

GETTING THINGS DONE 2

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INTRODUCTION

There are two kinds of people that are in motion. The first kind just work, work, work, but do not make any progress. The second one, he is making progress. Both of them are tired at night. We want to teach you how to be in motion and make progress. There are several management techniques you can learn so as to use your time better.

I. CLUTTER

A. The problem of clutter

What we want to look at now is clutter. Now, let me define clutter. Clutter is when you have a lot of things laying on your desk or your dresser or on your table. Some people use clutter as a sorting device. I have been to some lawyers who had layers of material everywhere on chairs. I came in and he said, “Oh yes, you are number ‘five’”. No, no. Oh! Two. Right here.” And he was able to find it. So there are a few people for whom clutter works. But for most people it does not.

In most cases, clutter is a big hindrance. It hinders you from focusing on one particular task. Your eye is constantly diverted. You want to concentrate, and you see an apple, pens, ~~a book, other things,~~ and your mind just goes wandering. It can create tension and frustration. It gives you the feeling of being snowed under. “Oh yes, I need to take care of that yet. And, I need to do that before I go home.” You get tense and nervous, and therefore you are not free to concentrate on the thing you need to concentrate on.

If your office is typical, roughly three quarters of the items in your files should have been placed in the wastebasket.

You will not believe how important it is to have one small place in your apartment that is not messy. A place where the kids do not lay stuff, and where you can really study. I have found that several of our very successful students in Ukraine have exactly that, one perfect clean place to do their lessons. So let us see how we can do that.

B. Separate and Organize Clutter

Now, whenever you find your desk becoming chaotic, take time out to reorganize. And if your whole apartment is that way, move to another apartment. So let us say that your desk is a mess. Here is what you want to do with your desk:

- 1) You begin by putting everything in one pile.
- 2) Now you are going to work through this pile. You make four other piles, four other sections.

- Section one is for *immediate attention*.

All the papers, all the letters that have to be read or answered before you go to bed tonight you lay in that one pile.

- Then you make a second pile, a low priority pile.

Make sure it is separate from all your other clutter and paperwork +. And there you put in all the things of a low priority. Things that you do not need to do right away, or that may take a lot of time and you can easily do it later on--**low priority items**.

- Then you make a third pile, a **pending file**.

In there you put in all the things that are pending, they are *undecided*. They are fairly important, and you need to take care of them. But not right now, not this very moment, and you will go through them after you have finished your most immediate action pile and sort them out as to when and how you will take care of it.

- The fourth pile is **reading material**.

My reading material pile keeps growing. In 1991 I had a small pile. In 1992 it got bigger. In 1993 it got bigger. Once in awhile I look and I say "Boy, I must read that."

- 3) Now you go through your immediate action pile and you select the highest priority item.

You lay that nicely in the middle of your desk.

- 4) Now you take the rest of your materials, and you put them away, still in their neat piles.

- 5) Now there is nothing on your desk except one piece of paper or one book.

You sit down, and you take care of it. Five minutes, twenty minutes later "whew," finished. Then you can forget about it and do something else.

Now, the temptation is to leave other items laying somewhere on the desk. This is not acceptable. You must clean them all off so that your eyes and your mind, have only one item to concentrate on. Maybe you can think quickly about different things, but you can only think about one thing at one time. So the best thing is to concentrate and focus all your attention and all your energy onto that one thing until you are finished.

C. A Planner — "To Do" List

You need some sort of a planner showing when you need to do things in the future. Perhaps you could use a computer to automatically bring items up when you need them. Some people use a "**To Do**" list for planning. On a "To Do" list, you just write in what you need to do tomorrow and the next day, and so forth. Now you may say, "Oh, this method is not necessary for me." but maybe but soon you may have many commitments. There are training sessions you are having in your province. There are classes for coaches. There are guests coming, and other things. You need to regularly buy train tickets for some people. If you do not have a good system, I guarantee that your ministry is going to suffer.

So mark everything on a "To Do" list daily. Then every evening take a few minutes and transfer your notes. If you need to do it tomorrow, transfer it on your Daily Schedule. If it is something to do this week, transfer it to your Weekly Plan. If it is something for later transfer it to your Monthly Calendar.

The information is easy to find, “Buy train tickets today” or “Go visit so-and-so” or “Tonight phone ...” and so forth. This is a system that automatically brings up the things you need to do. Instead of always wondering “What should I do tomorrow? What do I need to do tomorrow?” If, for example, someone phones you and asks to meet with you tomorrow night, you can immediately enter it on your schedule for tomorrow. And some apps or digital calendars even let you set a reminder which is very useful for items you might forget.

D. Clear Your Desk, Daily

Clearing your desk completely of study materials, or at least organizing it very nicely before you leave your office each evening, should be a standard practice. When you are finished studying, put study materials nicely away in an organized fashion. Remember our lecture “Successful Study Habits” (PD25) in which we learned to have everything organized, sit down and get started immediately. If your desk is cleaned off, then the next time you sit down you can just start. You can immediately concentrate. It saves at least fifteen minutes. And for many people it saves their whole evening. Because if before they start they have to clean this up and put that away and put something else away, they lose interest in studying completely and cannot concentrate.

