

What's Important Now?

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If your doctor told you that you could only work for 2 hours a day or you would die immediately, what would you do? Okay, maybe death is a bit harsh, but I think you get the point. If you only had two hours each day where you could actually do work, and then the rest of the time you were forced to relax and enjoy life, what would you do in those two hours?

It is probably easier to start by saying what you *wouldn't* do during this time—mindlessly surf the internet, text/Skype with people, run around the office just enough so you don't get called out by your boss for doing nothing. The list is pretty much endless. In fact, I would say it's a fair assumption that for most of us, what we *wouldn't* do is *exactly* what we do on a daily basis. So here you are, 120 minutes away from the end of your workday, and you have to somehow be productive enough to put food on your family's table and pay the bills. How are you going to do it?

See, here's the thing, this article would not have to be written, except for the fact that I work in the land of the living dead. Every day I see people who spend 80+ hours a week in their cubicle purely so they can have a few more zeros on their paychecks. Now, if they walked into the gym with copious amounts of energy and had a lust for life, without having any coffee, then I wouldn't say anything. In fact, I might consider a career change because I could definitely use a few more zeros on my paychecks. But they're not, and neither is society at large.

In America we are brought up to believe that if you work really hard at something you can achieve anything. I was raised to believe this, as was my father, because this workhorse mentality was developed and preached through practice by my grandfather. Don't get me wrong here, I love working and I love working hard and I love my job, but there is a distinct difference between working efficiently and effectively as to get the most out of your time and putting streaks of mindless tasks together so you can punch your time card at the end of the day.

People may or may not be realizing they do it, either. Sure, you notice the obvious stuff when you clearly aren't doing work. But what about the way you do things because you were told that was the most effective way to do them or because that's how they've always been done? What about the things you do purely out of routine or habit? Have you ever thought about if there is a better way, a more time-efficient and cost-effective way to do things? Because, in the end, when there are fewer hours to do what you actually want to do, things have to be sacrificed, and, more times than not, it ends up being people's health and well being.

Eating out because you are too tired to cook, skipping on going to the gym, too much caffeine, and little or poor sleep are all common complaints I hear every single day as to why people are in the physical condition that they are in. Not to mention people's stress levels are through the roof, they have low self-esteem, and every relationship in their life seems to be falling apart. So let me ask you this, if you lose every positive relationship, your health, and your peace of mind, is it worth it?

There was a time, about two months ago, where I could feel myself reaching that point of mindless work just to put in face time. I was spending more time at the gym, often going from 5:30 AM to 8:00 PM with an hour for lunch. I had opened up my schedule on Saturdays as well, allowing myself to go from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Still, my session count was as low as it had been since I started working there back in August. I was constantly fatigued throughout the day, and truthfully, I really didn't want to be at the gym. Instead of being a place that turned me on and excited me, I could feel myself dragging every morning knowing that I had to go back. So what did I do? I figured out when I *actually* wanted to be at the gym, the days and times that were most appealing to me. Then I focused on filling my schedule up in those times and those times only. I didn't want mid-afternoon sessions, so it didn't make sense for me to be at the gym during that time trying to pick up clients. And I didn't have any regular weekend clients, so I chose to just block out my weekends. Since I started focusing on those times and days, I have been spending half the time at the gym and getting close to three times as many sessions. That's an efficiency rating that is six times higher than before. Plus, I have my weekends off now, so I come back Monday well rested and excited to be there.

The two-hour scenario wasn't just to emphasize a point; I really do want you to brainstorm about this. What would you do? How would you make ends meet? Well, first off, you would prioritize. It has been said, and I fully believe this, that lack of time isn't due to having too few hours in the day but to one's inability to prioritize effectively. If you only had two hours to work each day, what would you do? Probably only the most important things. In fact, it might only be the most important *thing*. What is the one thing in your life or work that you would completely focus on for those two hours in order to sustain your current lifestyle?

Think about that for the next month, and in addition, ask yourself this question at 8:00 AM, noon, and 4:00 PM every day, "Am I maximizing my ability to accomplish that one thing at this moment?" Just by asking that one question three times a day and focusing your efforts towards what is truly important in your work, you will find yourself having less stress, more time, and more health than you could have ever had before. And, on top of all of that, I wouldn't be surprised if the increased efficiency and peace of mind lead to a higher income as well. Now, wouldn't that be lovely? Here's to faith, strength, and passion.

Get big or die tryin'.

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