

Ep #34: Time Management Evaluations (Time Management Series)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

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You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 34. Today, I'm gonna teach you how to do time management evaluations. You ready? Let's go.

Welcome to *The Less Stressed Lawyer*, the only podcast that teaches you how to manage your mind so you can live a life with less stress and far more fulfillment. If you're a lawyer who's over the overwhelm and tired of trying to hustle your way to happiness, you're in the right place. Now, here's your host, lawyer turned life coach, Olivia Vizachero.

Hey there, how you doing? I am so excited to talk to you today about time management evaluations. It's gonna be the last episode in the time management series. Of course, I will continue to talk about time management on the podcast in future episodes, but I wanted to create a really comprehensive series for you. And, that's what we've done.

But this is the last episode in the time management series. And I'm really going to get into the thick of it with you. I want to give you a really deep understanding of how to evaluate how you spend your time, how you plan, and how you execute your plans. So, we're going to do a deep dive on evaluations today.

In the meantime, couple of things. Number one, I want you to stay tuned for the next two episodes that I release. I'm really, really excited about them. I'm going to do an episode on the impact of coaching, and all of the real-life applications where you can use what I teach you. And, I'm gonna use examples from my own life.

My clients often tell me that they love how many examples I give them, from my own life or from other clients of mine, and how they work through issues and apply the coaching tools that I teach. I'm going to do a whole episode on some situations that I've recently encountered, and how coaching has helped me navigate them pretty seamlessly. So, you can start to see what it looks like to apply a lot of the tools that I teach you, a lot of the concepts that I teach on a day-to-day basis, like in the real world.

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I'm going to do an episode on that. And then, I'm also going to do an episode about the importance, the value, the impact, of investing in yourself. The reason that I want to talk about that is because I am getting ready to open up enrollment for the next round of *The Less Stressed Lawyer Mastermind*.

A lot of people encounter obstacles to investing in themselves, and they end up not doing it because of those roadblocks, because of those obstacles. So, I really want to talk about what those obstacles are and the impact of overcoming them, working through them, to invest in yourself and why you want to do that.

Kind of keep that in the back of your mind, mark your calendars. The next couple of episodes that I'm going to release are going to be really meaty, and really meaningful. I just want you to check back in and make sure you're subscribed if you're not already subscribed. Make sure you hit that subscribe button on whatever podcast platform you listen to this on, so you don't miss those two episodes. They're gonna be really, really good. I'm super excited to record them and to release them to you.

Speaking of the podcast, and subscribing and all that good stuff, I would also really appreciate it if you would take a second and leave me a review. They really make a difference in getting the content that I produce in front of more people. So, if you're loving the podcast, if you think it's really valuable and you haven't yet, please rate. Give me five stars if you love it. Rate and review the podcast, it would mean the world to me.

All right. With that said, let's dive in to time management evaluations. So, I'm gonna start by breaking down the actual steps you want to take, the process that you want to follow, to complete a time management evaluation. And then, I'm going to go into an actual example. I'm going to run you through a day, and how you would evaluate it.

To start, ideally, you would have made a plan for the day, right? As a refresher, I've talked to you about the three simple steps you need to follow

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in order to manage your time: You want to reclaim control of your calendar, plan your schedule accurately, and honor your plan. And in order to honor your plan, you want to start on time, work without interruptions, and end on time.

Now, if you are following those steps, you should have created a plan for the day, and you executed it, and now, it comes time to evaluate. If you didn't make a plan, I want you to *not* skip evaluations. You can still learn so much if you evaluate whether or not you made a formal plan for the day, and stuck to it or didn't stick to it. So, I really want you to be careful and don't let your perfectionism get in the way of your learning, alright, of the progress you want to be making here.

Ideally, you would have made a plan for the day, and you executed it, and maybe it didn't go perfectly, right? And you want to evaluate, so you can learn from what didn't go well and make consistent, constant improvements. So, you executed your plan, and you're going to answer three questions.

The evaluation process that I teach people is very simple. It's just these three simple questions: What worked? What didn't work? And what will you do differently, going forward? Now, I've explained this before, you really want to start with what worked. So many people have a tendency to skip this part and go right to what didn't work. And that's our brains being brains, and automatically seeking out negative information, faults, all that stuff.

You want to interrupt your brain's desire to do that, to take you to the dark place, so to speak. And, you want to start with focusing on what worked. It's going to help keep your evaluation process really positive. It's going to feel a lot better; you're not going to feel as badly about yourself. And it's really going to set you up to move into the 'what didn't work' part of the evaluation process, in a much more curious, less judgmental place. So, don't skip that step.

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Force yourself to make a list of what worked. A lot of people that I work with struggle with doing this. I want to offer you that that is also a skill. Learning how to evaluate and find the good is something that you can practice. I often help clients learn how to develop this skill.

They really struggle, you know, they'll tell me, they're like; nothing worked, absolutely nothing worked. And then, I'll push back on that. I'll actually help them identify some of the things that did work. Every win is a win to be celebrated. There's no win too small to celebrate.

So, you want to catch yourself if you struggle with identifying your wins. Force yourself to answer that question, and really take it seriously. It can be easy to be dismissive about it. You want to make sure you're not dismissive. Take it seriously, and come up with some good answers to that question; what worked? What's going well? What did you do a good job with?

Now, when you go into what didn't work, again, you're going to go into that from a curious place, not a judgmental place. You're going to identify all of the things that didn't go according to your plan. All the things that felt like hiccups, or obstacles, or mistakes, or errors, throughout the day. Any divergence that came up from your plan. Any place that you made a detour that felt unintentional. Anything that you wouldn't want to recreate.

