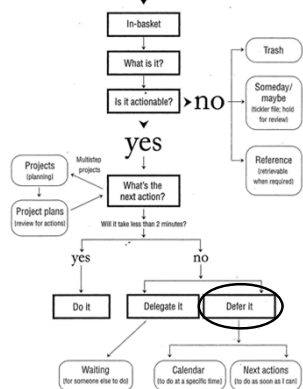
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"stuff"



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How do you prioritize?

- Have a complete list of projects
- Understand that your choices each day relate to short term and long term projects
- Spend at least 20% of your time in quadrant 2
 - 20% of your work nets 80% of results
- Use your calendar to help you
 - Make it absolutely reliable, accurate
 - Track all due dates
 - Block your time in at least 45 minute increments



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Feed the eagles. Starve the turkeys!



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	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Quadrant #1 "NECESSITY" Your Key Action: "MANAGE" Common Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crises - Deadline-driven activities - Medical emergencies - Other "true" emergencies - Pressing problems - Last minute preparations 	Quadrant #2 "QUALITY & PERSONAL LEADERSHIP" Your Key Action: "FOCUS" Common Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation and planning - Values clarification - Empowerment - Relationship-building - True recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	Quadrant #3 "DECEPTION" Your Key Action: "USE CAUTION or AVOID" Common Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting other people's priorities and expectations - Frequent interruptions - Most emails, some calls - Urgency masquerading as importance 	Quadrant #4 "WASTE" Your Key Action: "AVOID" Common Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Escapist activities - Mindless tv-watching - Busywork - Junk mail - Some emails - Some calls

Adapted from Stephen Covey's "First Things First" - Covey Leadership Center, Inc. © 2003

What you actually do depends on three things:

- What do I have time to do?
- Where am I?
 - context and tools available
- What do I have energy for?



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Common Time traps

Education is at the heart of patient care. — Shapiro Institute



Email



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Email

Turn off notifications

Not your to-do list

Avoid long emails

Be careful about who you include

Don't feel obligated to respond to every thread

Not necessarily always efficient to read on phone

Unsubscribe



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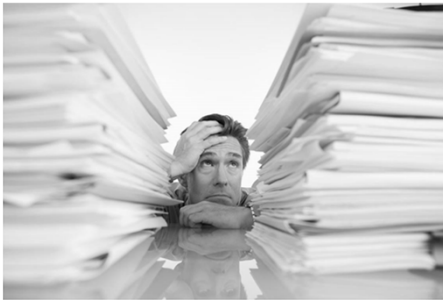


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Work Space



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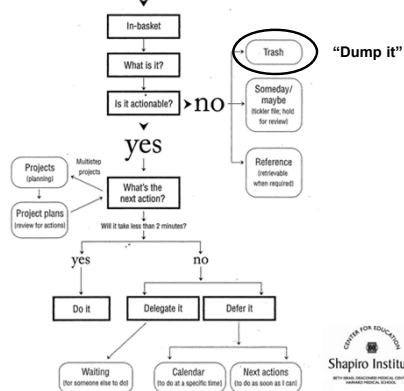


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"stuff"



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Interruptions

- Key to have uninterrupted times of work
- Who/ Why / When are you interrupted
- What are some ways to control interruptions



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Meetings



Meetings

Think of alternatives
Not all meetings need to be one hour
Start on Time
Who needs to be there?
Agenda
Preparation to optimize work
Apply next action planning to the meeting



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The Power of Habit and Routine

- Creating new habits can help move you forward towards getting on top of things
- Small changes do add up over time
- Build trust in your organization scheme
- Once you set a goal, what are the process changes that might lead in that direction?
- Takes intentionality / Balance between things you will do and not do
- Daily rituals and weekly review really work



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End Goal: Making Space for what you want –personally and professionally



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Commit to one change this week



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TIME

MANAGEMENT

PROGRESS

Survey Instructions:

Six weeks after this class, complete this summary of your progress. It will show you where you are doing well and where you still need to devote some attention.

Scoring Key:

Yes = 1, Usually = 2, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 4, Never or No = 5, Not Applicable = NA

1. Do you have a clearly defined list of written objectives? _____
2. Do you plan and schedule your time on a weekly and daily basis? _____
3. Can you find large blocks of uninterrupted time when you need to? _____
4. Have you eliminated frequently recurring crises from your job? _____
5. Do you refuse to answer the phone when engaged in important conversations? _____
6. Do you use travel and waiting time productively? _____
7. Do you delegate as much as you can? _____
8. Do you prevent people from delegating their tasks and decision making to you? _____
9. Do you take time each day to think about what you are doing and trying to accomplish? _____
10. Have you eliminated any time wasters during the past week? _____
11. Do you feel really in control of your time? _____
12. Is your desk and office well organized and free of clutter? _____
13. Have you eliminated time wasted in meetings? _____
14. Have you conquered your tendency to procrastinate? _____
15. Do you carry out your work on the basis of priorities? _____

TIME

MANAGEMENT

PROGRESS

Survey continued

Scoring Key:

Yes = 1, Usually = 2, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 4, Never or No = 5, Not Applicable = NA

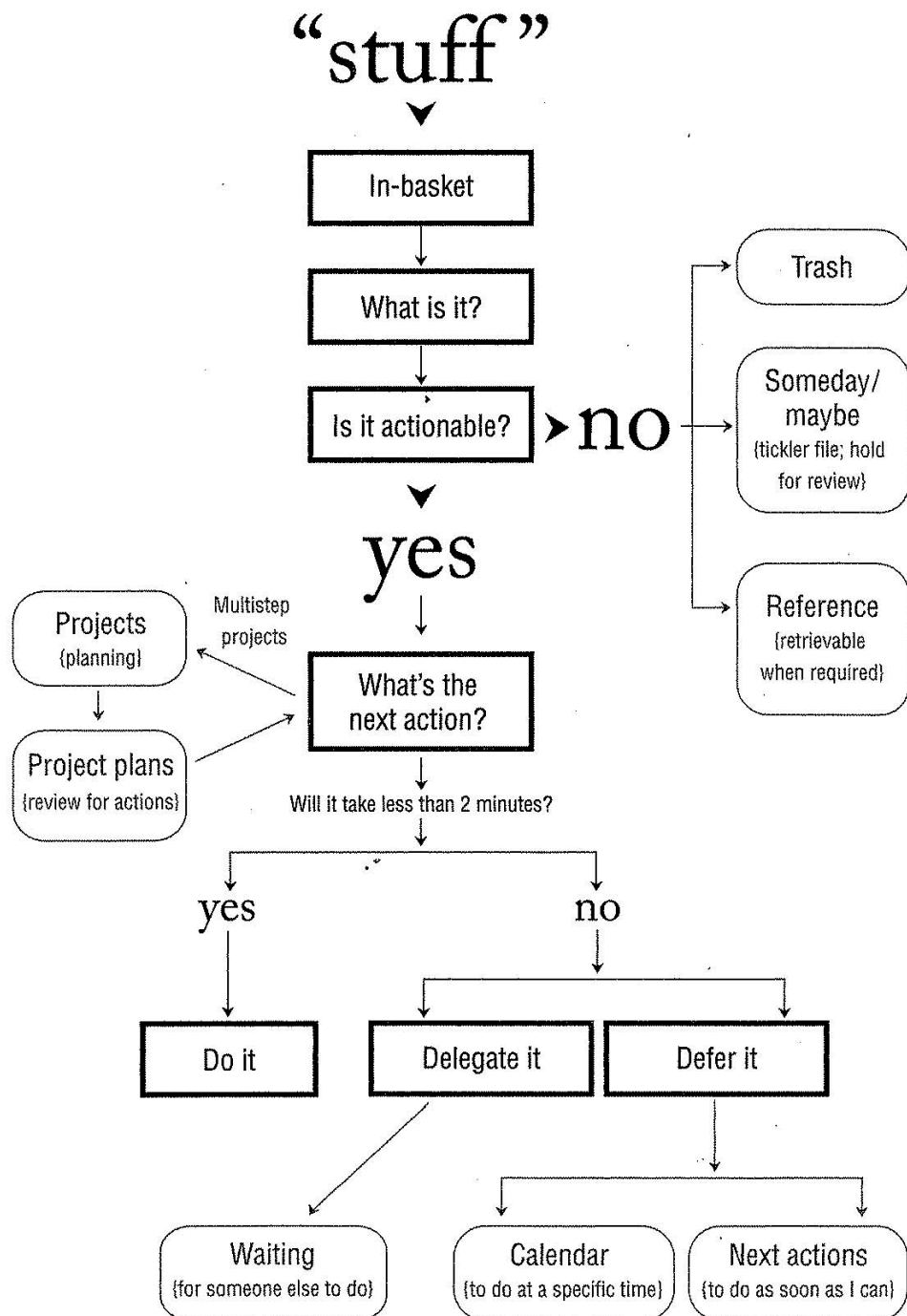
16. Do you resist the temptation to get overly involved in other's activities? _____
17. Do yo control your schedule so that other s do not waste time waiting for you? _____
18. Do you meet your deadlines? _____
19. Can you identify the critical few tasks that account for the majority of your results? _____
20. Are you better organized and accomplishing more than your were six weeks ago? _____
21. Have you been able to reduce the amount of time you spend on routine paperwork? _____
22. Do you effectively control interruptions and drop-in visitors? _____
23. Have you mastered the ability to say no whenever you should? _____

