

# 7 Questions to Help You Regain Control

OF YOUR DAY...AND YOUR LIFE



## **Ever had one of those days (or decades) where you were constantly working but not getting enough done?**

You're not alone. So many of us lose hours playing whack-a-mole with emails, calendar invites, and text messages before we've even had our morning coffee. Studies show we touch our phones 2,176 times a day, drowning in a never-ending stream of digital information. No wonder we don't consistently get our goals past the finish line, let alone have enough time for the basics like eating, drinking, or going to the loo.

**What if I told you that there's more time available than you ever imagined?** That you could find some calm in your day and still drive exceptional results? While ruthlessness with people never succeeds, ruthlessness with time never fails. Learning how to become a master of minutes is the number one difference between breaking down and breaking through.

First, let's align around the rhythms of our biology. Neuroscientists have found that we have roughly four hours of brain power available to us when the brain can burn the brightest. Those 240 minutes are pure gold. The most competitive advantage you have is how you manage your brain as a resource, investing those minutes wisely by allocating them towards your most meaningful priorities. These priorities are the critical few directly aligned with your key goals.

**Examples?** To grow my business, I need time to contact new customers. To write a book, I need distraction-free time to write. To earn more money, I need to brainstorm on how to increase my value. To lose ten pounds, I need to work out.

Whatever your goals and priorities may be, treat those activities like royalty. Give them protected space on your calendar before all else. The rest can get slotted once the royals have been seated.

To make this an unbreakable habit, a constant and continuous commitment to value over volume (or VOV given our deep need to make everything into an acronym), allocate 60 minutes a week to mapping out the days to come. Whether it's Friday morning, Thursday afternoon, or even over the weekend, run a calendar audit as part of your routine. Trust me, nothing will ratchet up the value quotient of your time more than this type of honest, brutal accounting.

Think of your calendar as a treasure map that can be redrawn every week. Pull your personal and professional life all into one place so that all unproductive scheduling is there on full display. You may be forced to admit that your schedule doesn't accommodate any of your major priorities. Or that you somehow must be in three places at once. You may realize that your commitment to working out stopped last month - or last year? Or that you have no time to actually do your work. This iterative process will help you proactively assess how to invest your future time, giving you the opportunity to tweak the map until it's consistently uncovering you a fortune.

## HERE ARE 7 QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOU:

- 01** What meetings can you let go of by delegating, outsourcing, or deleting entirely?
- 02** Time doesn't only come in 30- and 60-minute increments. What can you shorten to be a 5-, 10-, 15- or 45-minute discussion?
- 03** Where do you have blocks of time scheduled to actually getting work done?
- 04** What problems do you need to solve next week, and where is that thinking time allotted?
- 05** What meetings can you take standing or walking, activating your body to boost brain functioning and clarity of thought?
- 06** For scheduled meetings, whom do you need to email to ask for clear objectives/agendas or to send clear objectives/agendas to?
- 07** What can you weave in to make it a week you are looking forward to living? No dreading the week ahead!

Be aggressive when going through this activity, and for goodness' sake, let go of the guilt! This is your life. Your one chance to make your goals a reality. No more thinking, "That meeting's a waste of time, but Dave always brings good bagels!" Choose what's worth investing in; any activity that doesn't align with what's important has gotta go, and it's nothing personal.

And yes, I know you can do it all. I've seen people do it and tried it myself on multiple occasions. Here's what I also know to be true. You can't do it all and achieve exceptional results. If you are serious about getting more time, joy and success out of your life, get serious about mastering your minutes. Your success depends on it!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christina Curtis is a leadership consultant with a background in organizational psychology and neuroscience. She helps Fortune 500 executives, Olympic athletes, and entrepreneurs in driving breakthrough performance. She is a certified Master Coach, a designation held by less than 2 percent of coaches globally. Her articles are published in Harvard Business Review, Forbes and Psychology Today.

Christina's work is focused on enhancing the performance and effectiveness of leaders and their teams. She is frequently leaned on by her clients for:

- Keynote speaking
- Executive coaching
- 360 feedback reviews
- Executive communication training
- Cross-functional team dynamic challenges