So, you go through, and you identify the things that didn't work. I also, to give you a little bit more guidance and a little bit more structure for this part of the evaluation process, you can answer these questions: What negative thoughts were you thinking that caused the results that didn't work?

Your thoughts create your results. So, you always want to identify the negative thoughts that you were thinking, the thoughts that didn't serve you, and you want to address them and replace them with better thoughts, if you can.

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That starts with gaining awareness of what you were thinking, that led to the problem in the first place. Figure that out; make a list of the thoughts. What were you thinking about your day? What were you thinking about yourself? What were you thinking about time? What were you thinking about the assignments you were working on? What were you thinking about setting boundaries, in order to stick to your schedule?

You want to be really clear about all of that because those thoughts are creating your results. So, in the 'what didn't work' section, you've got some negative results that you don't love. You want to find the negative thoughts that lead to those results.

You also want to identify the feelings you weren't willing to feel? So, that's the second question you could answer: What feelings was I unwilling to feel? If you've identified the thoughts that you were thinking, you can just ask yourself: What's the one-word emotion that I experience when I think this negative thought?

You'll start to see how you avoided that feeling or reacted to it in an unintentional manner. That's going to start to formulate this list, of the emotions that you would have needed to feel on purpose, very intentionally. You know, I always describe this, you have to allow them to ride shotgun with you in the car, so to speak. You don't want them driving the car and determining what you do or don't do for the day. But they're going to have to come along for the ride, unfortunately.

What thoughts were you thinking? What feelings were you not willing to feel? And then, what actions did you take that didn't serve you? And what actions didn't you take, that you would have needed to take, in order to create a better result, the results that you wanted?

You want to make that list. That will help really flesh out your what didn't work section? And then, from there, I want you to get curious: Why? Why were you thinking that? Why were you unwilling to feel these feelings? Why didn't you do certain things? Why did you do others? You really want to

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explore and understand your reasons for all of the action that you took that didn't serve you. Or, all of the action that you didn't take that you would have needed to take.

Another amazing question here, to create additional awareness is the question: If there were specific actions you “should” have taken but didn't take, you want to ask yourself, what negative emotions would I have been forced to feel, if I forced myself to take that action? And then, add those feelings to the list of feelings that you weren't willing to feel.

Okay, that ends up becoming your roadmap for what you'll do differently. You can use these three subcategories: What thoughts would you need to think, in order to create better results, your desired results? What feelings would you need to feel on purpose and allow? And then, what actions would you need to take? What would you need to do differently, in order to create your desired results? You want to make a list.

That might also include what you need to not do. Okay, so make sure you include that, as well. Now, one of the big things that I see people do, is they don't get specific enough with their ‘what they're going to do differently’ section. You want to be very, very precise with identifying what you'll do differently.

The more precise you are, the more impact these evaluations are going to have. The more improvement you're going to make, because you're going to have a very clear plan of how to move forward and make these incremental changes, in order to move the dial. So, you want to be really specific about your ‘what didn't work’ section and your ‘what you'll do differently’ section.

Okay, that's the overview. Three questions: What worked? What didn't work? What would you do differently. You want to get really specific, and figure out the thoughts you were thinking, the feelings you weren't willing to feel, and the actions you didn't take that you would have needed to, and the actions that you did take that maybe you shouldn't have, all right?

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Then, you just want to get really specific with what you'll do differently, with what you'll think differently, and what feelings you will feel, in order to make improvement moving forward. So, that's the overall evaluation process.

Now let's walk through an example. I said, ideally, you would have made a plan for your day. This is the plan that you would have ideally made: You plan to wake up at 6:30. You plan to start working at 8:00. Let's say you plan to go into the office, so you plan to be at the office by 8:00.

You're working on a brief, or if you're a transactional attorney, maybe you're reviewing a contract or something like that. Maybe you're drafting a contract, or terms, provisions, things like that. But whatever writing assignment you're working on, you plan to work on it for three hours. And then, you've got a meeting at 11:00. You plan it to be an hour long. You plan a quick lunch at 12:00. You give yourself 15 minutes for lunch.

And then, you plan to work on the writing assignment for another two hours and 45 minutes. Later in the afternoon, you plan to complete a few other assignments; three specific tasks that will each take an hour a piece. You plan to stop working at 6:00. You drive home from work; that'll take a half an hour. Then, when you get home at 6:30 you plan to do some chores. Then, you are going to do dinner from 7:00-8:00. And then, your game plan is to relax for the rest of the night and be in bed by 11:00. Okay?

Now, I want to be really clear on something here; this plan that I just walked you through, has you starting work at 8:00 and ending at 6:00. I am not suggesting that you need to work 8:00-6:00. If you want to work 10:00-4:00, work 10:00-4:00. If you want to work 8:00-8:00, work 8:00-8:00. If you want to work 9:00 to 5:00, work 9:00 to 5:00. It is up to you.

There is no right and wrong answer for how much work you should be working. You get to decide what that number is for you. I'm just using this as a for instance. You get to pick the schedule that feels right and in alignment for the results you want to create.

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So, I always let people decide how much they want to work for them, what feels right for them. I certainly don't start working at 8:00. I, at least, don't start client sessions, normally, not until 10:00. I'm actually changing that, to start my days at 11:00. And, that's what works for me. I do social media from 8:30-9:30 every day, and then, I get ready for my calls.