TOTAL _____

Scoring: Add the points assigned to each item. The lower your score, the better. Look particularly at those items you rated 4 or 5. These represent challenges for further development.

Workflow diagram

Getting Things Done: the art of stress-free productivity by David Allen 2015



Getting More Done: Strategies to Increase Scholarly Productivity

Sarina Schrager, MD, MS
Elizabeth Sadowski, MD

Scholarship is required for promotion at many academic institutions, and academic physicians have a multitude of competing demands on their time. This article reviews strategies for organizing time, focusing on scholarly tasks, increasing scholarly productivity, and avoiding distractions.

The “To-Do” List

Most successful people plan what they need to accomplish. It has been demonstrated that having a written plan of action increases productivity.^{1,2} Studies looking at the effect of writing down a list of things to do date back to the 1920s and an Eastern European psychologist named Bluma Zeigarnik. The so-called “Zeigarnik Effect” demonstrated that the act of planning activities through “to-do” lists actually reduced executive burden on the brain by freeing the brain from having to worry about unfinished tasks.¹ More recent studies confirmed the Zeigarnik Effect by finding that when people were not allowed to finish a warm-up activity, they performed poorly on a subsequent brainstorming activity.² The implication is that people are more effective when they are able to cross off the first thing on their list. It allows them to go on to the next thing.

There are multiple ways to keep track of things to do. The traditional to-do list is created with a pen and paper. There are also multiple electronic to-do list applications for computers, tablets, or smartphones.³ Stephen Covey, in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*,⁴ describes a method of setting goals and then prioritizing tasks within those goals. He recommends prioritizing to-do lists into urgent and not urgent, important and not important. For faculty who are writing scholarly papers, breaking down each task into smaller tasks will help make the to-do list more effective. For instance, instead of putting “write paper” on the list, you can itemize each individual component, such as “write introduction” or “make tables.”

Finding a Balance: Learning to Say “No”

Once your to-do list is organized, it is time to focus on the actual tasks you need to do. Since each day has a limited number of hours, it makes sense to spend these hours on important tasks. Using time wisely includes limiting your workload to activities that are directly related to career goals. In doing this, you may be required to say “no” to certain requests for your time.

Saying “no” can be difficult for several reasons. The first reason is the inherent desire to help out colleagues if possible, so the first inclination is to say “yes” to a new request for help. However, saying “yes” to a project, committee, or work group that is not interesting or not aligned with career goals will potentially not allow enough time to complete work that is in your area of interest. Second, being a team player is important and saying “no” may be thought of as selfish, or may jeopardize a relationship (TABLE 1). Finding the right balance between aiding colleagues by saying “yes” to some requests, while also protecting time for your own work, can be challenging.

There are several ways to say “no.”⁵ Most time management experts recommend never saying “yes”

BOX

How to Decide Whether to Say “Yes” or “No”

1. Does the request fit with your career goals?
2. Would the work use your skills?
3. What is the long-term benefit of this work? Could it lead to other work that is more closely related to your goals?
4. What is the timing of this work? Does it need to be done within a week, a month, or can it be done more long term when you may have more time?
5. Can you be involved in part of the work but not all?
6. Are you able to give up another responsibility in order to take on the new request?
7. Is the requestor someone who is your supervisor or who can influence your career?
8. Would saying “no” jeopardize other parts of your job or career goals?

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-15-00165.1>

TABLE 1
Saying “Yes” and “No”

Dangers of Saying “Yes” Too Much	Dangers of Saying “No” Too Much
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become overcommitted ▪ Not be able to do a good job on the project ▪ Not have enough time to do your own scholarly work ▪ Not be able to say “yes” to a great opportunity because you are too busy ▪ People stop asking you because you either do a bad job or don’t finish the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thought of as not a team player ▪ Becomes a habit and then it is not clear when you will say “yes” ▪ People stop asking you to do things ▪ If you say “no” to a request, you may be forced to say “yes” to the next one ▪ You may miss out on an exciting opportunity

or “no” on the spot.⁶ It takes practice, but is ultimately very helpful to always say something like, “Thank you so much for asking me. I’m going to look at my other work and see whether I think I can give this project/committee/work group enough time to do a good job.” Another option for junior faculty is to consult their mentors before saying “yes” to a request. Obviously, if a request is exciting and closely related to your area of interest, saying “yes” seems obvious, but consider the request first. Can you negotiate to get something else off your plate so that you have adequate time for the new project? Can you negotiate for administrative support or time away from clinical duties? Even if what you want your answer to be is obvious to you, spend a day or two thinking about it. The trick is to have a clear idea in your head of what you love to do, what you like to do, and what you are required to do. Then, saying “yes” and “no” can be

based on that, in conjunction with work responsibilities (BOX).

Increasing Productivity by Making Everything Count Twice

Faculty can demonstrate a scholarly approach to patient care and teaching by developing scholarly products based on clinical or educational work. For example, if you enjoy taking care of patients with a specific disease (X), you may collect patient cases and focus your educational material on the presentation, management, and follow-up of patients with disease X. Making your clinical interests into scholarly products may involve using the lectures you have put together on disease X and writing a review article for a specialty journal. You may also involve trainees in developing posters and presentations on different aspects of disease X to present at meetings (TABLE 2).

