How to Master Your Time

Stanford Medical Center
August 13, 2018

Samantha Sutton, Ph.D.  Life Engineering
The evolution of me

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What brings you here?
A busy professional’s typical life

You feel perpetually behind and overwhelmed.

You spend your days putting out fires.

You avoid important, overwhelming tasks.

You let others dictate your schedule.

Your inbox is your master.

You juggle too many balls.
“Is your day by design or by default?”
– J.D. Meier
You feel perpetually behind and overwhelmed.

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Your inbox is your master.

You juggle too many balls.

You feel pleased by what you accomplish each day.

You do what is most important and satisfying.

You do what needs doing, unflinchingly.

You deliberately design your schedule.

Your inbox is your servant.

You focus on what matters.

A busy professional’s typical life

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Tenet 1: Build INTEGRITY
Tenet 2: PRIORITIZE
Tenet 3: Find ASSISTANCE
Tenet 4: Manage you MENTAL ENERGY
Tenet 5: CELEBRATE your daily wins

The Key Tenets of Time

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Tenet 1: Build Integrity

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“I intend to set aside blocks of time for work that are 'not to be touched,' but it never works.”

“I tried to work on the project today, but got overwhelmed with email.”

Sound familiar?
Definition:

You do what you say you will do.

Integrity
with others

Integrity
with yourself
We are thwarted by our Time Beasts

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The Perfectionist

The Free Spirit

The Avoider

The Glutton

The Pleaser

The Free Spirit
Which are you?
The Perfectionist
Release control
The Perfectionist
Make messes
The Pleaser
Embrace “enough”
The Glutton
Cultivate Courage
The Avoider
Structure = Freedom
The Free Spirit
Tenet 2: Prioritize
Tasks come in different sizes

- **Rocks**
  - Very important
- **Pebbles**
  - Somewhat important
- **Sand**
  - A little important
You decide your strategy

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Your Day

Default strategy

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Deliberate strategy

Your Day

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Deliberate strategy

Your Day

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Deliberate strategy

Your Day

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Problem: You are so frazzled about your time management that you don’t actually spend time managing it.
1. You must set aside strategic planning time each week.

2. Question assumptions.

3. You pick the top ~ 3 rocks you will do in a day.

4. You need to be ok with letting the sand go.

What it means to manage your priorities

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Beware of your Time Beasts!

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What rocks will you prioritize?
What sand will you deprioritize?
Tenet 3: Find assistance
How much $$ would you pay to have 25 hours per day?

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Arrange someone to pick up your kids.
Keep your accounting.
Find a hair stylist and book an appointment.
Pay your bills.
Find a house sitter.
Plan meals and order food.
Go online dating and filter matches.
Dispute charges with your credit card company.
Schedule meetings.
Arrange travel.
Fix that annoying computer glitch.
Find quotes for dental work.
Research the best water filter… or research anything!

What your assistant can do for you

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Tenet 4: Manage your mental energy

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Your brain is the most important organ for your work... take care of it!

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Fuel up

Limit your decisions

Avoid switching tasks

What this means
Subtract one thing per week.

Get out of your head and onto paper/computer.

What this means

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What will you take on?
Tenet 5: Celebrate your wins
You don’t stop and savor... it’s on to the next thing.

You rob yourself of the feeling of joy and satisfaction.

This is a CRIME.

You are robbing yourself.
Ideally, in the moment.

Or take 5 min on your drive home.

Think through what happened and really feel it.
Tenet 1: Build INTEGRITY

Tenet 2: PRIORITIZE

Tenet 3: Find ASSISTANCE

Tenet 4: Manage your MENTAL ENERGY

Tenet 5: CELEBRATE your daily wins

Yes, you can!

Samantha Sutton, Ph.D.  Life Engineering
It’s time to LIVE the dream, not SURVIVE the dream.

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