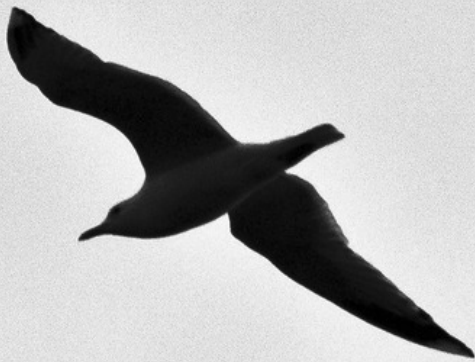




THE
14 DAY GUIDE
TO CUTTING YOUR WORKING HOURS
& Increasing your Impact



EXCELLENCE-EXPECTED.COM

CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER & COPYRIGHT	3
WHERE THE JOURNEY BEGINS	6
<i>Dazed & Confused</i>	6
<i>The Leap</i>	7
<i>Burning Out and Building Back Up</i>	7
YOUR JOURNEY - THE TRANSFORMATION YOU WILL EXPERIENCE & THE RESULTS YOU WILL ACHIEVE.....	10
YOUR TRANSFORMATION	12
PROGRAMME FORMAT	14
<i>Week 1 - Measuring & Understanding Your Day, Creating A Pace of Change to Suit You..</i>	14
<i>Week 2 - Removing Guilt & Overcoming Challenges of the Mind.....</i>	15
SUPPORT	15
THE PROBLEM - SYMPTOMS AND EFFECTS	17
DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT & "BUSY"	20
STRIVE TO BECOME EFFECTIVE, NOT EFFICIENT	21
PARKINSON'S LAW & THE PARETO PRINCIPLE	21
WELCOME TO THE STAGE... MR. PARETO... ..	22
YOUR 14 DAY TEMPLATE FOR CHANGE.....	25
WEEK 1	25
<i>Day 0: Monday - Setting the Scene</i>	26
<i>Day 1: Tuesday - Finding Your Starting Point</i>	27
<i>Day 2: Wednesday - Rinse & Repeat</i>	29
<i>Day 3: Thursday - The Triple "I" Principle</i>	30
<i>Day 4: Thursday - Creating Your New Daily Template, It Starts on Monday!</i>	33
WEEK #1 - IN REVIEW:	36
<i>A Dare...</i>	36
WEEK 2	38
<i>It's Going to Get Uncomfortable</i>	40
<i>Problematic Mindsets, Their Causes & How to Overcome Them - How to Complete This Section</i>	42
<i>Setting Shorter Working Hours</i>	43
<i>Your Feedback is Important to Me</i>	46
THANK YOU AND YOUR NEXT STEPS.....	48
...ONE MORE THING.....	48

*Time is what we want most,
but what we use worst.*

William Penn

Disclaimer & Copyright

I have written this book to share the processes and results that I have personally experienced based on trial and error, research and continual tweaking of my own workflow.

I recommend that you read and assess my experiences, looking to responsibly incorporate elements that you find useful into your own workflow.

This book is based on my own experience and opinion, it is not intended to provide anything as a guarantee although I firmly believe that by following this template, you will effect positive, sustainable change that suits **your** life.

Where references are made to third parties whom I find inspirational, the same mandate applies: this is opinion and is in no way an endorsement of any actions you take based on their content or my recommendation thereof.

Time to get started.

My favorite things in life don't cost any money.

*It's really clear that the most precious resource we
all have is time.*

Steve Jobs

About the Author



My name is Mark Asquith; I created Excellence Expected, the actionable podcast for business owners and entrepreneurs.

Here's the obligatory link: www.excellence-expected.com.

Excellence Expected is my way of sharing actionable advice and inspirational initiatives borne from the trials and tests that I face when running my businesses, along with how some of the world's most successful business-people and entrepreneurs deal with those same trials & tests.

Everyone I speak to on the show is an expert in the topic about which we talk and every episode delivers actionable takeaways that can be implemented the same day.

You might like it, a lot of people like you do.

Where The Journey Begins

Dazed & Confused

When you're a kid, people always ask you what you want to do.

My trouble was always that I had no idea what the answer to that was. Who does, at that age?

This was only compounded by the fact that my school-teachers, careers advisors and even college tutors were terribly equipped to deal with someone who didn't want to follow a traditional academic path.

As a teenager, I discovered music and thanks to the support of my family and an exceptional music teacher, I was encouraged to follow something that I enjoyed.

Looking back though, those years were filled with fear and confusion, worry and misdirection and when I thought about "what I want to be when I grow up". The sad fact is, that just like a certain Mr. Lennon, I simply wanted to be "happy" - I just didn't know it then.

So, I did what a lot of teenagers who have a pretty low self-esteem at that time of their lives do, I became the "grey man" - I simply decided to fit in, went unnoticed and I was happy to tread the "just above average" path that I was on academically.

Grades didn't matter to me, as long as I got what I *needed* to stop any doors closing on me and although I had (and still have) a wild passion for learning, I wasn't interested in... well, anything that didn't interest me.

A Secret

The thing that no one told me is that to be happy, we have to enjoy our lives. Everything else just falls in to place if we follow the pursuit of enjoyment.

That's the secret, it **has** to be.