TABLE 2
Making Everything Count Twice: The Art of Using Day-to-Day Work as Scholarship

Context	Opportunity
Seeing an interesting patient in the hospital?	The resident presents the case for morning report. Write a case report or volunteer to do grand rounds on the topic for your department.
Working on a new curriculum for an inpatient rotation?	Consider getting pretest results from the residents before the curriculum change and then posttest results after the change. Is it an innovative model? Consider publishing it in an education journal or online.
Giving a talk to residents on a clinical topic in which you have a lot of experience?	Consider turning that talk into a publication. ⁷ Suggest the topic for a state or national meeting.
Developing a new clinical approach to a specific set of patients?	Review the literature to determine the various clinical management options that exist and write a review article. Then, devise a study to measure the effectiveness of your new approach and collect outcomes data. Present this work, incorporating trainees to help you. Follow up with a manuscript.
You are asked to head a committee at the medical school and realize an opportunity to start a new program on a quality improvement topic.	Send out a survey to the medical school faculty to measure their current knowledge base. Use the results to develop a workshop or curriculum. Test the faculty knowledge postimplementation of the workshop or curriculum. Present the results, and write a manuscript detailing your process and the final results.

TABLE 3
Common Distractions and Techniques to Minimize Them

Distractions	Techniques
E-mail ^{8,9}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on 2 times each day you will look seriously at your e-mails—and only look at those times to minimize the time you spend on e-mails. Turn off “alerts” so you are not distracted each time a new e-mail populates your inbox. Close your e-mail so you don’t look at it. Don’t spend your most productive time of the day on e-mails. Choose times when you are taking a break or slowing down from a more intensive or important task. For instance, check e-mail at lunch and at the end of the day.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is most efficient to schedule meetings back to back so you have a “block” of meetings. This also does not allow most meetings to run over, as you have to move on to the next meeting.
Interruptions ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a place no one can find you, such as home, the coffee shop, or the library. Tell your clinic or nurse you will check in with them at specific times during the day to attend to clinical questions, so to hold your nonemergent messages until then.
Procrastination	<p><i>Reflect on the reasons you are procrastinating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling overwhelmed, don’t know where to start. Work not exciting or uncomfortable with the work. Worried about not doing a good job. Rather be doing something else. <p><i>Overcoming procrastination:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the reason and seek a solution. Break down big projects into smaller ones (eg, write 1 section of a grant application at a time or work on tables for a paper). Use the 10-minute rule: Do something just for 10 minutes at a time just to get it started. Ask for help from a colleague. (Can the statistician help you analyze the data from your study?) Make a deal with yourself: If I get this done, I can get x, y, or z.
Perfectionism ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realize your work is never going to be perfect. Perfectionism can be a form of procrastination in that you never finish because you always want to make it better or add more. Realize everyone makes mistakes. Do not dwell on your mistakes, but learn from them.

Being Efficient

To be more productive, we need to focus. Multitasking is a misnomer because our brains can really only focus on 1 task at a time. When we think we are doing 3 things at once, our brains actually switch back and forth from task to task. In a 2006 study that used functional magnetic resonance imaging to document the activation of different parts of people’s brains as they went from one activity to another, only 1 area was activated at a time. The researchers also documented what they called a “bottleneck” at a central area of information processing, which allowed only 1 thought through at a time.¹¹ Other research has shown that it takes 30 to 60 seconds to refocus on 1 task after transferring attention to a second one. The more complex the task (ie, analyzing data or writing an abstract) the longer it takes to refocus. It has been estimated that multitasking can reduce productivity up to 40% and actually decrease intelligence quotients up to 10 points.¹²

Finding a time to write a paper is challenging when clinical or other standing duties are ever-present. We all struggle with issues or habits that distract us and make us less productive.^{13,14} It is important to identify the specific causes of procrastination and learn techniques to minimize time spent on unimportant tasks that distract us from pursuing our scholarly work (TABLE 3). Some successful academic physicians designate time each week as writing time, to limit the number of clinical phone calls and interruptions that they receive.⁸ Faculty members who write regularly are more productive than those who “binge write.”¹⁵ Furthermore, avoiding interruptions of academic work by e-mail, Internet searches, or text messages will lead to more focused academic time and increased scholarly productivity.⁹

Conclusion

Academic faculty are very busy, and often wish for more hours in the day. Developing a plan of action, learning to be efficient, and limiting requests for time

that do not align with personal career goals should help faculty members accomplish more in the same amount of time while boosting scholarly productivity.

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Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time

The science of stamina has advanced to the point where individuals, teams, and whole organizations can, with some straightforward interventions, significantly increase their capacity to get things done.

by Tony Schwartz

STEVE WANNER IS a highly respected 37-year-old partner at Ernst & Young, married with four young children. When I met him a year ago, he was working 12- to 14-hour days, felt perpetually exhausted, and found it difficult to fully engage with his family in the evenings, which left him feeling guilty and dissatisfied. He slept poorly, made no time to exercise, and seldom ate healthy meals, instead grabbing a bite to eat on the run or while working at his desk.

Wanner's experience is not uncommon. Most of us respond to rising demands in the workplace by putting in longer hours, which inevitably take a toll on us physically, mentally, and emotionally. That leads to declining levels of engagement, increasing levels of distraction, high turnover rates, and soaring medical costs among employees. My colleagues and I at the Energy

Project have worked with thousands of leaders and managers in the course of doing consulting and coaching at large organizations during the past five years. With remarkable consistency, these executives tell us they're pushing themselves harder than ever to keep up and increasingly feel they are at a breaking point.

The core problem with working longer hours is that time is a finite resource. Energy is a different story. Defined in physics as the capacity to work, energy comes from four main wellsprings in human beings: the body, emotions, mind, and spirit. In each, energy can be systematically expanded and regularly renewed by establishing specific rituals – behaviors that are intentionally practiced and precisely scheduled, with the goal of making them unconscious and automatic as quickly as possible.

To effectively reenergize their workforces, organizations need to shift their emphasis from getting more out of people to investing more in them, so they are motivated – and able – to bring more of themselves to work every day. To recharge themselves, individuals need to recognize the costs of energy-depleting behaviors and then take responsibility for changing them, regardless of the circumstances they're facing.

The rituals and behaviors Wanner established to better manage his energy transformed his life. He set an earlier bedtime and gave up drinking, which had disrupted his sleep. As a consequence, when he woke up he felt more rested and more motivated to exercise, which he now does almost every morning. In less than two months he lost 15 pounds. After working out he now sits down with his family for breakfast. Wanner still puts in long hours on the job, but he renews himself regularly

along the way. He leaves his desk for lunch and usually takes a morning and an afternoon walk outside. When he arrives at home in the evening, he's more relaxed and better able to connect with his wife and children.

Establishing simple rituals like these can lead to striking results across organizations. At Wachovia Bank, we took a group of employees through a pilot energy management program and then measured their performance against that of a control group. The participants outperformed the controls on a series of financial metrics, such as the value of loans they generated. They also reported substantial improvements in their customer relationships, their engagement with work, and their personal

The core problem with working longer hours is that time is a finite resource. Energy is a different story.

satisfaction. In this article, I'll describe the Wachovia study in a little more detail. Then I'll explain what executives and managers can do to increase and regularly renew work capacity – the approach used by the Energy Project, which builds on, deepens, and extends several core concepts developed by my former partner Jim Loehr in his seminal work with athletes.

Linking Capacity and Performance at Wachovia

Most large organizations invest in developing employees' skills, knowledge, and competence. Very few help build and sustain their capacity – their energy – which is typically taken for granted. In fact, greater capacity makes it possible to get more done in less time at a higher level of engagement and with

more sustainability. Our experience at Wachovia bore this out.

In early 2006 we took 106 employees at 12 regional banks in southern New Jersey through a curriculum of four modules, each of which focused on specific strategies for strengthening one of the four main dimensions of energy. We delivered it at one-month intervals to groups of approximately 20 to 25, ranging from senior leaders to lower-level managers. We also assigned each attendee a fellow employee as a source of support between sessions. Using Wachovia's own key performance metrics, we evaluated how the participant group performed compared with a group of employees at similar levels at a nearby set of Wachovia banks who did not go through the training. To create a credible basis for comparison, we looked at year-over-year percentage changes in performance across several metrics.

