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Put time on your side

Understand why it is important to have good time management skills

WHEN the clock chimes 12 at midnight, everyone is given a very special gift: time – 24 full hours – to spend as he pleases.

Yet, when you fast-forward your clock by a day, how much would your gift remain unspent?

Has your day yielded deficits that stretch ahead, ready to be painfully paid for by borrowing from the following day? Or are you one of the lucky few who always seem to have more than enough time for everything they wish?

Chances are if you recognise this “spend-borrow-spend” cycle, this means you use poor time management techniques.

If you feel you are one of those constantly time-challenged folk, then you probably are.

Why time matters

In 388BC, Aristophanes said: “Men of sense often learn from their enemies.”

If you want to improve your time management, a good place to start is with a better understanding of yourself, and the challenges that you face.

Here is a simple question for you: “Have you always been time challenged?”

If not, can you recall a time when you regularly had more than sufficient time?

Remember that particular time and how good it felt for you. Recall how much more productive you used to be, both personally and professionally.

Wouldn't you like to feel that way again? You can.

Make time your friend

You already know how good a friend time can be. Time can help you become more productive and relaxed. And when time is used in a balanced way, you will be rewarded with more than enough of it to go around.

But as economist Milton Friedman said, there is no such thing as a “free lunch”. Like all good friendships, you have to work at building a good relationship with time.

Whether you want to improve your business performance, bring balance into your life, improve social relationships, reduce your daily stress or just take some time out for yourself (that is, your goals), start with three things – commitment, application and technique:

- Determine your goals and commit to them.
- Apply yourself wholeheartedly to achieve them.
- Use the right techniques to support your goals.

Focus your efforts on the first two stages, and stage three be-

comes easy.

Time management techniques include talking with people who are good at time management, researching online, buying a good book or registering for a time management programme.

Look for a programme that trains you to reach out to time as a friend. Investing a little of your time upfront enables you to have more time, so you can re-invest it in a number of productive ways.

Remember, it will be midnight again very soon. Before the clock strikes 12, ask yourself how different you want tomorrow to feel and how different you personally want to become.

Tomorrow: Time management techniques

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