

SCHEDULING

7 to 7

I think about scheduling a little bit different than most. I believe that tomorrow starts right now. Especially if right now is the evening before. What you have for dinner, what you watch on television, how you speak to your family or significant other, how you reflect on your day, and how much sleep you get tonight all have significant impacts on *tomorrow*.

For those reasons, my schedule starts at 7pm tonight and goes to 7pm tomorrow.

Before you begin filling an example schedule, please consider the questions I have below. Here's the thing: Even if you know all of this stuff, it never hurts to remind yourself. Besides, you might stumble across an idea that hits you in a new way and makes a significant impact.

In addition to the *7 to 7 Strategy*, I also break the day up into segments. I'm not a fan of packing a schedule so tight that there's no room for spontaneity, flexibility, or creativity. Your day should be focused but also have breathing room. People that cram their days full of meetings and tasks often over-inflate their importance and rarely have time for significant connections, innovation, or reflection.

As you consider your day, think RHYTHM. What is a good rhythm for your life? I have weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms, too. But for now, consider a 7 to 7 rhythm. Sure no day is exact same - that'd be boring. But I have intentional patterns based on my Core Commitments and goals that work out to look something like this:

Night Before:

- Have a healthy dinner and spend quality time with family, maybe friends
- Watch an hour of encouraging television or a good movie
- Read in bed
- Close eyes and reflect on the day; visualize attaining core commitments and other goals

Morning:

- Wake up between 5am and 7am, depending on the day
- Read, pray, plan for the day
- Starting creating - work on most important/urgent project
- Use "Time-Blocking" to focus on one project for at least two uninterrupted hours

Midday:

- Break for a work-out
- Have a good lunch after working out - often a lunch meeting

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Afternoon:

- Do something administrative that's not fun
- Address sales/marketing efforts
- Make phone calls, follow-up, set appointments
- Re-evaluate Key Task List

Key Task List

I'm an advocate of a To-Do list, or a Checklist. I think they are great, and necessary. I use a legal pad and just list everything that I need to get done in the near future. If something can be done in less than five minutes, I do it right then. If not, then it goes on the To-Do List.

From the To-Do list, we schedule. If you want to set aside a block of time for your To-Do list, that's great. It can be energizing to *check* things off a list, right? But it can also give you the illusion of doing meaningful work, so be careful.

I add a column to my Schedule call, "Key Tasks", because I like the scheduling the most important things. And only try to accomplish one, two, or three of those things in a single day. Any more than that is unnecessary. If you have considerably more "Key Tasks" in your day, then you need to do one of three things: 1) reprioritize, 2) delay the vision, or 3) delegate to others.

The most important aspect of scheduling is to allocate time everyday to being YOU - and to accomplishing the primary things that are most specific to YOU. Only do what only you can do. Most other things should be delegated, delayed, or dropped.

I've heard that 40% of what we do could be done by anyone else - no training needed. Another 50% can be accomplished an intelligent person with some specific training. Only 10% of what you and I do in an average day is unique and only possible for you/me to accomplish. Such things might be: loving your spouse, empowering your children, using your voice, executing your vision...

Scheduling Questions

Night Before: How you go to bed impacts how you wake up.

- What time are you going to bed? What are the last thoughts on your mind?
- What did you eat? Notice stress, conflict, emotion...

Morning: How you start your day sets you up for success or struggle.

- What time are you waking up?
- What's the morning routine? What, in the past, has interrupted the morning routine?

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- What's the plan for the day?
- What are the two most important things that have to happen today? When are they scheduled?
- What in the past has distracted you from the most important things?

Midday: Break your day into segments and helps provide focus and re-focus.

- How is your day broken up?
- What do you do to spark “afternoon momentum?” (Workout, lunch, reflection, pause, nap, etc.)
- Are you most productive before or after lunch?
- Are you most creative earlier in the day or later in the day?
- Are most of your meeting/appointments before, during, or after lunch?

Afternoon: Maintain energy throughout the afternoon and don't lose steam.

- What are the activities and appointments you are avoiding and putting off?
- When, in the past, have you “hit a wall” in terms of energy or motivation?
- What are your default activities when you're not focused? (IE: check Facebook, etc.)

Evening: Winding down, resting, and reflecting prepares you for a better tomorrow.

- When do you turn off “work mode?”
- What are the most important personal or family activities that mean the most to you and others?
- What does “reflection” look like to you?
- What is your nightly ritual? (IE: television, reading, snacking, etc.)
- What worries or concerns come to you in the evenings? What is your response?
- Would you characterize your evenings as restful, stressful, or neutral?

Simple Schedule Template

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Timeframe	Priorities (ie: writing, sales calls...)	Key Tasks (ie: call mom, send invoice...)
Night before		
Morning		
Midday		
Afternoon		
Evening		