On a measure called the "Big 3" – revenues from three kinds of loans – the participants showed a year-over-year increase that was 13 percentage points greater than the control group's in the first three months of our study. On revenues from deposits, the participants exceeded the control group's year-over-year gain by 20 percentage points during that same period. The precise gains varied month by month, but with only a handful of exceptions, the participants continued to significantly outperform the control group for a full year after completing the program. Although other variables undoubtedly influenced these outcomes, the participants' superior performance was notable in its consistency. (See the exhibit "How Energy Renewal Programs Boosted Productivity at Wachovia.")

We also asked participants how the program influenced them personally. Sixty-eight percent reported that it had a positive impact on their relationships with clients and customers. Seventy-one percent said that it had a noticeable or substantial positive im-

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pact on their productivity and performance. These findings corroborated a raft of anecdotal evidence we've gathered about the effectiveness of this approach among leaders at other large companies such as Ernst & Young, Sony, Deutsche Bank, Nokia, ING Direct, Ford, and MasterCard.



The Body: Physical Energy

Our program begins by focusing on physical energy. It is scarcely news that inadequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, and rest diminish people's basic energy levels, as well as their ability to manage their emotions and focus their attention. Nonetheless, many executives don't find ways to practice consistently healthy behaviors, given all the other demands in their lives.

Before participants in our program begin to explore ways to increase their physical energy, they take an energy audit, which includes four questions in each energy dimension – body, emotions, mind, and spirit. (See the exhibit “Are You Headed for an Energy Crisis?”) On average, participants get eight to ten of those 16 questions “wrong,” meaning they're doing things such as skipping breakfast, failing to express appreciation to others, struggling to focus on one thing at a time, or spending too little time on activities that give them a sense of purpose. While most participants aren't surprised to learn these behaviors are counterproductive, having them all listed in one place is often uncomfortable, sobering, and galvanizing. The audit highlights employees' greatest energy deficits. Participants also

fill out charts designed to raise their awareness about how their exercise, diet, and sleep practices influence their energy levels.

The next step is to identify rituals for building and renewing physical energy. When Gary Faro, a vice president at Wachovia, began the program, he was significantly overweight, ate poorly, lacked a regular exercise routine, worked long hours, and typically slept no more than five or six hours a night. That is not an unusual profile among the leaders and managers we see. Over the course of the program, Faro began regular cardiovascular and strength training. He started going to bed at a designated time and sleeping longer. He changed his eating habits from two big meals a day (“Where I usually gorged myself,” he says) to smaller meals and light snacks every three hours. The aim was to help him stabilize his glucose levels over the course of the day, avoiding peaks and valleys. He lost 50 pounds in the process, and his energy levels soared. “I used to schedule tough projects for the morning, when I knew that I would be more focused,” Faro says. “I don't have to do that anymore because I find that I'm just as focused now at 5 PM as I am at 8 AM.”

Another key ritual Faro adopted was to take brief but regular breaks at specific intervals throughout the workday – always leaving his desk. The value of such breaks is grounded in our physiology. “Ultradian rhythms” refer to 90- to 120-minute cycles during which our bodies slowly move from a high-energy state into a physiological trough. Toward the end of each cycle, the body begins to crave a period of recovery. The signals include physical restlessness, yawning, hunger, and difficulty concentrating, but many of us ignore them and keep working. The consequence is that our energy reservoir – our remaining capacity – burns down as the day wears on.

Intermittent breaks for renewal, we have found, result in higher and more sustainable performance. The length

of renewal is less important than the quality. It is possible to get a great deal of recovery in a short time – as little as several minutes – if it involves a ritual that allows you to disengage from work and truly change channels. That could range from getting up to talk to a colleague about something other than work, to listening to music on an iPod, to walking up and down stairs in an office building. While breaks are countercultural in most organizations and counterintuitive for many high achievers, their value is multifaceted.

Matthew Lang is a managing director for Sony in South Africa. He adopted some of the same rituals that Faro did, including a 20-minute walk in the afternoons. Lang's walk not only gives him a mental and emotional breather and some exercise but also has become the time when he gets his best creative ideas. That's because when he walks he is not actively thinking, which allows the dominant left hemisphere of his brain to give way to the right hemisphere with its greater capacity to see the big picture and make imaginative leaps.



The Emotions: Quality of Energy

When people are able to take more control of their emotions, they can improve the quality of their energy, regardless of the external pressures they're facing. To do this, they first must become more aware of how they feel at various points during the workday and of the impact these emotions have on their effectiveness. Most people realize that they tend to perform best when they're feeling positive energy. What they find

surprising is that they're not able to perform well or to lead effectively when they're feeling any other way.

Unfortunately, without intermittent recovery, we're not physiologically capable of sustaining highly positive emotions for long periods. Confronted with relentless demands and unexpected challenges, people tend to slip into negative emotions – the fight-or-flight mode – often multiple times in a day. They become irritable and impatient, or anxious and insecure. Such states of mind drain people's energy and cause friction in their relationships. Fight-or-flight emotions also make it impossible to think clearly, logically, and reflectively. When executives learn to recognize what kinds of events trigger their negative emotions, they gain greater capacity to take control of their reactions.

One simple but powerful ritual for defusing negative emotions is what we call "buying time." Deep abdominal breathing is one way to do that. Exhaling slowly for five or six seconds induces relaxation and recovery, and turns off the fight-or-flight response. When we began working with Fujio Nishida, president of Sony Europe, he had a habit of lighting up a cigarette each time something especially stressful occurred – at least two or three times a day. Otherwise, he didn't smoke. We taught him the breathing exercise

beneficial to the giver as to the receiver. It can take the form of a handwritten note, an e-mail, a call, or a conversation – and the more detailed and specific, the higher the impact. As with all rituals, setting aside a particular time to do it vastly increases the chances of success. Ben Jenkins, vice chairman and president of the General Bank at Wachovia in Charlotte, North Carolina, built his appreciation ritual into time set aside for mentoring. He began scheduling lunches or dinners regularly with people who worked for him. Previously, the only sit-downs he'd had with his direct reports were to hear monthly reports on their numbers or to give them yearly performance reviews. Now, over meals, he makes it a priority to recognize their accomplishments and also to talk with them about their lives and their aspirations rather than their immediate work responsibilities.

Finally, people can cultivate positive emotions by learning to change the stories they tell themselves about the events in their lives. Often, people in conflict cast themselves in the role of victim, blaming others or external circumstances for their problems. Becoming aware of the difference between the facts in a given situation and the way we interpret those facts can be powerful in itself. It's been a revelation for many of the people we work with to

People can cultivate positive energy by learning to change the stories they tell themselves about the events in their lives. We teach them to tell the most hopeful stories possible.

as an alternative, and it worked immediately: Nishida found he no longer had the desire for a cigarette. It wasn't the smoking that had given him relief from the stress, we concluded, but the relaxation prompted by the deep inhalation and exhalation.

A powerful ritual that fuels positive emotions is expressing appreciation to others, a practice that seems to be as

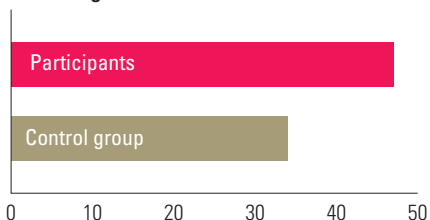
discover they have a choice about how to view a given event and to recognize how powerfully the story they tell influences the emotions they feel. We teach them to tell the most hopeful and personally empowering story possible in any given situation, without denying or minimizing the facts.