Enjoyment leads to becoming immersed, leads to becoming an expert, leads to being able to sell that expertise, leads to a great lifestyle.

Honestly, it really is that simple.

At the time of writing this I'm 32 years old and it's only recently that I realised that I'm part of Generation-Y, the Millennial generation - a generation defined by passionate fulfillment both professionally and creatively and a generation that is known for entrepreneurial spirit with a wild lack of loyalty to jobs that provide no motivation.

For years I fought against that - it couldn't be "normal"; there was something "wrong" with me; "no one enjoys their job, you just have to do it to achieve the other things you want to achieve and pay the bills".

I vividly remember the day that I decided that was complete and utter bullshit.

I quit my job the same day.

The Leap

That day was in the spring of 2005. It was the day that I decided I would no longer work the 9 to 5 and generate income for people with whom I had little in common and little respect.

My 2-year tolerance of jobs only fed the confidence that I could do something more. I was earning a decent salary, but at age 23, I could do *anything* to earn that – why shouldn't I enjoy whatever that was?

So, I became the proverbial bookworm and studied in my spare time - I learned about this emerging "Web 2.0" trend and began building "digital things". Some people began to call me a digital expert and by the end of my 25th year, I was earning a six-figure sum as a freelance consultant.

Since then my journey has been varied and I have been fortunate to meet a great deal of successful, inspirational people.

That journey has taken me to places that my 23 year old self would never have dreamed of: from working with the UK's Ministry of Defence to working on implementing digital solutions for some of the UK's biggest corporations and financial institutions.

Each challenge; each stop on that journey afforded me the chance to work alongside some extremely bright minds, solving some extremely intricate problems, all whilst battling against the unstoppable force that chases us all: time.

Burning Out and Building Back Up

The trouble with Generation-Y is that money isn't the only thing we value. We value fulfillment but freelance consulting, even with that six-figure income, wasn't enough.

So, I co-founded a design and digital agency called DMSQD, an agency within which I am still an active director and within which I'm privileged to work with the finest, most talented people I've ever known.

As DMSQD grew from a small three person agency into an agency working with some of the worlds' biggest brands, I found myself working longer and longer hours, but becoming consciously and measurably less productive.

I was struck by "superhero syndrome": "I must keep control of everything and the only way to be "productive" is to sit here longer and longer".

Wrong. As a result, I burned out and became extremely unpleasant to be around.

I wasn't very effective and I was a complete asshole.

So, in 2012 I decided to take control of that and embarked upon another journey that would result in becoming more productive, more effective, more confident and a much happier, peaceful person in every aspect of my life.

My transformation isn't thanks to a magic formula; it is thanks to trial, error, persistence and the confidence to win back my life, one day at a time.

And it worked.

*Productivity is not about a list of “tips” or “hacks”
that work in isolation.*

*Productivity is about creating a personal schedule
that works for you, maximising your impact in the
time you choose to work.*

Mark Asquith

Your Journey - The Transformation You Will Experience and The Results You Will Achieve

I'm not going to profess to "teach" you how to work 2 hours per day and achieve maximum success.

In fact, I'll go so far as to say you wouldn't *want* to work 2 hours per day, 4 hours per day, 6 hours per day... Not yet anyway.

I believe that you simply want to work *standard* hours, say 8 hours per day, but achieve maximum impact during those hours and liberate yourself from the **guilt** you feel by leaving at 5pm.

Imagine:

- Picking the kids up from school every day.
- Not worrying about opening your emails on a morning because of the amount you'll receive.
- Having the entire weekend off, every weekend.
- Going on holiday and not checking your work phone once.
- Coming back from holiday to "oh, nothing major happened".

If you could flip a switch and achieve everything you need to whilst working the hours that suit **you**, *plus* having all of the above, you would.

Well, you can.

Granted, it isn't a switch, but 14 days from now you can achieve that.

No, you **will** achieve that.

I must govern the clock, not be governed by it.

Golda Meir

Your Transformation

By the time you have finished this book you will know how to create more time every single day by introducing a series of specific, high-impact changes to your workflow.

We will also explore the causes and effects of letting your time manage you and the impact this has on every aspect of your life.

Your overall transformation will be achieved through the completion of “micro-transformations” - transformations specific to solving particular problems that will allow you to achieve your ultimate goal: the creation of more time without causing destructive upheaval to your current workflow.

You will learn a series of simple tasks and mindset changes that can be immediately implemented in order to positively impact *your* optimum productivity; changes that will allow you to do more of what you are best at.

Independently, these tactics and mindset changes are simply useful. Together, they are positively powerful.

I will give you a series of tools and tactics that will allow you to maintain this mindset for the rest of your life and that will allow you to enhance everything that you choose to undertake.

Best of all, none of this really eats into your schedule, the programme is something I developed for myself and I was “busy” - therefore it requires no more than 30 minutes of your time each day.

You have no excuse to not follow this programme - time is not an issue and if you believe it is, you’re the person who needs it the most!

*Work is hard. Distractions are plentiful. And time
is short.*

Adam Hochschild

Programme Format

Week 1 - Measuring and Understanding Your Day, Creating A Pace of Change to Suit You

Your transformation starts on a Tuesday.