But you get to decide what works for you. That's what works for me, right now. I am not suggesting you need to start working at 8:00. So, please don't misunderstand me here, it's just an example.

That's the example schedule. Now, let's take a look and see how your day actually went. Instead of what you planned, here's what your day looked like: You set your alarm for 6:30, but you ignored it and hit snooze until 7:30. And then, you grabbed your phone, and you laid in bed scrolling on social media, until 8:32. At which time, you were like, "Oh, shit, I'm behind schedule. I need to hurry up and get ready."

So, you rush to get ready. It feels like a frenzy. You spend extra time, more than you would have liked to spend, picking out what you were going to wear for the day. And then, you finally leave. You get in the car. You hit traffic because you left later than you anticipated. And, you don't get to work, into your office, until 9:28.

You start to work on that brief that you were planning to work on, that writing assignment. But instead of the three hours that you plan to spend on it, now we've only got about an hour and a half before that 11:00 meeting. You end up being late to that meeting by like eight minutes, because you didn't leave your office, and stop working, and doing your legal research until basically 11:00.

So, the time it took you to walk down the hall, get into your colleague's office for that 11:00 meeting, you didn't factor that in, so you were late. The meeting runs over; you budgeted an hour for it, but it runs over by an extra 37 minutes. So now, it's 12:37. It's almost 1:00 and you're like, "I need to have lunch."

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You end up actually spending an hour on lunch, because you go out to lunch, instead of bringing something with you. So, you spend about an hour doing that. While you do it, you kind of leisurely look at your cell phone, and now it's 2pm. You were supposed to spend two hours and forty-five minutes on that brief, right? So, you try and get back into the brief, but you actually spend most of your afternoon in your email, instead.

Someone swings by your office unexpectedly at 3:20, and they hang around for like, 25 minutes. So now, it's 3:45, and you really haven't spent any time on that brief. And, you also haven't gotten to those three other tasks that you planned.

Finally, the person leaves your office, and you start attacking the brief. So, it's 3:45, and you're really just starting to make headway on it. You do some research towards the end of the day. You promised your spouse you'd be home by 6:30, but that would require you to leave the office by 6:00, like you planned. But you're in the middle of some research, and you really don't want to stop.

So, you don't stop, and you don't end up leaving the office until 6:52. You get home by 7:20, and you haven't figured out a game plan for dinner, yet. You spend some time talking about that. You don't get the chores done that you planned. You decide that you're really trying to be healthy, so you want to cook dinner instead of ordering out. That ends up taking about an hour and a half, for you to prep and prepare dinner.

And then, you have to take time to eat dinner. So, by the time you're done, preparing dinner, eating dinner, it's now 10:00. You wanted to be done hours ago, but it's now 10:00. You started to watch some TV with your partner while you were eating dinner, and you tell yourself, "We're just going to watch like one more episode," and then, one more episode.

You're feeling guilty, because in the back of your mind, you're telling yourself you should be working because you didn't get nearly enough done on that brief, and you didn't get to those other three tasks, so you are

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“shoulding” on yourself, feeling guilty, while you're watching TV. Not really enjoying yourself. Not really able to be present. But you still watch TV instead of going to work on the brief.

Eventually the guilt really starts to consume you, so you log back on, to work, and you work on the brief a little bit more. You go down a Westlaw™ rabbit hole, and you stay up till 2am doing research. You haven't typed up anything, you've just been researching. Finally, at 2am, you're exhausted, and you crash. And the whole process starts again the next day, right?

So, that's how your day actually went, and you want to do an evaluation. Now, I am going to do a very full, complete evaluation with you just so you can see what it looks like. But if you find this process overwhelming or too time consuming, here's what I want to offer you. You can do the lite version of an evaluation. Which is just picking one answer to each of those questions: What worked? What didn't work? And, what would you do differently? Pick one thing.

If you evaluate one aspect of your day, every single day, you will change your life. The compound effect and impact of doing that is so transformative. So, don't let yourself get perfectionistic, and say, “If I can't do the complete version of an evaluation, it's not worth doing it at all.” That is total malarkey, and excuse that your brain is serving up to you. So, I really want you to be onto yourself here, and don't let yourself get away with those excuses.

We're going to start with what worked, because we always want to start there in order to highlight our wins. What worked? You went into the office. Maybe that's something that you had been struggling with, and you had to have a lot of resistance to going into the office. So, you did get into the office, amazing. You had a successful meeting with your colleague, and maybe a client, if it was a client meeting. So, you had a successful meeting.

You made time for lunch. Maybe that's something that you've been working on, too. Actually, feeding yourself throughout the day, so you can maintain

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your energy. You also enjoy cooking, it's something that you do as a form of self-care and leisure. So, you cooked dinner, and you ended up eating healthy. That's what worked, too.

You had dinner with your spouse, which is really nice; some quality time with someone. And you got to watch a little TV with them, and relax with them, and just enjoy their company. So, that's a what worked. You responded to X number of emails in the afternoon.

You had a couple that you really wanted to get out, and you made sure that you got those out. You did conduct some legal research for the brief that you're working on. So, those are all wins that you want to celebrate. Those are things that you did that worked.

Now, we're going to turn to what didn't work. And I think it's really easy to do an evaluation where you go through what didn't work, and then figure out what you would do differently, for each thing that didn't work. Rather than doing all of what didn't work, and then doing all of what you'll do differently. I like to go one by one by one. So, you get really specific solutions for what didn't work.