E. No Knickknacks

Any knickknacks that you have, souvenirs, paper weights, trinkets, clocks, or thermometers -- put them someplace else, but not on your desk. I have no pictures of my family on my desk. I have no time to dream about my family. In the morning I come into my office, I reach in and press the button on my computer. And it gets ready while I take my coat off and do all the other things. I get a cup of water for my throat, and then I sit down and I begin. Many people have distracting memorabilia (from friends and relatives) on their desk.

Now I follow these principles which I have been teaching you here. I have only two or three days every week in my office to do all my work. This is because I have business trips and Training Seminars. When I am in my office, I really need to concentrate. So I use these principles.

II. COMMUNICATION

A. Say What You Mean

A frequent cause of time wastage is the lack of clear, direct communication between two people. Maybe some of you have heard of the French philosopher Voltaire. He said, “Words were given to man to enable him to conceal his true feelings.” I have found that to be true.

If I ask somebody a question here: “Can you do that tomorrow?” They say, “I think so. I will try. Yes, I will do my best.” But I can see on their face that they are saying, “No, no, no.” They do not want to offend me. They cannot say “no” to a leader. The Ukrainian culture is so, that you must always say “yes” to people. Maybe it is because fifty years ago if you said “no,” you would be on the next train to Siberia. People have developed a culture by which it is impolite to give a negative answer to a request.



We answer in terms of what we think we should say, in terms of what we think the other person would like to hear, instead of really expressing our true feelings. We call it “tact,” or nice human relations. We offer mild praise for an unsatisfactory job. Or, we solve the problem by doing a few things ourselves to finish up the job somebody else did because it was easier than explaining we had expected something better. We pussyfoot. Pussyfooting demeanor with superiors wastes the time of everyone involved. Playing “Mr. Nice Guy” to your boss by saying, “No problem, do not worry about it. Blah, blah, blah, blah...” wastes everybody’s time. His time, your time, the other people that are going to be involved; it wastes everybody’s time. Open and frank communication is better for everyone. That is why we tell you to make a Weekly Plan and a Monthly Calendar and write things down. Tact has a place, of course, but you need to remember, there is just a time to honestly say “no”.

B. Commitments

We mentioned to you before that if you have a calendar which you keep up-to-date you can say, "Yes, I would like to do this. It is a very worthwhile thing to do and I do not mind participating. Let me see my schedule. Oh no. I already have some other things planned. Look at this. I am sorry. I cannot because I have already promised to do this." And he says, "What a pity. But your plans are important and you need to do that" and so forth. And you say, "Yes, I think you are right. If I had known it sooner I would have loved to help you. But now I have made a commitment for this. I cannot lie about it and I cannot break my promise. So, next time when you have something, please phone me a bit sooner and I would love to help you." You are polite. You use tact. But the answer is still "**no!**" Not, "yes," not, "maybe", not, "I will try". The answer is "**no!**" You are just going to have to learn to say "**no**" in life.

C. Sloppy Work

The important thing to remember is that sloppy work from somebody who works under you is not acceptable. It needs to be challenged. At the Johnny Hunt seminar when I said, "You have to type out those lectures," Johnny Hunt made a comment about it. He was very happy. He said, "Mr. Bible is holding the people accountable." Whenever a colleague or somebody that works with you is not doing a satisfactory job, you need to challenge them. If you challenge him, he will do a better job, which means personal growth for him and less work for you in the future. And it will mean less time management problems for both of you.

D. Clearly Communicate Your Expectations/Standards

Also make a clear statement of what is expected when you give somebody something to do. If somebody is wasting your time, the best thing is to clearly say that. "Now brother, look at this. I think you yourself know that this is not satisfactory. You must have done that on the train coming over here, or something like that. Now next time, please do not do that. You are wasting your time and you are wasting my time. If you are going to do it, do it properly. I know you can do it better. Right? So do it better next time."

Make it clear to people that you are serious about making the best possible use of your time and their time. Then when somebody does come to you with a good product, you drool all over him, "See, I knew you could do it! Oh, man you make me happy now. You know, it was very uncomfortable last week to tell you that I was not happy. But now you have pleased Jesus. We can say 'hallelujah' together." Now the person is thinking, "Oh, so this is the way I am supposed to do it." and he continues trying to do it like that.

III. COMMUTING TIME

Commute time is time you are commuting from your house to your work; sitting on the bus, on the metro, and waiting in different places. An awful big portion of our lives is taken up with traveling. In many places people travel forty-five minutes to go to work and forty-five minutes back again in the evening. Anything that takes an hour or more of your time every day deserves special attention. Obviously there are two things to consider:

A. Can commuting time be reduced?

That means, can you get another job or live in another place, or is there some other way to travel that can shorten the time you are spending going back and forth. You need to think about that because there may be other ways, such as: one of the people on your block is traveling the same way with a car every day and, maybe for very little money, or a small gift he would be willing to give you a ride. This would save a lot of time. Or maybe by looking around you find another job closer by, or one that is more convenient travel-wise.