Why? Because we all have a pre-disposition to starting new things on Mondays.

This is ridiculous and because of all the diets we've started on Mondays, all the gym sessions we've missed on Mondays, we are also pre-disposed to expecting these things to fail.

You will **not** fail at reducing your working hours and increasing your impact.

So, let's remove that crazy Monday barrier and begin readying yourself to dive in next Tuesday.

The reason we all sometimes fail at any given process of change is usually due to an over-expectation of results: we force ourselves into a position where we expect amazing results with minimum effort and minimum time investment.

Week 1 works on helping you find your **own** pace of change, something that you are able to turn into a lifestyle and something that you can rely upon anytime you're feeling overwhelmed or find yourself creeping back into working long hours.

Week 2 - Removing Guilt and Overcoming Challenges of the Mind

Once you have measured your day and identified the issues that create your inflated working hours and diminishing effectiveness, your mind will naturally hold you back thanks to the years of conditioning that we all go through subconsciously.

This section aims to address these mindset challenges by allowing you to understand them and then make small, although sometimes uncomfortable changes every day, that illustrate the falsehood of many of these destructive thoughts.

Support

Throughout your transformation I will be there to support you via direct contact at: <http://exex.link/eefbpg>.

Let's do this.

*If you don't have time to do it right, when will you
have time to do it over?*

John Wooden

The Problem - Symptoms and Effects

When we begin in business, at some level we're usually pursuing a passion: a passion for our product or service; a passion to create something we believe in; a passion to build something we can call our own; a passion to create the life that we want.

It's what makes us great and it's what drives us to excellence. We never, ever stop until we believe everything is as it should be: perfect.

Service is our currency - we strive to keep everyone happy and for a while, we do so. We believe that we simply *have* to react to every crisis or query immediately, for fear of judgment and customer dissatisfaction if we don't.

We forget how people deal with *us* as customers. We forget that it's all right to studiously ponder a situation and only then return to a customer with a measured response.

This admirable, service driven approach is inevitably compounded by our own "superhero syndrome" - a mental frailty in many entrepreneurs that makes it hard to believe that anyone can *possibly* deliver anything at all to the same standards that we can.

Words like "efficiency" creep into our lives more and more and suddenly, we're on a mission to become the most efficient person in the business and yet we **still** we wonder why we're working 60 hour weeks, barely seeing our family and friends and somehow, losing passion for this thing we created and that we profess to "love" - we are constantly eluded by the perfect life that we set out to design for ourselves by becoming our own "boss".

Work becomes us. We become work.

As an entrepreneur, that's just in our nature. However, what **is** wildly destructive is trying to fit that passion - the idea that we're always working and we're always not working, "this is just our life" - into the cultural, societal expectations of the 9 to 5.

That's when things go wrong: we work longer and longer hours and can't seem to break the cycle.

Why?

Because not only do we expect it of ourselves, but those around us expect it from us.

Being the first in and the last to leave is **not** a measure of success: ask yourself, when you created your business did you set out with the goal to work a 60-hour week?

I didn't think so.

I concede that there are times when we simply have to work longer hours - situations arise that are out of our control or we simply want to help a customer out of a pickle by earning some of that service goodwill we trade in - but this shouldn't be the *norm*.

The first 12 months are hard and full of lessons that, if never learned, won't allow your mind to become open to a work / life balance that benefits you.

But, if you're beyond the first 12 months of your business then you **should** be working in a manner that delivers maximum impact to that business with minimum disruption to your personal life.

*Most people spend more time and energy going
around problems than in trying to solve them.*

Henry Ford

Differentiating Between Effective, Efficient and “Busy”

We’re all “busy” aren’t we?

We’re always too “busy” to take that call, see the family, go to the cinema, train at the gym, read that book - do the things that we *enjoy* doing.

“Busy” is usually an illusion, a mental state that satiates our desire to be seen as successful: the busier we are, surely the more successful we are?

Not so.

We’ve all felt that little tinge of pride when someone describes us as “really busy”.

Wouldn’t we have so much more pride in that same third party instead saying: “they’re doing really well and look really well too, seems to be really proud of what they’ve built”?

Think back to a time when something urgent, I mean really urgent, has cropped up and pulled you away from your “busy” life. What was the *real* impact of you being away?

Chances are, no one outside of those people you physically see - i.e. all of the email / telephone contacts - never even noticed you were operating any differently to usual.

You certainly didn’t lose a customer, nor did your business profitability suddenly plummet.

Really think about a time when that’s happened to you, I mean really think about it.

Nothing was affected, nothing. Nada.

From here on in, “busy” doesn’t exist. Deal?

Strive to Become Effective, Not Efficient

If you've delved in to any kind of personal development, I've no doubt that this concept isn't new to you:

A simple way of distinguishing between efficiency and effectiveness is the saying, "Efficiency is doing things right, while Effectiveness is doing the right things." This is based on the premise that selection of objectives of a process, are just as important as the quality of that process.

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efficiency>

The big problem is that whilst much of the time we know this distinction exists, we don't really know how to build an effective day around it.

The ultimate balance is to achieve maximum effectiveness in the most efficient manner possible.

Believe it or not, those long hours that you keep in order to stay on top of being "busy" could very well be working *against* that panacea...