We'll just start at the beginning of the day. You didn't wake up on time. That's something that didn't work. Now, we want to explore that, there's a couple different avenues to go here. Are you waking up earlier than you actually prefer? If you constantly try and force yourself to wake up earlier than you prefer, you're going to encounter the struggle every single day.

So, you can do one of two things: You can adjust the time that you wake up, to be more in line with your preferences. Like, I'm never going to wake up at 5:00 in the morning, that is not who I am. I'm not a 5am person. If you are, amazing for you, if that's what works for you. If you're not, you don't need to be, in order to be successful.

But you want to be really honest about the time that you actually want to wake up, because you're much more likely to stick to it. So, are you waking

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up too early or trying to wake up too early? And are you not getting enough sleep? If you're going to bed at 2:00 and trying to wake up at 6:30, that's only four hours of sleep, four and a half hours of sleep. That's not enough, more than likely.

So, you want to be onto yourself, and that you're giving yourself enough rest. You also, the second part of this, is that you've got to resist the urge to snooze. So, you're going to have to feel some negative emotions and stick to it anyways. There's going to be some discomfort involved, in getting up when you say you're going to get up, and you just need to be willing to feel that discomfort and stick to your plan.

Maybe what you'll do differently, is that you decide to set your alarm for 7:30 instead, it gives you a little bit more time to sleep. And it's more in line with when you're actually getting up anyways. So, you make that plan. And you're also going to plan to feel your negative feelings at 7:30, when your alarm goes off, and you still don't feel like getting up. Okay.

Now, the second thing that you did, was you scrolled on social media for a little over an hour. That's going to be something that didn't work, as well, because you didn't plan to be on social media. If you like to spend a time on social media, there's nothing wrong with that. You just want to plan it into your schedule. Be really intentional about it.

Don't plan to be doing something else, and then be on social media. That's a recipe for disaster. That's a way to always find yourself falling behind. Okay, so plan your social media time. You can plan all of the things that you do for leisure; TV, reading, sleep, social media, all of that. Conversations with friends, you want to plan that into your schedule.

Because if you don't plan that stuff, what you're doing is double booking yourself. You're spending time doing those activities, but you're planning to be doing something else. So, you're double booked. Even though you probably don't think of it that way. You probably think double booking only

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as like, double booking meetings at the same time. There are a lot of ways you can double book yourself.

This is one of the ways that I see this happen most frequently. You plan to be doing one thing, but you're actually doing something else. And the thing that you are doing instead, you never planned to do, but it's something that you do all the time. So, you want to factor that in.

You're scrolling on social, and it's really a way that you're avoiding your day, right? So, what thoughts are you thinking that are driving you to buffer with social media? Maybe thoughts like; I don't want to go to work. I have so much to do, I don't know where to get started. I'm never gonna get it all done. Just one more minute, just one more scroll, just one more post, and then I'll get started. I'll get off and I'll start my day.

Those are the thoughts that are really going to present as obstacles for you to stick to your schedule. So, you want to be aware of them. And you want to think, really specifically, what do you need to think instead? For me, whenever I'm thinking the thought; just one more, just one more minute, just one more episode, just one more cocktail, just one more potato chip.

Like, just one more, I'm always on to myself. That is a really sneaky thought that creates a lot of negative results, that I don't love. So, I know that is a little whispery lie that my brain likes to tell me. And, I know not to believe it. Just one more begets just one more begets just one more. So, you want to be able to interrupt that.

You also want to identify the negative feelings that you were feeling that you avoided by scrolling on social media. So, ask yourself with those thoughts that you had just identified, what were the negative feelings that you felt, when you thought each of those thoughts? Maybe you felt dread about work for the day. Maybe you felt overwhelmed. Maybe you felt deprived with the thought of thinking; I'm not gonna be on social media anymore. I'm gonna put the phone away and get started.

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So, you'd have to be willing to feel dread, overwhelm, and deprivation. That would need to go in your 'what you'll do differently' moving forward, gameplan. And maybe you make just a hard and fast rule, speaking of what you'll do differently. Maybe you make a hard and fast rule, no social media in the morning, because it just ends up sucking up way too much time. And it creates too much temptation, and triggers too much deprivation. And it's just too hard to stop once you've started.

Maybe you make the roll no social media in the morning, so you can have a more streamlined, smooth start to your day. Okay, so from there, you started to get ready. And it was kind of a scramble. If you don't like how that felt, what you want to do differently, is figure out exactly how long you need to take to do all of the things in your morning routine.

So, maybe you budgeted in your head, it only takes you 30 minutes to get ready, when in actuality, it takes you 45 minutes to an hour. So, you need to build that in to your schedule. Also, you noticed that you spent extra time kind of spinning in confusion about what to wear for the day. So, you want to address that, as well. What can you do differently there?

I like to create a work uniform, or make decisions ahead of time about what I'm going to wear. It gets me out of indulging in devoting extra time to decisions like that, right? When we make in the moment decisions, we really waste a lot of our mental energy. So, those are decisions that you can make ahead of time, and really constrain what you wear to work, in order to make that a lot more seamless and streamlined.

Now, you didn't get to work until 9:28, when you planned to be there at 8:00. So, obviously, that's going to be something that didn't work, either. You want to ask yourself a couple questions: Was 8am too ambitious? Again, if you're planning your day out of alignment with what you're most likely to do, with what your preferences are, you want to be onto yourself there, and see if you need to adjust your expectations.