The most effective way people can change a story is to view it through any

How Energy Renewal Programs Boosted Productivity at Wachovia

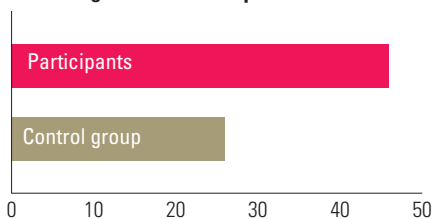
At Wachovia Bank, employees participating in an energy renewal program outperformed a control group of employees, demonstrating significantly greater improvements in year-over-year performance during the first quarter of 2006.

Percentage increase in loan revenues*



*From three critical kinds of loans

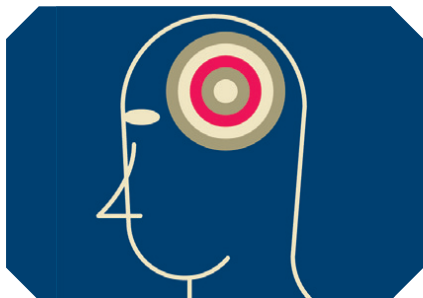
Percentage increase in deposit revenues



of three new lenses, which are all alternatives to seeing the world from the victim perspective. With the *reverse lens*, for example, people ask themselves, "What would the other person in this conflict say and in what ways might that be true?" With the *long lens* they ask, "How will I most likely view this situation in six months?" With the *wide lens* they ask themselves, "Regardless of the outcome of this issue, how can I grow and learn from it?" Each of these lenses can help people intentionally cultivate more positive emotions.

Nicolas Babin, director of corporate communications for Sony Europe, was the point person for calls from reporters when Sony went through several recalls of its batteries in 2006. Over time he found his work increasingly exhausting and dispiriting. After practicing the lens

exercises, he began finding ways to tell himself a more positive and empowering story about his role. “I realized,” he explains, “that this was an opportunity for me to build stronger relationships with journalists by being accessible to them and to increase Sony’s credibility by being straightforward and honest.”



The Mind: Focus of Energy

Many executives view multitasking as a necessity in the face of all the demands they juggle, but it actually undermines productivity. Distractions are costly: A temporary shift in attention from one task to another – stopping to answer an e-mail or take a phone call, for instance – increases the amount of time necessary to finish the primary task by as much as 25%, a phenomenon known as “switching time.” It’s far more efficient to fully focus for 90 to 120 minutes, take a true break, and then fully focus on the next activity. We refer to these work periods as “ultradian sprints.”

Once people see how much they struggle to concentrate, they can create rituals to reduce the relentless interruptions that technology has introduced in their lives. We start out with an exercise that forces them to face the impact of daily distractions. They attempt to complete a complex task and are regularly interrupted – an experience that, people report, ends up feeling much like everyday life.

Dan Cluna, a vice president at Wachovia, designed two rituals to better focus his attention. The first one is to leave his desk and go into a conference

room, away from phones and e-mail, whenever he has a task that requires concentration. He now finishes reports in a third of the time they used to require. Cluna built his second ritual around meetings at branches with the financial specialists who report to him. Previously, he would answer his phone whenever it rang during these meetings. As a consequence, the meetings he scheduled for an hour often stretched to two, and he rarely gave anyone his full attention. Now Cluna lets his phone go to voice mail, so that he can focus completely on the person in front of him. He now answers the accumulated voice-mail messages when he has downtime between meetings.

E&Y’s hard-charging Wanner used to answer e-mail constantly throughout the day – whenever he heard a “ping.” Then he created a ritual of checking his e-mail just twice a day – at 10:15 AM and 2:30 PM. Whereas previously he couldn’t keep up with all his messages, he discovered he could clear his in-box each time he opened it – the reward of fully focusing his attention on e-mail for 45 minutes at a time. Wanner has also reset the expectations of all the people he regularly communicates with by e-mail. “I’ve told them if it’s an emergency and they need an instant response, they can call me and I’ll always pick up,” he says. Nine months later he has yet to receive such a call.

Michael Henke, a senior manager at E&Y, sat his team down at the start of the busy season last winter and told them that at certain points during the day he was going to turn off his Same-time (an in-house instant-message system). The result, he said, was that he would be less available to them for questions. Like Wanner, he told his team to call him if any emergency arose, but they rarely did. He also encouraged the group to take regular breaks throughout the day and to eat more regularly. They finished the busy season under budget and more profitable than other teams that hadn’t followed the energy renewal program. “We got the same

amount of work done in less time,” says Henke. “It made for a win-win.”

Another way to mobilize mental energy is to focus systematically on activities that have the most long-term leverage. Unless people intentionally schedule time for more challenging work, they tend not to get to it at all or rush through it at the last minute. Perhaps the most effective focus ritual the executives we work with have adopted is to identify each night the most important challenge for the next day and make it their very first priority when they arrive in the morning. Jean Luc Duquesne, a vice president for Sony Europe in Paris, used to answer his e-mail as soon as he got to the office, just as many people do. He now tries to concentrate the first hour of every day on the most important topic. He finds that he often emerges at 10 AM feeling as if he’s already had a productive day.



The Human Spirit: Energy of Meaning and Purpose

People tap into the energy of the human spirit when their everyday work and activities are consistent with what they value most and with what gives them a sense of meaning and purpose. If the work they’re doing really matters to them, they typically feel more positive energy, focus better, and demonstrate greater perseverance. Regrettably, the high demands and fast pace of corporate life don’t leave much time to pay attention to these issues, and many people don’t even recognize meaning and purpose as potential sources of energy. Indeed, if we tried to

Are You Headed for an Energy Crisis?

Please check the statements below that are true for you.

Body

- ☐ I don't regularly get at least seven to eight hours of sleep, and I often wake up feeling tired.
- ☐ I frequently skip breakfast, or I settle for something that isn't nutritious.
- ☐ I don't work out enough (meaning cardiovascular training at least three times a week and strength training at least once a week).
- ☐ I don't take regular breaks during the day to truly renew and recharge, or I often eat lunch at my desk, if I eat it at all.

Emotions

- ☐ I frequently find myself feeling irritable, impatient, or anxious at work, especially when work is demanding.
- ☐ I don't have enough time with my family and loved ones, and when I'm with them, I'm not always really with them.
- ☐ I have too little time for the activities that I most deeply enjoy.
- ☐ I don't stop frequently enough to express my appreciation to others or to savor my accomplishments and blessings.

Mind

- ☐ I have difficulty focusing on one thing at a time, and I am easily distracted during the day, especially by e-mail.
- ☐ I spend much of my day reacting to immediate crises and demands rather than focusing on activities with longer-term value and high leverage.
- ☐ I don't take enough time for reflection, strategizing, and creative thinking.
- ☐ I work in the evenings or on weekends, and I almost never take an e-mail-free vacation.

Spirit

- ☐ I don't spend enough time at work doing what I do best and enjoy most.
- ☐ There are significant gaps between what I say is most important to me in my life and how I actually allocate my time and energy.
- ☐ My decisions at work are more often influenced by external demands than by a strong, clear sense of my own purpose.
- ☐ I don't invest enough time and energy in making a positive difference to others or to the world.

How is your overall energy?