Parkinson's Law and The Pareto Principle

"Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion"

- Parkinson's Law

Think about it, I mean *really* think about it - how **effective** are you during those extended working hours?

Do you actually get more done to a higher standard or do you aimlessly meander from one unfulfilling task to the next; tweaking, tinkering and occupying yourself because you feel a compulsion to be "productive"?

The thing that tricks us is the idea of the importance of the task at hand.

Any task we carry out has its importance weighted by the impact that it can have on our business. Thus, we typically over-allocate time to completing said task, because we're nervous about "rushing it".

Parkinson's Law is the summation of this - we simply dwell on tasks and give them too much *time* importance rather than concentrating on *effectively* completing them in an *efficient* manner.

Parkinson's Law addresses one simple fact: we all work better with *realistic* deadlines.

In fact, we all work better under some *pressure*:

- As children, we left our homework to the last minute and usually, it got graded pretty well.
- We've all worked efficiently and effectively on a surprise deadline without the quality of the output being compromised.
- We've all gotten in early to get that major task done "before 9" - and got it done to a high standard.

By the way, we have *no* problem at all shutting every single distraction off when we're "up against it" in order to hit that crazy deadline.

Keep that in mind.

The truth is, our long hours can be wildly counterproductive: so much tinkering and changing just because we feel compelled to sit there, proving our "dedication" or outwardly projecting our "success" often results in us **still** delivering something closer to what we produced in the first few hours.

This kind of working leaves us unfulfilled, causing a lack of enthusiasm and motivation for the things that *matter* and because we lose sight of exactly what *does* matter - everything becomes mundane.

In stark contrast: a short and highly focused burst of effective working yields the same results but without the bloated time investment.

I truly believe that happiness in your working life is directly tied to *effectiveness* and *results* **not** to how *long* you spend being "productive".

In short: you're happier when you **achieve**, not when you work more.

Welcome to the Stage... Mr. Pareto...

Everyone in business knows the Pareto Principle; the 80/20 rule; the law of the vital few.

Most prominently in business:

- 80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers.

The trouble is, your mind is conditioned to ignore this proven rule when it comes to time spent working – we forget that

- 80% of our **results** come from only 20% of our time.

By being aware of this can begin to alleviate our minds of the faux-guilt that we place upon ourselves when we do work “standard” hours.

More so, we can do this whilst feeling happier and more fulfilled.

Compounded by the understanding of Parkinson’s Law, suddenly you have the beginnings of a road map to becoming more effective personally, whilst freeing up the time to *live* outside of the confines and pressures that you place upon yourself.

By extrapolating these principles and starting to appreciate that each of your team members are very effective at different things, you can learn to confidently rely on your team to carry out the tasks that you hold so dear.

Thus, you begin to take your life back.

We must use time as a tool, not as a couch.

John F. Kennedy

Your 14 Day Template for Change

Week 1

Your first week is understanding, measuring and beginning to change at your own pace.

The key to success is a simple, consistent plan that involves small steps, resulting in an entire overhaul of your own personal systems.

More so, there's a vital lesson to be learned: what does productivity look like **for you**?

We're not falling in line here; not creating a standard template that is generic enough to have *some* impact but no longevity.

Instead we're going to look at what **you** are **most effective** at along with what **you enjoy** the most.

Within each step of this process; each mini-transformation, I recommend tools and resources to help you achieve that transformation along with outlining why it is important to the overall objective of cutting your working hours, whilst becoming more effective.

Day 0: Monday - Setting the Scene

We all need help and support to achieve something that we believe in: today is the day to set the scene with friends, family and colleagues about what you're going to achieve by changing your working habits.

A simple conversation on a one to one basis with those for whom your journey will have the most impact goes a long way and who knows, they may even join you!

Be sure to let them know:

- What you're doing is for the good of the business.
- The change you're about to go through will have positive impacts for everyone.
- That you need their support in sticking to some of the techniques you'll be implementing.
- That you value their feedback and welcome them to get involved in any way they'd like to.
- Nothing drastic will be changing; you simply want to become more effective so that you can help *them* as much as they help you.
- You appreciate their support and will be open and transparent with everything you're doing so that that can see the value of your transformation.

Day 1: Tuesday - Finding Your Starting Point

Understanding exactly *what* you spend your time doing - I mean really doing - is a **vital** part of becoming more impactful whilst cutting your hours.

Task

Today you're going to record your entire working day.

Purpose

You can only effect change if you're aware of the current situation.

By recording your day you quantify exactly what you spend those long hours doing and begin to form the basis of your transformation.

You need a starting point; something to *change* that results in the decrease in working hours, increase in impact and a happier working life.

Mini-Transformation You Will Achieve

By the end of this task you will understand exactly how your day breaks down. Not how you *think* it breaks down, how it *really* breaks down.

Time You Need to Allocate Today to Achieving This

- 15 minutes set-up

Resources to Help You Complete This Task

- RescueTime.com - I use this every single day to track my time and block any distracting websites. It can save you HOURS, give it a go - it's free: [download it for free now](#).
- A pen and paper.

How to Do It

Important: Work the hours you usually work, don't tweak or tinker with your hours to distort and 'optimise' these results - the more honest you are, the more effective your transformation will be.

