

Celebrate Your Overflowing Life!

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Laura Stack is known as the activity pro. I was fortunate enough to attend one of her sessions at an ALA Educational Conference several years ago, and adapted her organization method for dealing with mail/e-mail and stacks of to-do items on your desk. I know the system works, and I am looking forward to implementing the latest ideas so that I can Celebrate my Overflowing Life!

Strategy 1: Move On

We were all asked to define our true priorities in life. Since Administrators are known for being work alcoholics and spending long hours at the office, it was surprising to discover that our jobs were not our true priorities. We have to learn to do what we can in an allotted amount of time and then spend the most time on our true priorities.

To help achieve this goal you need to create a personal mission statement. It should begin with "success to me means." Once you have done this, you need to develop a strategy for staying on goal. The following three strategies were given:

1. Heed the warning;
2. Decide what to do;
3. Act.

Strategy 2: Move a Mountain

Do you want to be more productive and yet have more time for the true priorities in your life? If you do, you need to take 10 minutes each evening to plan for the next day. The benefits are:

1. You don't endanger other drivers;
2. You don't get insomnia;
3. You wake up with a purpose;
4. You can enjoy your family more;
5. You have a clear focus and reduced stress.

Can you use an extra 1 hour and 40 minutes each day? For every one minute of planning you gain 10 minutes in execution. Ten minutes spent planning at the end of each evening helps you gain an extra 1 hour and 40 minutes on your next work day.

1 minute spent planning = 10 minutes gained in the execution
10 minutes spent planning = 1 hour and 40 minutes in the execution

1. You need to schedule your day realistically. Record the following:
2. Number of hours you plan to work in a day;
3. Subtract the time you have planned for meetings;

4. Subtract uncontrollable time. This would include the time you spend on routine activities, visitor interruptions, phone calls, crises, etc. You should schedule at least 1.5 hours here;
5. The balance is your estimated total controllable time.

Review and build your to-do list with the items left from today, system imposed activities, boss imposed activities, peer or subordinate imposed activities, self imposed (improved) activities.

Prioritize your activities.

Assign pure-time estimates to determine the tasks that can reasonably be accomplished in the time available to you.

Accomplish tasks in the order of importance. When you have an interruption, you have already accounted for it in uncontrollable time. Handle it quickly and get back to your to-do-list.

Strategy 3: Move a Minute

We need to learn how to deflect interruptions, plan around our energy level and prime time and stop multi-tasking!

We need to learn to deflect interruptions. Some examples would be explaining to people that you are on a tight deadline. You can explain that you would be happy to talk to them, help them, etc. but at 3:00 p.m., or whenever I complete X, Y and Z, or whatever is realistic for your day and/or schedule.

We have to teach ourselves to not listen to our thoughts. Our subconscious will try to get us to respond immediately. This is not productive. We need to write down what needs to be done, overrule our thoughts, and discipline ourselves to go back to the last task at hand as quickly as possible!

We all have periods in the day when we are least and most productive. Find your peak time and plan difficult tasks that require the most concentration during this period of time, such as reading contracts. You will be your most observant and will absorb the most during your peak time.

Laura shared how she keeps herself organized. She has a day planner, to-do list and index tabs A-Z. Instead of trying to remember everything, she uses the A-Z tabs to keep track of items of importance whether they be business related or family related. When she needs to remember to talk to John Doe regarding her next seminar and has 5 questions, she goes to the D tab and records her questions. When John Doe calls her back, she doesn't have to try to remember what she needed to discuss with him. It is all behind tab D.

Laura Stack is so full of positive energy that made me feel ready to tackle anything. I left the session ready to put myself on a schedule, incorporate the many suggestions I learned (such as the A-Z tabs, spending 10 minutes at the end of each day, accomplishing what I could within my allotted schedule for the day) and be able to leave the office to enjoy my true priority in my life: my family.