Total number of statements checked: _____

Guide to scores

0–3: Excellent energy management skills
 4–6: Reasonable energy management skills
 7–10: Significant energy management deficits
 11–16: A full-fledged energy management crisis

What do you need to work on?

Number of checks in each category:

Body _____ Mind _____
 Emotions _____ Spirit _____

Guide to category scores

0: Excellent energy management skills
 1: Strong energy management skills
 2: Significant deficits
 3: Poor energy management skills
 4: A full-fledged energy crisis

begin our program by focusing on the human spirit, it would likely have minimal impact. Only when participants have experienced the value of the rituals they establish in the other dimensions do they start to see that being attentive to their own deeper needs dramatically influences their effectiveness and satisfaction at work.

For E&Y partner Jonathan Ans-pacher, simply having the opportunity to ask himself a series of questions about what really mattered to him was both illuminating and energizing. "I think it's important to be a little introspective and say, 'What do you want to be remembered for?'" he told us. "You don't want to be remembered as the crazy partner who worked these long hours and had his people be miserable. When my kids call me and ask, 'Can you come to my band concert?' I want to say, 'Yes, I'll be there and I'll be in the front row.' I don't want to be the father that comes in and sits in the back and is on his Blackberry and has to step out to take a phone call."

To access the energy of the human spirit, people need to clarify priorities and establish accompanying rituals in three categories: doing what they do best and enjoy most at work; consciously allocating time and energy to the areas of their lives – work, family, health, service to others – they deem most important; and living their core values in their daily behaviors.

When you're attempting to discover what you do best and what you enjoy most, it's important to realize that these two things aren't necessarily mutually inclusive. You may get lots of positive feedback about something you're very good at but not truly enjoy it. Conversely, you can love doing something but have no gift for it, so that achieving success requires much more energy than it makes sense to invest.

To help program participants discover their areas of strength, we ask them to recall at least two work experiences in the past several months during which they found themselves in their “sweet spot” – feeling effective, effortlessly absorbed, inspired, and fulfilled. Then we have them deconstruct those experiences to understand precisely what energized them so positively and what specific talents they were drawing on. If leading strategy feels like a sweet spot, for example, is it being in charge that’s most invigorating or participating in a creative endeavor? Or is it using a skill that comes to you easily and so feels good to exercise? Finally, we have people establish a ritual that will encourage them to do more of exactly that kind of activity at work.

A senior leader we worked with realized that one of the activities he least liked was reading and summarizing detailed sales reports, whereas one of his favorites was brainstorming new

strategies. The leader found a direct report who loved immersing himself in numbers and delegated the sales report task to him – happily settling for brief oral summaries from him each day. The leader also began scheduling a free-form 90-minute strategy session every other week with the most creative people in his group.

In the second category, devoting time and energy to what’s important to you, there is often a similar divide between what people say is important and what they actually do. Rituals can help close this gap. When Jean Luc Duquesne, the Sony Europe vice president, thought hard about his personal priorities, he realized that spending time with his family was what mattered most to him, but it often got squeezed out of his day. So he instituted a ritual in which he switches off for at least three hours every evening when he gets home, so he can focus on his family. “I’m still not an expert on PlayStation,”

he told us, “but according to my youngest son, I’m learning and I’m a good student.” Steve Wanner, who used to talk on the cell phone all the way to his front door on his commute home, has chosen a specific spot 20 minutes from his house where he ends whatever call he’s on and puts away the phone. He spends the rest of his commute relaxing so that when he does arrive home, he’s less preoccupied with work and more available to his wife and children.

The third category, practicing your core values in your everyday behavior, is a challenge for many as well. Most people are living at such a furious pace that they rarely stop to ask themselves what they stand for and who they want to be. As a consequence, they let external demands dictate their actions.

We don’t suggest that people explicitly define their values, because the results are usually too predictable. Instead, we seek to uncover them, in part by asking questions that are inadvertently

Behind every success

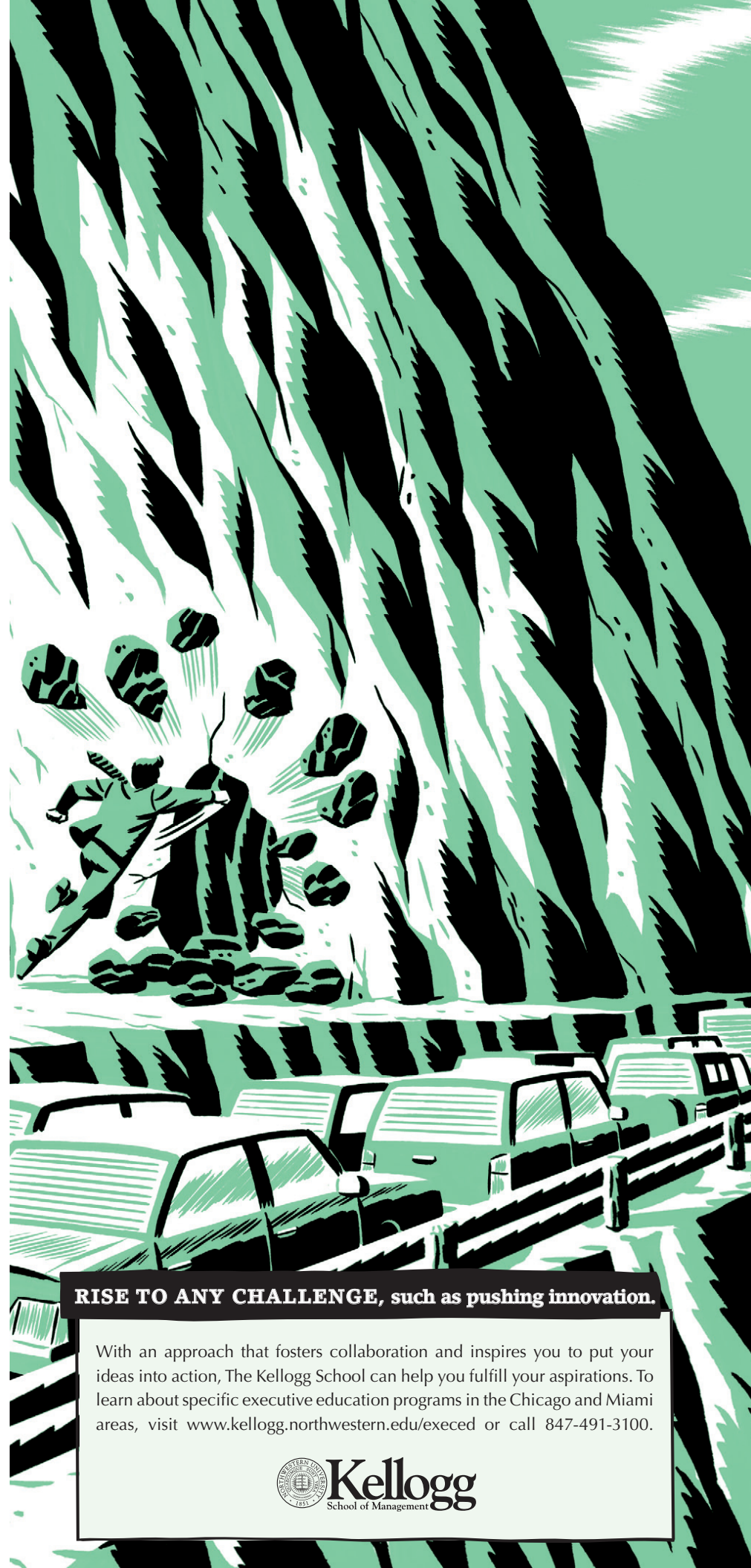
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revealing, such as, “What are the qualities that you find most off-putting when you see them in others?” By describing what they can’t stand, people unintentionally divulge what they stand for. If you are very offended by stinginess, for example, generosity is probably one of your key values. If you are especially put off by rudeness in others, it’s likely that consideration is a high value for you. As in the other categories, establishing rituals can help bridge the gap between the values you aspire to and how you currently behave. If you discover that consideration is a key value, but you are perpetually late for meetings, the ritual might be to end the meetings you run five minutes earlier than usual and intentionally show up five minutes early for the meeting that follows.