Use RescueTime to track your time online and we use the pen and paper to jot down times against specific tasks that RescueTime may not understand.

1. Go ahead and download RescueTime (I highly recommend the \$9 per month plan, it's fantastically effective).
2. Set RescueTime up - it's a fully guided process, extremely quick and simple.

3. Let RescueTime do its job - it will track your time expenditure online and at the end of the day, you will see exactly what you've been doing.
4. Write down every, single thing you do today - I mean *everything*, from taking phone calls & emailing to working on projects, meetings and even breaks.
5. Be **brutally honest** - include social media, text messaging, personal tasks you may undertake. The more honest you are at this stage, the more effective you will be in this programme.

Day 2: Wednesday - Rinse and Repeat

Task

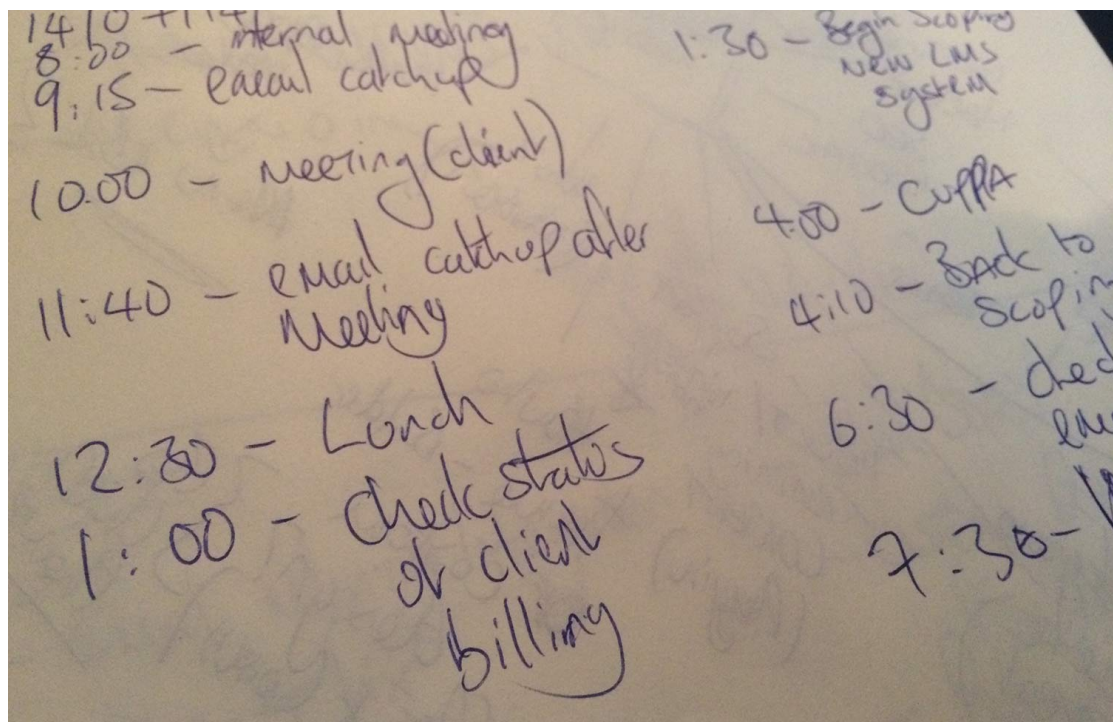
Repeat day 1.

Purpose

One day isn't a fair representation of what you really do, for a few reasons:

- You'll lie - we don't like to own up to spending a half hour on Facebook.
Be brutally honest for maximum results.
- You'll forget to record things - day 1 invariably misses things because recording them is something new. Check out my day 1 list below (fig. 1), I forgot to record ALL of my phone calls, oops... **and** I wasn't *brutally* honest about my time on social networks.
- Things change - one day isn't a fair representation of your working life. Two days is much more representative and actually, you can continue this process for as long as you feel gives a fair cross section of your time.

Fig 1. My first day.



Day 3: Thursday - The Triple “I” Principle

A client and highly respected sales expert once told me to focus on the important, not on the interesting in business.

That adage served me well, so well in fact that I adapted it into the format that you’re going to use today to start designing a day that suits you.

Task

Break the activities that you have recorded over the past two days into 3 lists, activities that are:

- **Important**
 - **These are** high impact activities that are effective for the business and lead to tangible, positive results.
 - **Examples:** Drafting proposals, business networking, new client meetings, project management sessions, new products / research and development.
- **Interesting**
 - **These are** activities that you find interesting and enjoy partaking in; may or may not yield positive outcomes for the business.
 - **Examples:** social networking, reading, personal development & learning.
- **Integral**
 - **These are** activities that are vital to the running of your business and the happiness of yourself and your team but that you may not be the best person to carry out.
 - **Examples:** breaks, accounting activity, email activity, telephone calls, managing schedules, administration, personnel management.

Purpose

To assess where you have the most impact in your business versus the tasks that you either enjoy doing or *shouldn’t* be doing.

Note: There is nothing *wrong* with doing things you’re interested in. Keep that in mind for later.

To illustrate where your time is bleeding and provide a structure to build upon during Day 4.