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So, maybe you decide 8am is too ambitious, because you want to start and wake up at 7:30. And again, it's going to take you about an hour to get ready, and then a half an hour to get to work, to go into the office. So, you're going to change your game plan to get in at 9:00, instead. Like I said, which means you need to leave by 8:30.

So, part of this planning, you want to start working backwards so you see exactly how long you need. What are the negative emotions you're going to have to feel, in order to get to the office by 9:00? You're probably going to need to feel constrained. Most people don't love following a schedule because it feels restrictive. So, you're going to have to change your thoughts about following a schedule.

You want to make sure you're thinking positive thoughts about doing it. Maybe you need to think that that's how you get the most done. And, that sticking to a schedule creates a lot of freedom for you. You're also going to have to be willing to feel feelings like constraint and restricted.

Same thing goes for being late to that 11:00 meeting, right? You didn't give yourself enough time to stop the work that you were doing, and to make your way down the hallway or to a different floor, in order to attend that meeting. So, you want to build that time in. It might take you longer than you realize. You want to be really clear about how long that travel time takes you, and factor it in to your plan.

Again, this may require you to feel constrained or restricted. Or, I find a lot of people struggle with feeling unfinished. They don't like to feel interrupted and what they're doing. So, they will devote longer to something than maybe they should, in order for their plan to work. But they don't want to stop what they're doing, so they don't stop what they're doing. And then, they wait until it's too late or at the very last minute, and then they make the switch.

When, ultimately, you're going to interrupt yourself anyways. So, you can figure that out ahead of time, and make your plan accordingly. Another

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thing you could do, it would be up to you, but you could also decide, when you're working on a brief, you don't do meetings on those days. You really can exert a lot more control over your schedule, and when you meet with people, than you probably realize.

So, this may be an area where you need to control your calendar a bit more, and set some boundaries and push back, and not agree to the meeting, and put it on another day that works better for you. You'll probably have to allow yourself to feel guilty, or worried, or ashamed, or exposed, or judged, if you do something like that.

You just want to build that into what you would have to do differently. All right, the meeting ran long, right? So, you were late for it, but it also ran over time. So, when that happens, you want to ask yourself; what's the solution here? Do I need to just plan more time?

Did I really underestimate how long that meeting was going to take? Did I need more than an hour? Should I have known that I needed more than an hour going in? Or, was that sufficient time and you just let it run long? Was it a meeting that took almost two hours, but it could have been an hour?

And you're gonna have to trust yourself to know the answer to that question. If the answer is you needed to plan more time for it, then you know next time you have a similar meeting, make it two hours instead of one, or an hour and a half, instead of one. If you decide that you should have just ended it at an hour, that that was sufficient enough time, then what are the feelings that you're gonna have to be willing to feel?

Again, guilt for cutting it short. You might have to be willing to feel a little rude. Not that it is rude to cut a meeting short, you just might have to feel rude. That might be one of the negative emotions that comes up for you. Or, maybe worried about what other people will think. So, build that into your 'what you would do differently.'

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You're going to have to feel those feelings, and cut the meeting short and end it on time. That also may change the way you show up in the meeting, right? You might be a lot less willing to make small talk, and you'll be much more focused on getting through your agenda items. So, your meetings become much more effective and efficient.

All right. Now let's take a look at your bad lunch plan. You took almost an hour, but you only budgeted 15 minutes for lunch. So again, you want to ask yourself; do you want to give yourself more time? Or, do you want to give yourself the amount of time that you originally planned, and you just need to stick to it? What would you need to do, specifically, in order to stick to your plan?

If you decide, let's say you want to give yourself half an hour for lunch. And if you're one of the people who says, "I can just prep my lunch really fast, it doesn't take me very long. And then, I can eat it at my desk, and I just work through lunch." This is you double booking yourself. You can only be doing one thing, meaningfully, at a time. So, if you're eating lunch, you're eating lunch. I wouldn't budget the time that you're eating lunch to do anything else.

Really allow yourself to be present with whatever it is that you're doing. You will find, if you time yourself, that's why we do time audits, that lunch probably takes you longer than 15 minutes. So, whether it's half an hour or an hour, figure out the amount of time that you want to devote to lunch, and then stick to it.

A way that you can limit the amount of time that you spend on lunch is to eat the same thing every day, or to plan your lunches ahead of time. So, you don't indulge in any confusion about what to eat and waste time there. How might you need to be willing to feel if you were to do that?

You might need to be willing to feel bored with your lunch selection, and a little deprived, if you want something that you didn't plan for. If, like you're craving a Reuben, but you planned to eat a salad from the place in your

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building, right, you might need to be willing to feel those feelings, in order to stick to your plan.

Now, you spent a big chunk of your afternoon reading and responding to emails, instead of working on that writing assignment. So, if you did that, I want you to take a look at your plan for the day. It didn't include any time for email. Again, this is how you double book yourself. You, of course, are going to be reading and responding to email throughout the day, you need to plan that in your schedule.

Otherwise, you're going to get to your end of your day and feel behind, because you read and responded to email when you should have been doing something else. Or, you didn't read and respond to email, and now you're doing email at the end of the day, or feeling like you need to get through email. So, you want to make sure you budget email time accordingly. You need to include that in your plan.

I like people to get very clear, by doing the time audit process, how much time they spend, on average, reading and responding to email. And, include that in your plan for the day. You can do it in one big chunk. You can break it up into a couple chunks throughout the day.