Addressing these three categories helps people go a long way toward achieving a greater sense of alignment, satisfaction, and well-being in their lives on and off the job. Those feelings are a source of positive energy in their own right and reinforce people’s desire to persist at rituals in other energy dimensions as well.

...

This new way of working takes hold only to the degree that organizations support their people in adopting new behaviors. We have learned, sometimes painfully, that not all executives and companies are prepared to embrace the notion that personal renewal for employees will lead to better and more sustainable performance. To succeed, renewal efforts need solid support and commitment from senior management, beginning with the key decision maker.

At Wachovia, Susanne Svizeny, the president of the region in which we conducted our study, was the primary cheerleader for the program. She embraced the principles in her own life and made a series of personal changes, including a visible commitment to building more regular renewal rituals into her work life. Next, she took it upon herself to foster the excitement and commitment of her leadership

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team. Finally, she regularly reached out by e-mail to all participants in the project to encourage them in their rituals and seek their feedback. It was clear to everyone that she took the work seriously. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and the results spoke for themselves.

At Sony Europe, several hundred leaders have embraced the principles of energy management. Over the next year, more than 2,000 of their direct reports will go through the energy renewal program. From Fujio Nishida on down, it has become increasingly culturally acceptable at Sony to take intermittent breaks, work out at midday, answer

of the CEO, the company was under intense pressure to grow rapidly, and the senior team couldn't tear themselves away from their focus on immediate survival – even though taking time out for renewal might have allowed them to be more productive at a more sustainable level.

By contrast, the group at Ernst & Young successfully went through the process at the height of tax season. With the permission of their leaders, they practiced defusing negative emotions by breathing or telling themselves different stories, and alternated highly focused periods of work with renewal breaks. Most people in the


A number of firms have built “renewal rooms” where people can regularly go to relax and refuel.

e-mail only at designated times, and even ask colleagues who seem irritable or impatient what stories they're telling themselves.

Organizational support also entails shifts in policies, practices, and cultural messages. A number of firms we worked with have built “renewal rooms” where people can regularly go to relax and refuel. Others offer subsidized gym memberships. In some cases, leaders themselves gather groups of employees for midday workouts. One company instituted a no-meeting zone between 8 and 9 AM to ensure that people had at least one hour absolutely free of meetings. At several companies, including Sony, senior leaders collectively agreed to stop checking e-mail during meetings as a way to make the meetings more focused and efficient.

One factor that can get in the way of success is a crisis mentality. The optimal candidates for energy renewal programs are organizations that are feeling enough pain to be eager for new solutions but not so much that they're completely overwhelmed. At one organization where we had the active support

group reported that this busy season was the least stressful they'd ever experienced.

The implicit contract between organizations and their employees today is that each will try to get as much from the other as they can, as quickly as possible, and then move on without looking back. We believe that is mutually self-defeating. Both individuals and the organizations they work for end up depleted rather than enriched. Employees feel increasingly beleaguered and burned out. Organizations are forced to settle for employees who are less than fully engaged and to constantly hire and train new people to replace those who choose to leave. We envision a new and explicit contract that benefits all parties: Organizations invest in their people across all dimensions of their lives to help them build and sustain their value. Individuals respond by bringing all their multidimensional energy wholeheartedly to work every day. Both grow in value as a result. 

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Early career faculty time management challenges: The role of the leader

"...it is mainly through the control of time that academic power is exercised." - Pierre Bourdieu

As a leader in an academic unit (director of a research group or training grant, division chief, department chair, or dean) you have a responsibility to help your faculty succeed. You know the basics: mentoring for research, teaching, and general career development, support for grant and manuscript preparation, and provision of "start-up" (laboratories and other resources) so that research gets off to a good start. Hopefully your institution and/or professional society offers programs to which you can send your early career faculty to enhance skill building in these areas, as well as the "softer" skills of people management, negotiation, and so on.

You may not think that you have a role in helping your faculty use their time more effectively.

You should think again.

In my conversations with faculty members around the country, "too much to do" is a major source of stress. Although life in academic medicine has always been busy, the pressures these days are particularly intense. You know the effect that, for example, current dwindling of funding and constricted hospital budgets have on everyone. Based on a survey of early career academic medical center faculty, Bellini and colleagues¹ reported 21 workplace "stresses" identified by the group. Forty percent were time-related issues. Nearly 80% of the group felt stressed by both lack of work-life balance and "too many time pressures," and nearly 70% were already concerned about burnout. Some of the specific issues will sound familiar:

- too much paperwork,
- not enough time for research and other academic pursuits and
- lack of control over how time was spent.

I believe that senior colleagues, and especially leaders, have a responsibility to attend to these issues. Faculty members who have a clear idea of what they should do, and effective processes for getting that work done will be more likely to succeed, and this success contributes to the success of the unit and institution.

When I began work on this article, my idea was to offer the typical sort of "self-help" advice along the lines of "Seven easy steps an academic leader can take to ensure good faculty time management among..." -- but I soon realized that the issues are too complex for facile solutions.

Here is a nutshell message: simply telling someone to be more efficient does not work.

Now for the long version.

Several principles have been useful to me as I think about these issues:

1. New faculty members may have never encountered time management issues before. The path to becoming a physician or scientist is structured, and can often be navigated successfully by those who have problems with procrastination, lack of focus, perfectionism, difficulty making decisions, and general disorganization. However, moving into a faculty position, with its multiple roles, responsibilities, and need for independently directed work, can quickly expose these problems. New faculty may be as shocked as you are at the problems they are experiencing, and they often have no idea how to change.
2. As mentors/advisors/coaches, we should not rely too much on our own experience. If you are among the "naturally organized," you may not really understand why anyone should need to learn these skills; some leaders in this category believe that time management skills are "soft" and not worth supporting. Or, you may have personally overcome time issues, and you have a system that works for you; you need to avoid the error of the convert in assuming your system will work for others.
3. Although an "intervention," such as reading a book or attending a workshop can get things off to a good start, lasting change takes time and experimentation to find what works. The mentor needs to be patient and not expect miracles.

4. Some people have no interest in change, or have an underlying condition that requires professional psychological/psychiatric help to make change possible.

So, although I can't provide easy answers, I do have several strategies for you to consider. These are framed as if you are the direct supervisor of the early career faculty member, but if you are the dean or the chair, you can expect, respectively, your chairs or division directors/mentors to use these approaches.

ONE

Help your faculty members identify the work they should be doing, and the work they should not be doing.

I hope it will not come as a surprise to you -- although I agree that this reality is disappointing!

- Our supply of time cannot be expanded,
- We do not have time to do everything in which we are interested, and
- Thus, how we choose to spend our time is critical to successfully accomplishing our goals.

You are probably already expert at conveying clear expectations about outcomes, but I recommend that you go the extra step and discuss specifically what kinds of work will show progress toward those outcomes. New faculty may try to take on too much at once, Or, they may choose projects that seem to lead to the outcome, but you know they will not.