Mini-Transformation You Will Achieve

You will gain an understanding of exactly how your time breaks down weighted against the nature of the activities you carry out during that time.

Assessing the impact of these activities within the business and how effective *you* are at these activities.

The realisation that you're effective for a much smaller portion of the day than you currently believe.

Time You Need to Allocate Today to Achieving This

- 30 minutes

Resources to Help You Complete This Task

- "Day 3 – Triple 'I' Principle" - of the free Microsoft Excel workbook available to download here: <http://exex.link/14DayWorkbook>

Note: the workbook is entirely unprotected so that you can tinker with it as you see fit.

How to Do It

- Fill in the sheet as instructed within.
- As ever, be very honest with this based on the time you've recorded.
- Either print once completed (it'll fit great on one side of A4) or take a note of the totals in the top right hand corner.
- Divide the totals by 2 to get the daily average.

Here's an example of mine over the two days:

Fig. 2 My example Triple "I" breakdown



The Essential 14 Day Guide to Cutting
Your Working Hours & Increasing Your Impact
By Mark Asquith
www.excellence-expected.com

Time spent doing the...

Important:	✓	9	37%
Interesting:	✓	5	20%
Integral:	✓	10.5	43%
Total		24.5	

Activities Carried Out During Days 1 & 2					
Important		Interesting		Integral	
Activity	Hours Spent	Activity	Hours Spent	Activity	Hours Spent
e.g. Draft proposal	1 (round to nearest 15 minutes)		1.5 = 1 1/2 hours		1.25 = 1 1/4 hours
Client meeting	1.75	Social networking	1.5	Staff meeting	1.25
LMS system scoping	2.5	Reddit / blogs	2	Admin	0.5
LMS system scoping	2.75	Podcast upload / show notes	1	Lunch	0.5
Client meeting	2	Social marketing	0.5	Break	0.25
				Accounts queries	2
				Email	4.5
				Phone calls	1.5

Assessing Your Triple "I" Output

Here's how my example above breaks down:

- Averaged around **12 hours per day** working.
- Spent only **less than 40%** of that doing what I deemed to be "important".

WOW!

Interpreting The Figures

- **Important** activities are where you need to focus. These activities are what make you money or effect positive change within your business.
- **Interesting** activities fall in to the following categories:
 - "Filler" activities that feel productive but usually aren't because they're low impact and typically expand to take more time than they should.
 - Activities you actually enjoy; things that allow you to break for a while and come back with more focus.
- **Integral** activities are activities that your business cannot survive without but that have usually either been given too much false importance or are activities of low impact, "commodity" activities, that can either be delegated or handled differently in order to fit into a more effective daily plan for you.

Day 4: Thursday - Creating Your New Daily Template, It Starts on Monday!

Today is where the fun begins: you're going to set your new working hours for next Monday...

Task

Use "time-boxing" to create a new daily schedule based on the Triple "I" process you went through during days 1-3.

Purpose

Create more focus; stop Parkinson's Law affecting your working day and deliver maximum impact within working hours that suit **you**.

Mini-Transformation You Will Achieve

The realisation that you can complete *more* of the effective and impactful activities - the activities that yield results for your business - whilst working hours that you *want* to work.

Time You Need to Allocate Today to Achieving This

- 30 minutes set up

Resources to Help You Complete This Task

- "Day 4 - Design Your Day" - of the free Microsoft Excel workbook available to download here: <http://exex.link/14DayWorkbook>.
- RescueTime.com - download for free now.

How to Do It

- Set your new working times at the top right of the sheet. Be frank, fair and honest with this - if you want to leave at 3:30pm, then leave at 3:30pm.
- Allocate blocks of time to certain activities - 1 block = 15 minutes:
 - Be tight on this; don't over allocate time to activities just to be 'safe'.
 - **Important** activities should be allocated first as these deliver the most value to your business.
 - **Integral** activities should be allocated next and should be allocated no more than 2 blocks at a time.
 - **Interesting** activities, in my opinion, should be weighted on a 1 to 3 ratio; for every 3 important activities you include, 1 interesting activity should be included.
- Turn off **all** notifications / distractions, including:
 - Text message notifications

- Ring tones
 - Email notifications
 - Social media notifications
- **Stick to it!**

The Will vs. the Guilt

We're going to delve in to some mindsets a little further in, but the sticking to this new schedule you've devised will begin to pit your will against your guilt.

In short, you will feel bad about saying 'no' to certain requests but there are some stark truths about that, which you need to start considering right now:

- If you box off 15 minutes at the end of the day for phone calls, don't take any calls outside of those hours unless it's a matter of life, death or something equally pressing. People *will* understand and be fine with it.
- If something runs over, do not work late - instead shift priorities and figure out what you can achieve in less time; delegate or simply add to tomorrow's schedule.
- Stay communicative - people are extremely understanding *as long as they know what's going on*. Clients, colleagues and family will understand if you can't chat for a few hours and this helps avoid that email / text message ping-pong inevitably creeps into your day.

A Personal Recommendation

I always start my day with some exercise and clarification of the day ahead. It helps me to focus from the moment I begin working and helps me to achieve that magical "flow" that we all strive for.

"Flow"

You know the feeling - suddenly hours have passed and you have been flowing and focusing so much that you didn't even notice. It's an amazing feeling!