I don't love people being half pregnant between their email and an assignment that they're working on. You want to be very clear and present with whatever task it is that you're completing. So, you're either knowingly working on email, or you're working on the assignment that you planned. But you don't want to be doing both at the same time. Multitasking is really inefficient.

So, if you do that, you want to be onto yourself. You want to come up with a different plan. In order to work on the brief, instead of being in your inbox, by the way, you probably are going to have to feel guilty and worried. Guilty, that you're not getting back to people as fast as you might like to get back to them. And, worried that they're going to be upset about your response time.

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Another thing that I teach people to do here, is to define what responsive means to you. So, you want to figure out how responsive you want to be. What's your standard? What's your expectation for yourself? And you want to use that to inform when you're working in your inbox, when you're responding to email. And, when you're working on those more substantive assignments.

Now, in the afternoon, that coworker also stopped by, and they stayed and really, you didn't have time to talk to them. So, that's a 'what didn't work,' too. What would you need to do differently there? You might need to set a boundary, and communicate that you aren't in a position to talk, right now. So, you might need to tell them that you're in the middle of something.

You're probably going to have to feel guilty, rude, and worried, as you communicate that. Of course, you can change your thoughts, so you don't feel those feelings. But you're a human, and if boundary setting is something that you're just learning how to do, it's probably going to feel uncomfortable. So, you're gonna have to be willing to feel those feelings.

And you would want to take a look at what were the thoughts you were thinking, about telling them that you didn't have time to talk, that prevented you from doing it. So, maybe you thought that you couldn't tell them no, or that you want to be a person who has an open-door policy and who's really accessible. So, you're gonna have to change those thoughts if you want to create a different result.

You need to think that it's okay for you to have boundaries. And, that your work, that you've planned for the day, is your top priority, and then you help other people when you are able to. Their needs don't come first, you come first.

Another thing you can do, is to schedule standing meetings with people, to really prevent them dropping by unannounced. You can also build some flex time into your schedule, and flex time is time you literally don't plan to be doing anything.

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So, when something unexpected pops up, it has a place to go in your day, rather than, again, you being double booked. By having a game plan and then tending to that emergency instead, that's a double booking that you create. So, if you create flex time in your schedule to do nothing, and people love to put flex time in their schedule. And then, in their head, they plan what they're going to do in their flex time. That's not proper flex time.

Flex time is really blank. You don't plan anything for that time. And, you just see what comes up through the day. If nothing comes up, move on to the rest of your schedule. But normally something comes up, so you want to have a place to put that.

You can also have office hours, so you can teach the people that you work with, whether it's clients or colleagues, when you're available for those swing-by sessions. Again, you can see how specific the 'what you will do differently' section is here. You want to have a very clear plan on how to prevent stuff like this.

Now, you also didn't get enough done on the brief. You did start working on it late in the afternoon, but you didn't get enough done on it. So, you want to assess that. Did you not plan enough time? Did you underestimate how long it would take?

Figure out the total number of hours you thought you needed to spend on it. If you thought you would be done with it by the end of the day, and then you ended up really not even making a dent, ask yourself why. You reshuffled a lot, right? You procrastinated, some. You didn't control your calendar. Kind of the three main offenses, violating those three simple steps.

So, you needed to control your calendar, you needed to honor your plan, but also, maybe you needed to plan on more time to work on it. So, you want to be really clear about that. Maybe you needed longer than you initially gave yourself. And, you want to look at the very specific reasons that you didn't get enough, done.

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You reshuffled. Maybe in the afternoon, even while you were working on it, you stared your screen; you scrolled on Instagram®. Maybe you spent too long looking for templates, and that prevented you from getting started on the research portion. Maybe you went down some rabbit holes. Come up with your game plan, for what you're going to do differently.

If you were staring at your screen, you might have been feeling confused about where to start, or overwhelmed. Or, feeling inadequate, worried that you're not going to do a good enough job, and you started to spin, instead of moving forward. If that's the case, you need to be willing to feel those negative feelings, and work in spite of and despite them.

You also may need to address your thoughts, right? What are some of the positive thoughts you would need to think? And what are the some of the positive emotions you would need to feel, in order to take positive, productive action working on the brief? You might have to feel bothered if you don't feel like working on the brief. You might need to feel bored. You might need to feel deprived, to not go on Instagram, right? You might need to feel imperfect, if you pick a template, and it's a little ill-fitting, and you just make it work.

You might need to feel incomplete or unsatiated, if you're researching and you're spending too much time going down rabbit holes. So, you want to be really clear about the things that you can do differently. Maybe also, you'll ask for a template from the person that you're working for. And maybe, they have a good idea of a great template for you, rather than you struggling to find something on your own.

So, that's a specific 'what you could do differently,' in order to help with the situation. You can also make a much more specific list of the tasks you need to complete that go into the brief. That's going to help you get a much more accurate time estimate for how long the brief would actually take you. So, you break it down. You're going to have to have time to find a template, and then to identify the issues you need to research.

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How long is it going to take you to research each one? Do you need to start by reading the briefs from earlier in the case, or any other materials that would be relevant to the brief? Maybe a transcript you need to read? What portions are you going to research, and when? How long do you want to spend researching? And, do you want to have work to show for the research you do?

That was another one of the things that didn't work; you don't really have anything to show for the work you did. You were just researching. But you didn't actually put your fingers on the keyboard and type up any of the research, you didn't summarize anything. You didn't make headway on the writing portion of the brief.

So, if that's something that you struggle with, you want to solve for it. What will you do differently? I like to teach people to summarize the research that they do, as they're doing it. So, either at the end of the session, you don't stop researching until you've summarized what you've found for the day.

