

TIME MANAGEMENT

Why Developing Self-Awareness Is Key to Managing Your Time

You might know all the tricks of time management, but are you self-aware enough to put them into action?



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If you Google "time management," you'll just under 5.5 million results. You might notice some common themes within those results like using a calendar, learning to say "no," delegating and prioritizing your health. Techniques

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like following the 80/20 Rule, blocking out distractions, eating frogs in the morning and planning your schedule in advance are often mentioned.

I don't have an exact figure, but I've mentioned these hacks many times in writing and speaking because they are so crucial to time management. I'm also confident that you've come across these helpful hacks more times than you may realize. The question I have is, have you taken action to make these time management hacks your own?

I believe that time management problems boil down to something much more straightforward: The reason why so many individuals fail at time management is that they're not self-aware.

If you believe that you don't have "time" to exercise, hang out with friends or relax, then you won't have time. Not having time isn't the issue — it's that you aren't aware of how much time you're spending on each activity and part of your day. You'll want to track what you do, often, to achieve the work-life balance you desire. Not having time is an awareness problem.

Do you feel that you're [wasting too much time](#) on unnecessary and unproductive activities like pointless meetings or watching TV? Again, that's an awareness problem.

The key to time management is self-awareness. But don't just take my word for it: As Erich C. Dierdorff notes at [HBR](#), awareness, along with arrangement and adaptation, are the skills that "separate time management success from failure." Research shows that "people struggled the most with awareness and adaptation skills where assessment scores were, on average, 24 percent lower than for arrangement skills."

I particularly appreciated the action words used by Dierdorff: "assessment: and "adaption."

"This evidence suggests that awareness and adaptation are not only rarer skills, but are more difficult to develop naturally without direct interventions," writes Dierdorff. "Additionally, awareness skills were the primary driver of how well people avoided procrastination, and adaptation skills were the primary driver of how well they prioritized activities."

Journal.

I've enjoyed writing down my thoughts and ideas. I still enjoy writing in a journal either to practice gratitude or just get some of the million thoughts out of my head and onto paper.

There are also some additional [benefits of journaling](#), like stretching your IQ and evoking mindfulness. Moreover, journaling can spark creativity, boost memory and concentration, and strengthens communication skills. And it can also help you achieve your goals and improve your self-discipline.

Journaling can also help you become more self-aware. Tom Kuegler explains in a [Medium](#) post that this is because journaling can:

- Help you control your emotions.
- Show what strategies work and don't work.
- Teaches you to become more "present."
- You'll have "a full-blown recorded conversation with your thoughts. I spar. I find weaknesses — flaws. I find opportunities," writes Kuegler.

The key, according to [Dr. Tasha Eurich](#), is not to write every day. But, when you write every few days, make sure that it's "expressive." That means that you're writing down your "deepest thoughts and feelings. Maybe write about an issue that has made a big impact on your life." I only spend about 20-minutes.

Ask for feedback.

Early in my entrepreneurial journey, I wasn't as confident in my writing as I am now. I stressed over every sentence to make it "perfect." It was painful to write at first. I took any criticism personally as if it was against my writing skills.

I quickly noticed, however, that these people weren't trying to question my writing. Individuals were taking their valuable time, offering me constructive criticism so that I would become a better and more productive writer. And guess what? Once I accepted advice and applied it, I improved my writing.

Understand that [soliciting feedback](#) isn't easy. Who wants to hear what their shortcomings are? You can make input easier on yourself and find faster personal and professional growth by listening to others. Listening to others is a shorter path to becoming self-aware.

- Starting small. Ask for feedback on something that will help you improve as a person, but isn't ultimately that big of a deal.
- Only turn to people you trust and respect. Your spouse, parents, best friend, and business partner are all great sources you should rely on.
- Don't take any feedback on any subject personally. For many people, staying

professional about feedback is the hardest part. Keep in mind that feedback is meant to help you identify weaknesses so that you can strengthen them.

Practice meditation.

Meditation already comes packed with benefits like reducing stress and anxiety and strengthening your memory. Meditating can also make you kinder, curb unhealthy habits, and decrease blood pressure. Did you know that pondering and meditating can also make you more self-aware?

"Some forms of meditation may help you develop a stronger understanding of yourself, helping you grow into your best self," [writes Matthew Thorpe, MD, Ph.D.](#)

"For example, self-inquiry meditation explicitly aims to help you develop a greater understanding of yourself and how you relate to those around you," says Dr. Thorpe. "Other forms of meditation teach you to recognize thoughts that may be harmful or self-defeating."

Related: [7 Proven Ways Meditating Prepares You for Success](#)

Develop intuitive decision-making skills.

What does this have to do with self-awareness? Well, by leaning on your intuition, you're relying on your past experiences and knowledge to [make confident decisions](#) promptly. Even better, learning to make quick and accurate decisions is something that you can develop.

- Conduct a cost-analysis benefit.
- Simplify the battlefield.
- Strengthen your decisive muscles by making less critical decisions more quickly.
- Set time limits.
- Outsmart anchoring bias.
- Put your ego on the backburner.
- Always trust your first instinct.

Related: [Why Do Entrepreneurs Need to Take Quick Decisions](#)

Test your limits.

Finally, get out of your comfort zone and try new things and experiences. Push your limitations, like seeing how many miles you can run or how long you can work on a

task without taking a break. Go somewhere you hate to go and like it. See a movie you hate and enjoy it. Change your mind about a person merely by thinking differently about them.

Don't allow the things in your life to be frightening or exhausting. Doing what has to be done may as well be enjoyable. Your time management will improve so much more as you become more self-aware. Discover more about yourself, and break through obstacles that have been holding you back.



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