B. Can commuting time be used more effectively?

Some years ago there was a director at a Training session, and after the meeting he was going home by train. And he said he was going to study his lessons on the way home. I said, "Well, you know, I think you should spend time with your friends and talk." He said "I have no time. I need to do my lesson." So he had a plan to make good use of his time. That is what you need to think of. If you have lectures on your

phone or laptop you can listen to them in the dark on the train. It can be very helpful. Recently on a train I did that. I listened for many hours to some of the things I had to be teaching. You need to organize yourself. For instance, I went somewhere just two weeks ago. I was in a car. I had some material to read. So I was reading in the car. Then later when it got dark, I started listening to lectures because I could not read any more.

The important thing to decide before you go is “what would I like to accomplish on this trip.” Set yourself a little goal; a task that you can accomplish during this travel time. Make sure you have the right materials with you. Not just a book, but also a pencil, so that you can concentrate and study.

IV. CONCENTRATION

Of all the time management principles this is the most basic: concentration. Most people that have management problems have those problems because they try to concentrate on many different things simultaneously. One of the key things is to learn to **concentrate on one thing**, do it as quickly as you can, have it over with, and do the next thing.



The amount of time spent on a project is not what counts. It is the amount of uninterrupted time that counts. That is why with the “Successful Study Habits” lecture (PD25), we emphasized no telephone calls, no friends or visitors — just quiet time. No radio or music, nothing! Just do your study and finish it.

One of the most productive modern French writers has a special method by which he produces very much. When he starts writing a book, he shuts himself away from the world. No phone calls, no visitors, no newspapers, no mail. Living, as he himself said, like a monk. He does that for two weeks, and he already has a new book because he learned to do nothing but concentrate on that one thing.

So, good time management requires concentrating on one thing at a time. It sounds good. It sounds easy. However, I know that for many of us it is difficult. Ukrainian people have a very artistic mind. They see this and that, and they see something else, and it all runs together. Concentrating on one thing, from beginning to end, is perhaps difficult for many of you also. If you learn it, it will help you to be successful.

V. CONFERENCE CALLS

This is an option for many of you. As you know there are apps and programs available by which several people can talk together at the same time. So, you can talk to and conference with several people at the same time. They are very, very handy. They save hours and hours.

If you and two other friends need to talk about preparing a pastors’ Training Seminar, let us say. Instead of them having to come to you on the bus, and you preparing coffee and some sandwiches for them etc; which all takes a lot of time; through this system, you can simply contact each other, and for twenty minutes or half an hour talk together. Everybody knows what topic you are talking about. You say, “Do you have your list with topics in front of you? Do you have note paper? Ok, number one. What do you think about this? And John, what do you think about this?” And so you begin to talk about some of these things. “All right. Are we agreed to do it this way? Okay, let us write it down. Next point...” And, together, via a video or audio call you can do in twenty minutes, what would otherwise take maybe three hours. Because otherwise you need to travel. You need to eat or drink.

In some cases you could use this method, maybe on a one-on-one basis, with a student also. If he missed class, you could phone him up, and say, “I am sorry you missed class. I would like to video call tomorrow evening and help you with some parts of the lesson. So, tomorrow evening what is a good time? Be sure to have your book and your notebook ready so I can help you. I love you, and the other students really missed you. Thank you. We will talk to you tomorrow night. Bye.”

CONCLUSION

In closing let us review:

When confronted with much paper work quickly sort it into 4 piles; immediate attention pile; low priority pile; pending pile; reading material pile.

Maintain an ministry planner where you write down each person's appointments and task deadlines.

Whenever a colleague is not doing a satisfactory job, you need to challenge him to do better.

When you give somebody something to do, make a clear statement of what is expected with a deadline. Then have him repeat the assignment to see if he understood it correctly.

Good management requires concentration on one thing at a time.

Use your phone — it is much cheaper and much more efficient than traveling.

I hope that you will take one of these ideas for time management and begin practicing it today. Then next week you can add another until you are actually able to practice each point and have the joy of "Getting Things Done." God blesses doers. May He bless you as you start doing these things.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by New Life for Churches. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical assignment to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Write down each of the five points and begin to apply the first one this week. Continue to apply the principles on a weekly basis until you have applied each principle to your ministry in a practical way.

Week 1—Clutter

Week 2—Communication

Week 3—Commuting Time

Week 4—Concentration

Week 5—Conference Telephone Calls

- Share these principles with your team and help them begin to put them into practice.

- Bring a written report of how you put each one of these principles into practice to share with other leaders to bless them in their ministries.