You can also do case summaries. This is total perfectionism that comes up for people. They read something and they're like, "Oh, I'll go back through later, and I'll make summaries of all these cases." No, no, no, that's duplicative. What you want to do, is summarize as you go.

So, even if you want to edit it later, you still have something to show for the work that you did throughout the day. You'd also be able to send that to someone else, to show them the progress that you're making. So, that's really good, too.

I also, this is just a little tip and trick, I also used to have two documents, the Word™ document that my brief would be in, and then I'd have a separate document where I'd dump my research. And that second document would become really unworkable and unhelpful after a while, it would just have all these quotes from cases without any context. And, that wasn't great.

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So, if you do that, I really want to advise you to combine the two, and drop your research into the brief document that you're working on. the outline that you've started. That will keep everything all in one place, and it will save you a lot of time, and make you much more efficient in your writing process.

Okay, you also, another thing that didn't work, is that you didn't enter any of your time for the day. Because you ended up working later than you planned to, and then you scrambled and ran out the door. So, what do you need to do differently there?

Number one, you need to build in time, in your game plan for the day, to enter your time. I also advise people to plan when they're going to enter their billable time, and to make a plan for the next day. So, you're not scrambling the following morning trying to figure out what you're going to do. So, you want to make your plan, and you want to enter your time.

If you have really negative thoughts about planning and time entry, you're going to need to change those thoughts. You're also going to need to feel the negative feelings that you associate with doing those tasks. You get to decide; do you want to put in your time throughout the day? Or, at the end of the day? Pick one and stick to it. Don't be half pregnant between two different options. That's a recipe for disaster.

And pay attention to the lies that you tell yourself, like, "Oh, I'll do it later. Oh, I'll do it first thing in the morning. Oh, I'll do it later tonight, when I get home." That's your brain selling you snake oil. So, you want to catch those thoughts, be onto yourself, and come up with a specific 'what you'll do differently' gameplan, in order to fix this.

You also need to identify the discomfort that you feel about leaving work when you say you're going to leave work. Those negative emotions are emotions you're going to have to allow, in order to stick to your schedule. So, what will you do differently? You're going to leave on time. You're going to feel those negative feelings. Maybe you need to feel overwhelmed or

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again, incomplete, because you're not done with the work that you planned for the day. And you need to feel those feelings, and leave work anyways.

Now, when you got home, you had planned to do some chores, but you didn't end up doing them. You want to ask yourself; Do I need to give myself more time? Do I need to force myself to adhere to this plan? Or, was my plan overly ambitious?

You also didn't get to those three other action items that you had planned for your late afternoon. So, same thing; was your plan overly ambitious? It sounds like it was. Sounds like, if you were being really honest, you would have never had enough time to get to those three things, and work on and complete the brief.

So, going forward, you want to plan less items to complete in a day, when you're working on a big brief like that. It doesn't work; you just don't have enough time. So, you were being overly ambitious about those three extra tasks and about the chores. So, maybe you make a decision to only do chores on the weekends. You might also decide to outsource what you can, right, maybe you hire someone to clean your house. Or, maybe you have a laundry service, rather than needing to do that.

And there may be some negative emotions that you have to be willing to feel, in order to leave the chores to the weekend, or to outsource them. Maybe guilt, maybe shame, maybe embarrassment, right? Maybe you need to feel inadequate.

You can, of course, change the thoughts that cause you to feel all of those feelings. And then, you will just get rid of those negative emotions, if you change your thinking. But if those negative emotions are sticky, you've got to be willing to feel them.

Now, one of the things that did work, is that you cooked dinner, you got to eat a healthy meal; amazing. But dinner took too long, so again, it goes back to this consistent question, you can start to see a theme here. Do I

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need to take less time to do something? Or, do I need to give myself a more honest, accurate allotment of time in order to complete the task?

Dinner's probably going to take you longer than you budgeted if you're going to cook. So, you want to make a decision: Do you order out and you plan something healthy to eat? You decide ahead of time. Maybe you have a hit list of places you order from when you order out, that all support your food goals and your nutrition goals. You can do that.

Or, you can decide, no, I do want to cook. But I'm going to give myself more time to cook, because I know, if I'm being really honest, it's gonna take me a lot longer, probably an hour and a half to prep and prepare dinner. So, you get to make the decision there. But you want to make sure you are decided on how you will approach that moving forward.

Maybe when you're working on a brief you decide that it's not the best day to cook. Or, you figure out what you can make in the shortest amount of time, and you make that instead. All right, maybe you want to meal prep, that's another option.

I find that meal prepping, for people, tends to be a perfectionistic thing that they would love to do, and they plan to do, and then they don't do. You just want to be really honest with yourself. Are you likely to stick to that? Is it in line with your preferences? Do you like to eat the same thing every day?

If you do, amazing. If you don't, but you want to implement that. What negative emotions do you need to feel? Probably bored with food. And that's okay, you can feel bored and eat something that you planned to eat ahead of time, anyways.

Alright, so dinner took too long. You're going to figure out what you're going to do differently there. And you also buffered a little bit with TV, right? One episode turned into three episodes. So, you want to figure out what thoughts created that result. Maybe you were thinking; I deserve a break.

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Or, again, that lovely thought; just one more episode. Just one more, just one more.

And you were feeling entitled, and deserving, and tired maybe, and feeling dread about getting back to work, and just overwhelmed. Nothing good, and maybe guilty. And, you avoided guilt by seeking entertainment. So, you want to make that hit list, of the feelings that you're going to have to be willing to feel, in order to cut the TV off after the one episode that you watched while you ate dinner.