Counseling about "what not to do" can be challenging. Early career faculty often get sidetracked pursuing activities that do not move them toward their career goals, including promotion, or that are not of real value to themselves or the unit. Part of the challenge is that some activities which junior faculty choose sound as if they are valuable. You can think of many such examples, but these include agreeing to write a chapter (when peer review articles are a better use of time), joining a committee (that provides no direct career benefit), devoting excessive extra time to patient care activities, or collaborating on someone else's grant (when the research is not central to the junior person's focus).

Saying 'no' is difficult for many people, and it is particularly difficult for junior faculty. They worry about offending senior people or missing opportunities, or they simply don't know what is in their best interests. You can help by offering to be a sounding board anytime a junior faculty member gets asked to take on something new, and you can offer a "cover story" that can be used when the answer is no ("my division chief won't allow me to do this...").

Finally, ask yourself if the institution really is asking too much -and be willing to consider what might be taken "off the plate." I know this is difficult in our financially challenged times, but sometimes too much is too much, and we pay an institutional price in high turnover or disengaged, burned out faculty.

TWO

If the faculty member has been promised protected time, figure out how to really protect it.

I know this is can be very difficult -- an extra clinic needs covering, classes of the professor on leave need to be taught, and so on --, but you have both a contractual and a moral obligation to follow through.

THREE

Create a work environment that promotes both productivity and well being.

I believe this to be true: the academic health care center culture encourages people to work in ways that are not healthy, and not supportive of optimal productivity. Examples that I imagine will sound familiar: the expectation (for yourself or others) to work long hours; no breaks; no vacations; and in contact 27/7.

The consultant Tony Schwartz (www.theenergyproject.com) is arguably the most prominent, and persuasive, proponent of healthier work practices. Two of his books, *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy Not Time* (2004) and *The Way We're Working Isn't Working* (2010) are reasonably evidence based discussions of why change is needed, along with concrete strategies for doing so.²

The issue of long hours is particularly difficult for early career faculty members. They have a lot to do, and more than can ever be completed. They see some of their peers praised simply for the hours put in ("That Jane is a real go-getter! She's the first one in the building every morning and the last to go home."). As the junior person is staggering out the door at night, already late for something important at home, they notice what they think is a disapproving glance from a senior faculty member still at his desk. Meanwhile, the faculty member has a family, needs sleep, exercise, and relaxation time - but feels so guilty they can't do any of these things.

Schwartz², in a recent blog post, described the issue like this as part of a discussion of work place productivity myths:

"Myth #4: The best way to get more work done is to work longer hours.

No single myth is more destructive to employers and employees than this one. The reason is that we're not designed to operate like computers — at high speeds, continuously, for long periods of time.

Instead, human beings are designed to pulse intermittently between spending and renewing energy. Great performers — and enlightened leaders — recognize that it's not the number of hours people work that determines the value they create, but rather the energy they bring to whatever hours they work."

To be clear, it is not that long hours are always bad - they are either necessary or desirable sometimes -- but rather that a regular diet of long hours is neither sustainable, or associated with optimal productivity.

Here are a few concrete ideas to consider - but you should think beyond these to find approaches that work for your institution and group. This would be a great topic for brainstorming by your faculty as a group.

- Be explicit that faculty members will be evaluated based on the outcomes, not on "face time."
- Don't make comments, or even jokes, that imply the faculty member is not spending enough time at work (As Joe leaves the lab at 6:00 pm, you glance at your watch and say with a smile, "Joe - leaving a little early tonight, aren't we?"). Of course, this does not apply if someone is actually missing required appointments, or not producing outcomes. But address those problems directly.
- Take vacations, nights off, weekends out of the communication loop yourself, and encourage others to do the same. Talk with your colleagues about what you do to relax and relieve stress. You might benefit as well!
- Long hours are sometimes the result of a workplace that is so filled with distractions that work requiring concentration - like writing - can't be done during normal hours. Let your group know that it is OK to close the door or go off site to do intensive work.
- Watch for faculty members who may be spending too much time at work and seem to be distressed. Address the issue with them directly, express your concern over their apparent distress, and offer to brainstorm solutions or to find help, as appropriate.

FOUR

Model communication methods that are respectful of people's time.

I'm talking meetings and email practices here - both well-known workplace time sinks.

Model leadership of effective meetings, and mentor others to do the same. You probably know the basic best practices:

- Make sure the meeting is needed,
- Invite only the people who need to be there,
- Circulate an agenda in advance,
- Start and end on time,
- Stay on topic,
- Create explicit next steps at the end,
- Make sure it is clear who is responsible for each step or task, and
- Follow up to be sure these are done.

Some experts recommend that attendees stand during meetings to ensure brevity, but I can't personally go there!

Reducing the amount of time spent in email depends largely on developing more efficient personal email process (see, for example, my article "Getting Email under Control," posted on my website).

However, some changes in the workgroup email culture can help. Here are some ideas to consider:

- An agreement to create emails that make it easier for the recipient to handle: use of meaningful subject lines, messages limited to less than one screen length, clear instructions in either the **subject line** or the **first line** of the message about what is expected of the recipient (e.g. FYI only, "get back to me today about this:").
- An agreement not to use email for communications that are complex, or that involve conflict or the giving of bad news, or any other situation in which a conversation is more appropriate.
- An agreement about appropriate response times. Email is not the best medium for emergent communication, and you can encourage the use of phone, pagers, and walking down the hall to talk as alternatives. Establishing

an optimal upper end for response time is harder, because it depends on the kind of things for which the group uses email. My sense is that in most workplaces, a response by no later than the next day is expected.

- An agreement that people get to take breaks from email: no email during meetings; no responses expected overnight - say between 6 pm and 7 am, and on weekends; no connectivity while on vacation; and other breaks that make sense to your group such as when an individual is engaged in scholarly writing. Breaks will reduce the "addictive stress" of continuous email connectivity and will improve concentration and focus on real work.

FIVE

Support individual change.

Even though you are not a professional time management coach, as a leader you are in an excellent position to support and promote individual change. You have the authority to discuss these concerns, and ask for change; you either know personally or can find out from others, the nature of the problems and the productivity goals that are not being met; you have (at least some) resources you can bring to bear on finding solutions. If changes are undertaken, you can provide specific constructive feedback on whether progress is being made.

Some problems appear to have a straightforward solution, but one that may not be readily available. An example I hear about frequently is the frustration and inefficient use of time that results when a new faculty member receives no training in the institutional email and calendaring system, or in other software that is commonly used in the department. This problem would be relatively easy to solve, though I expect that budgets for this kind of training have disappeared at most places. To help with this problem you may need to both provide release time and pay for the training - but the long term payoff will be worth it.

At the unit level, you can support - or encourage the institution to offer -- workshops on various time management topics, and access to other self-help resources (books, on line resources, etc.). These methods are sometimes, understandably, met with skepticism as to their effectiveness. Here I need to reveal my conflict of interest as a presenter of these kinds of workshops, and I agree that "proof" of effectiveness is hard to come by. That said, the long term feedback I receive from participants supports the idea that a workshops can get someone started on a path to change, or can provide that one new idea that makes a difference. If you are going to use this approach, my advice is to use the highest quality presenters available.

Finding help for individual complex time management problems is challenging. While there is no guarantee of success, I encourage you to try. You can get ideas from colleagues, and your institution's faculty affairs leaders and human resources offices. There may be private coaches who come highly recommended, and if you are able, you can provide some financial support directly, or allow the faculty member to use a career development account for that purpose.

Living with time stress has become a way of life in our culture. I believe that as a leader, using these ideas as a start, you can make a difference for yourself and your faculty.

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