Here's how I get into the "flow" *quickly* and how you can too:

- Assign 15 minutes at the end of the previous day to identify your **biggest** challenge for the following day; the *one* thing that, if it were achieved, would make you feel like the day had been worthwhile.

Usually this is an activity that you might not particularly *like* to do, but that is of *vital* importance to your business.

It's a small, powerful way to begin to win back your day and it's something that is **easy** to implement!

*A man is a success if
he gets up in the morning
and gets to bed at night,
and in between he does
what he wants to do.*

Bob Dylan

Week #1 - In Review:

By now you've gone through week 1 of the programme; a week intended to illustrate *exactly* how you spend your time and how *effectively* you use it.

On Monday you will implement the day that you designed for yourself during day #4 and you will begin to feel the benefits, both commercially and personally, of creating a day that focuses on effectiveness rather than being "busy".

A Dare...

But, you're not quite done.

I **dare you** to have the entire weekend off. The *entire* weekend.

That means:

- No emails, not even the tempting Sunday night "get ahead" session that results in you not being able to sleep Sunday night.
- No work phone calls.
- No work related social media.
- No *actual* work. Not even planning.

Go and enjoy the weekend because you deserve it. There's *nothing* that can't wait until Monday and you know what, you have it planned in - you got this.

Scratching the Itch

Realistically, you can't switch off this urge to be "productive"; this compulsion to "work". Not yet at least - but you'll get there.

Instead of "working", scratch that "productivity" itch by *investing in yourself*:

- Pick up one of the amazing books that I recommend here:
<http://exex.link/ee-recommended>.
- Listen to a podcast that inspires you.
- Watch a documentary about your favourite business people (I highly recommend the Steve Jobs and Henry Ford documentaries on Netflix).
- Subscribe to an online course; begin to learn that new skill you've always wanted to learn.
- Join the gym!

In short: do something **interesting**, not something *important* or *integral*.

Enjoy yourself, do what you *want to do*.

*Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you
have, and only you can determine how it will be
spent.*

Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.

Carl Sandburg

Week 2

Week 2 is all about the mind: overcoming the mental barriers that we all put in place subconsciously.

These barriers and beliefs are destructive to not only ourselves, but to our customers, our team, our family and our friends.

It is these beliefs that lead to poor decisions, negative life events and burnout but these beliefs are based on nothing more than our own false fears.

Week 2 takes the fear of failure, the fear of letting people down and allows you to overcome it by taking direct action against some of the most paralysing mindsets that affect business owners and entrepreneurs.

Do one thing every day that scares you.

Eleanor Roosevelt

It's Going to Get Uncomfortable

Many elements of business involve doing things that make us uncomfortable but typically these are due to our own predispositions, one of the most common examples of course being:

"I'm not a sales person, I'm uncomfortable selling."

Yet, selling is vital to business - we *all* sell, we just don't always know we're doing it.

We typically understand these predispositions and are aware of them to a degree. However, there are so many subconscious obstacles that we build for ourselves and that we either don't realise are there, or don't know how to combat.

They just become "the way it is".

These are the kind of mental obstacles that lead to negative mindset changes – creating negative mindsets that we don't realise we have until something brings them explosively into the limelight: an argument with your spouse, a missed anniversary or birthday, a lack of invites to social events because everyone assumes "oh, they'll be working".

Yeah, you've been there.

These negative mindsets in turn lead to the longer or ineffective working hours that we're here to overcome, the hours that are so destructive within every element of our lives.

The truth is that these negative mindsets are prefaced by good intentions, typically around servicing our customers or upholding a level of quality that we believe will be unattainable should we actually work *normal* working hours.

By living through a little discomfort you can overcome these negative barriers and really begin to excel - you just need to teach yourself that these subconscious, negative mindsets that have become ingrained are simply *wrong*.

Until you value yourself, you won't value your time.

*Until you value your time, you will not do anything
with it.*

M. Scott Peck

Problematic Mindsets, Their Causes and How to Overcome Them - How to Complete This Section

You have already begun to design your days around where you're most effective and you have already begun to balance your life a little more thanks to that.

Week 1 was a physical week, a week of measuring and implementing.

This week is about diagnosing what may cause you to revert to your previous habits and is designed to give you an honest and rational check against the destructive mindsets that can hinder how effectively you implement the output from week 1.

Help When You Need It

In order to complete week 2, simply design every single day just how you did following completion of week 1 and the **moment** that your own compulsion to not stick to that plan begins to overwhelm you at any given point, simply identify the broad mindset problem you're having from the section below and take the suggested steps to combat it.

Setting Shorter Working Hours

Destructive Mindset: “If I don’t stay longer, I won’t get everything done.”

Stems From: Fear of failure, disapproval or burden of unrealistic deadlines.

New Mindset: “I’ve accounted for everything I *need* to do today, everything that is *important*.”

Suggested Action: Increased communications with people who may be affected by this, whilst acclimatising to your new working hours and honest appraisal of priorities / delegation when designing your day.

Positive Outcome: Realisation that it’s alright to leave work at the time you’ve set, because you can rely upon the day you have designed.

Delegation

Destructive Mindset: “No one does things like I do.” or “I feel bad delegating.”