So, you might have to feel deprived if you limit TV, or annoyed, or frustrated, or constricted, or controlled, or sad. Because you want to watch your shows and you wish you had more time. Again, those are all the different emotions that come up when you are not going to buffer, when you want to interrupt the buffering process.

And buffering is just any activity that you engage in, that allows you to temporarily avoid negative feelings, and provides you with that instant gratification. So, when you don't buffer, you normally have to feel a lot of deprivation. So, that's going to be part of your 'what would you do differently.'

You also get to decide if you want to be someone who works late. You did work late, and maybe that's something that you think is a 'what worked.' Because you did put in a couple extra hours of work on the brief that you're already a little behind on. But you get to decide how late do you want to work.

You don't have to work in the evenings, at all. And if that's the decision you make, what will you need to do differently in order to create that result? You might need to plan better and stick to your schedule. Start work on time. Work without interruptions.

You might need to feel negative feelings, like unfinished, or guilty at the end of the day, because you're not done with what you wanted to be done

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with. Maybe underwhelmed by what you accomplished. So many emotions go in to not working late at night.

So, you want to figure out how do you want to approach evenings. Do you want to work? Do you not want to work? I also think this is an area that is ripe for making decisions ahead of time. Like, what's your drop-dead time for going to bed? If you make that decision ahead of time, you will be a lot more likely to stick to it.

So, maybe you decide what's enough sleep. Enough sleep is seven hours. So, if you're going to wake up at 7:30 instead of 6:30, what time do you need to go to bed? 12:30, right? If you want more sleep than that, you just need to work backwards. When do you need to go to bed, in order to give yourself enough rest?

You also want to take a look at the thoughts that you're thinking, that lead to you staying up late. Some people, I think it's called "revenge bedtime procrastination." It's this concept where, you know you probably shouldn't stay up as late as you're going to stay up, but you feel like you never get to spend your time doing the things that you want to do.

So, you kind of self-sabotage by staying up late. In order to do things that you want to do like, scroll on social media. Maybe you want to watch TikTok®; you want to watch TV; you want to read. Whatever the case is, you do those activities, even though you're going to pay for it in the long run.

The only person you're hurting is yourself, but you still rebel against going to bed earlier. So, if you do that, you want to make a plan not to do that. Also, if you tend to stay up late, you want to examine what are your thoughts about sleep and needing rest.

I used to have really negative thoughts about sleep. I used to think that it wasn't important, that I wish I didn't need it, that I should be able to operate with a lot less of it. And I used to pull all-nighters, as a result, and I ended

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up being really unproductive. So, you want to take a look at how you think about sleep and about rest.

And I've done a whole episode on that before. You can go back and listen to it. I'll drop it in the show notes, a link to that, for you to listen to. It's about the sweetness of doing nothing and learning how to rest. But if you've got a bad relationship with sleep and rest, you want to take a look at that, and think about what you would need to think, instead.

You also want to identify, like I've been saying, I know I probably sound like a broken record at this point, but what are the negative feelings that you've been unwilling to feel? And what are the emotions that you need to be willing to feel moving forward, in order to stick to your schedule and go to bed at the time you say you're going to go to bed?

All right, that's the full evaluation of your day, right? You went through; you figured out what worked, you made a really comprehensive list of all your wins. And then, you went in to what didn't work, and what you'd do differently.

And when you do this, you're gonna have a really comprehensive list. And a ton of awareness as to what you're doing, why you're doing it. The thoughts that you're thinking that are causing the problems. The negative feelings you're not willing to feel. And the actions that you were taking that didn't serve you, and the actions that you need to take that you didn't take. And then, you formulate that game plan for what you're going to do differently, moving forward.

I told you already, in this episode, this is a very comprehensive evaluation. Because I wanted you to see how full and robust these evaluations can be if you choose to really invest time into this process. You will make massive transformations in how you manage your time, if you do these robust evaluations.

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That being said, I am cognizant of the fact that doing a robust evaluation like this takes a decent amount of time. Doesn't have to take a ton of time, I think you could do a pretty comprehensive evaluation in like 10 minutes; 10-15 minutes a day, where you'd be able to run through the process that I just walked through.

I gave a lot of explanation, but if you were writing this out yourself, you'd be able to do it a lot faster. So, it's not going to take you an hour, like how long this episode is. That being said, if you just answer one item for what worked, and one item for what didn't work, and you come up with one very specific solution for what you'll do differently to remedy that one 'what didn't work' item that you identified, you will still transform your life.

I actually think that that is a really effective way to go about leveraging these evaluations. Because it can be really overwhelming to try and attempt to make all of these changes at once. I love the robust evaluation, but if you pick just one change to make going forward, with each evaluation you do over time, you're going to make really massive shifts.

So, it may not seem like enough change. It may not seem like you're moving the dial enough. But I assure you, you will move the dial, even if you just do the simplest, smallest evaluation possible. Okay. I really want to encourage you to try this evaluation process. I think it will be life changing for you.

If you do it, reach out to me on social media. I can't wait to hear how it goes. Again, it's very simple: What worked? What didn't work? What would you do differently? And then, figure out the thoughts, the feelings, and the actions, all right, that are getting in your way and that you would need to change, in order to manage your time more effectively.

All right, my friends. That's what I've got for you this week. I hope this was helpful. I will talk to you in the next episode.

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