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Stop Managing, Start Maximizing: The New Approach to Time That Could Make You Happier and More Productive

Research shows actually no correlation between our success and hours worked.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

Have you ever known someone who was always very stressed, but somehow not really that successful?

How about the opposite? Have you ever known anyone who was very successful, but manage to stay peaceful and relaxed?

Which one are you?

It turns out that for all the time we devote to multi-tasking, managing time, and trying to squeeze it all in, according to innovative thinker Seth Godin, research shows actually *no* correlation between our success and hours worked.

Some people are starting to give up on time management altogether. And no wonder. All our fretting over how we manage our time doesn't seem to be working.

Managing your time is all about trying to squeeze in everything you need to do into those boxes on your calendar. It's how you organize and plan how long you spend on specific *activities*. The problem with that is that you can end up with more to do than you initially anticipated. The list never seems to get done. That's why I prefer a new take on time.

Maximizing your time is all about identifying what's essential and being sure you have plenty of time for *that*. It's how you live your life so you feel productive and fulfilled. Suddenly the to do list takes on a new perspective. It becomes clearer what's trivial and what's worth your time.

What would happen if instead of worrying about managing your you focused more intently on maximizing your time? Let's look at the difference.

Imagine two people are planning the week ahead. One takes a traditional approach to managing his time. The other decides to be proactive about maximizing her time. What would happen?

Managing your time means clearing away obstacles to increase time and productivity. Our first friend would get out his calendar, slot in all of the things he needed to do, crunch and cramp those tasks into the calendar as much as he can, perhaps even double booking himself, and maybe would even tack on an additional to-do list.

There is nothing wrong with managing your time – but you need to recognize your time limits. All that time management does is get you organized, which makes you feel like you can get more done in a day than you probably can. But is that the only goal?

Maximizing your time means making the most of your time. Our second friend would keep the calendar closed and ask herself some Big Questions. What's essential? What's my number one priority? What's the impact of this priority? How does it compete with the other things that might otherwise be on my calendar?

Now the next time you're on a business trip, instead of scheduling and managing your time, try maximizing it by prioritizing your time. You're thinking about not how to get everything done, but how to be your best. Being your best might mean that you get in bed early, get extra sleep, wake up feeling refreshed, eat only healthy food while you're there and focus on that one essential thing you need to do.

You can see how this approach could lead her to carve out time on her travels to do eliminate some of the other items of lesser importance that could have ended up on a to do list, and instead focus her week in the service of a greater goal.

You'll feel a dramatic difference when you maximize your time. Life slows down, you feel centred, you feel aligned, you may even feel like you're living a higher quality of life that's very different from the mad dash that many of us feel on a daily basis. Maximizing your time may seem like a luxury that you feel you can't afford right now, so maybe you might make the big bold leap to maximizing your time with these practices only for one day a week to start. Give yourself the opportunity to experience the difference.

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