Stems From: Obsessive desire to control output and results, fear of lowered quality and fear of being seen as lazy or “the boss”.

New Mindset: “I can trust my team to complete tasks as effectively as I can, I don’t need to micro-manage them. Further more, it will empower my team to take responsibility and I can factor in an extra layer of quality control carried out by myself to add even more value to my customers.”

Suggested Action: Identification (using “Triple ‘I’” principle) of activities that take up your time but yield lower impact results. Allocation of responsibility to team members that are more suited to the activity.

Positive Outcome: Empowerment of team, added customer value in extra quality control layer, less time spent “doing” resulting in ability to shorten your day.

Email

Destructive Mindset: “I must respond quickly to show that I care about my customers / colleagues.”

Stems From: Fear of letting people down. (Can *you* remember the last time you *badly judged* someone because they didn’t respond quickly? No, that’s because you don’t...)

New Mindset: “Recipients would much rather me respond decisively, thoughtfully and concisely in order to show that I understand their communication and have considered my response fully.”

Suggested Action: Turn off all email notifications, automatic “send & receive” and box time accordingly within your day.

Positive Outcome: Less email “ping pong”, increased impact of your communications, less time spent feeling falsely productive by engaging in constant platitudes.

Phone Calls

Destructive Mindset: “I don’t want to be constantly unavailable and people to think that I’m avoiding them.”

Stems From: Fear of letting people down and the perception of avoidance.

New Mindset: “I’d much prefer to be focused and alert when I speak to people, rather than pulled in so many directions that all I want to do is get off the telephone.”

Suggested Action: Turn off all cell phone notifications and enable voicemail. Instruct colleagues of the time you have boxed out for returning calls and add a line within your email signature: “Please note that I catch up on calls between the hours of X and Y. If you need to chat to me outside of these hours please call the office and one of the team will be happy to assist, otherwise please drop me an email & I’ll get back to you in a timely manner.”

Positive Outcome: Ongoing increase of respect for the hours within which you make calls and increased effectiveness of the calls you make thanks to the constraints in place.

Going Offline

Destructive Mindset: “I can’t possibly turn off my phone, email and social media notifications - what if I miss something?”

Stems From: Habit.

New Mindset “I’ll catch up on this at the proper time, I’ve got the correct amount of time built into my day for it.”

Suggested Action: As with email / phone call issue, go ahead and *do it* - turn off push notifications for everything.

Positive Outcome: Slower pace, less rushed mindset and slowly overcoming the compulsion to “quickly check” communications. Increased likelihood of achieving a focused, flowing state of effectiveness and a feeling of satisfaction during your day.

Exercise

Destructive Mindset: “I’m too busy to exercise, it’s not on my priority list.”

Stems From: False belief that productivity is *only* achieved in the work place.

New Mindset: “It’s *my* time, time to think, plot and plan for the coming day. This is an *opportunity* to enjoy myself.”

Suggested Action: A short walk early in the morning to clear you head and set you up for the day. Alternatively, for the more active, Tabata style cardiovascular workouts are short and high quality.

Positive Outcome: Clarity of thought, confidence, increased focus, increased happiness and problem solving capability. [Source](#)

Taking Time Out to Think

Destructive Mindset: “I just don’t have the time, there’s too much to do. This just isn’t productive.”

Stems From: False belief that productivity solely occurs at the place of work.

New Mindset: “This is the most productive, problem solving time for me. I can plan responses to emails and solve problems within the business.”

Suggested Action: Consider integrating this with your exercise routine. Alternatively take time out to have breakfast or a quality coffee break entirely away from your place of work. Invite a colleague and pay if you need second opinions.

Positive Outcome: Increased effectiveness and impact during your working hours thanks to rapid implementation of elements that are already thoroughly thought out in your head.

Your Feedback is Important to Me

This is certainly not an exhaustive list of problematic mindsets, nor is it a strict method to overcome them.

It is simply a list of mindsets I know that I suffered from and the steps I took to overcome them.

I’d be so pleased to hear from you if you have any alternative solutions or mindsets that you’d like to see featured in future editions of this book - I’ll give credit where suggestions are included - so if you’d like to contribute, simply head on over to: <http://exex.link/eefbpg>.

*People who cannot find time for recreation are
obliged sooner or later to find time for illness.*

John Wanamaker

Thank You and Your Next Steps

Thank you for taking this step to win back your life and thank you for allowing me the privilege of helping you.

Please remember that this process can be continually optimised and is intended to move you forward positively. You can tweak, tinker and change this however you see fit as long as it works for *you*.

And, if you find yourself slipping back into bad habits, simply run through week 1 again - I do it frequently myself, it really helps!

By adopting this kind of attitude and realising that you can live and work happily without letting anyone down will positively change every aspect of your entrepreneurial life.

It won't stop that odd day of working late on a surprise deadline but what it *will* do is stop these days becoming *the norm*.

It works, just give it a go and enjoy it.

...one more thing

And now I'd like to ask a favour please.

If you find the book useful, rather than simply passing it on to friends or colleagues, I'd really appreciate you recommending that they too download it for free at:

<http://exex.link/cwh>

Don't forget, the more you expect from yourself, the more you **WILL** excel!

