

## **STOP SABOTAGING YOUR PERSONAL TIME MANAGEMENT!\***

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Many people sincerely want to improve their time management but unintentionally put up roadblocks that sabotage success and make time management a dead-end proposition. Here are ten ways you may be sabotaging your success, and strategies for overcoming them.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #1: PREDICT FAILURE**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** It is easy to give up before you start, saying something to yourself like, “Schedules never work for me.” Hold judgment on whether or not you can be successful and think positively. Say things to yourself like, “I can learn to manage my time step by step” or “I don’t know if I can be successful, but I cannot lose by trying; I know I’ll learn something.”

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #2: START TOO BIG**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** An expectation that you can move from rarely managing your time to managing every moment or even most of your time is unrealistic and will set you up for failure. Start by scheduling a very short period of time where you are fairly certain of experiencing success. Even using a schedule 30 minutes or an hour out of a day can be a great place to start if it means you will experience success—it’s a 100% improvement over 0 minutes of sticking to a schedule, which may be what you are used to!

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #3: SCHEDULE EVERY POSSIBLE MOMENT OF THE DAY**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** A common fear expressed by people concerned about their time management is, “If I schedule in my time, I will lose all the spontaneity and fun in my life.” Life is made interesting by the unexpected; so don’t schedule it out of your life. Leaving open times helps you avoid feeling trapped by your schedule and gives you the freedom to enjoy unexpected opportunities as they arise.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #4: BE TOTALLY UNREALISTIC WHEN YOU SCHEDULE**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** A general rule of thumb is to estimate how long it will take you to do a task, then double that estimate. Hard to believe? You’ll be surprised to find the doubled estimate quite often accurate. If doubling your estimates means you won’t get everything done, you are probably overscheduled and could benefit from looking at the “big picture” of all the commitments you are balancing.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #5: ASSUME YOU HAVE FAILED AND GIVE UP WHEN THE SCHEDULE DOESN’T GO AS PLANNED**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** No one can stay perfectly on a schedule all the time, or perhaps even most of the time. If you expect yourself to schedule perfectly, you will be setting yourself up for failure. This failure then offers a great excuse to abandon scheduling all together. When you drift away from your schedule, find a way to have a success experience with whatever part of the schedule remains for that day. You might say something to yourself like, “Well I blew the last three hours of my schedule, but I have one hour now where I can do what I have scheduled.”

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #6: FOCUS ON THE PAST**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** Past failures are just that—past. Look forward toward success, using the failures to motivate your growth, rather than as an excuse to beat yourself up.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #7: EMPHASIZE FAILURES, IGNORE SUCCESSES**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** People who do not manage time well often get angry with themselves. Yet this anger interferes with effective time management, taking up time that could be better spent working toward goals. It is not possible to learn a new skill without making mistakes. Focus on what has gone well, and keep building on small successes that will add up to bigger successes as you improve. Also, think about mistakes in a different way—as a sign that you are trying new things and growing as a result.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #8: PRIORITIZE THE LEAST MEANINGFUL AND MOST UNPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** It is easy to do smaller, less important tasks to avoid more difficult and challenging goal-related activities. Some people find it helpful to schedule high-priority or difficult activities first to get them accomplished and out of the way. Others find that scheduling one simple, easy task to start with helps them get settled into work, after which they can tackle a difficult task. Whatever style works best for you, prioritize difficult or goal-oriented activities and set a specific time to do them. Use talking on the phone, going shopping, running errands, etc. as rewards for working on high priority projects.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #9: BASE YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT ON OTHER PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND PRIORITIES**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** Your motivation to succeed will be much stronger if you are working towards goals which feed your hopes and dreams rather than someone else's plans. Even those parts of life which are based on someone else's priorities (paying bills, working on that nagging project the boss gave you, etc.) will go more quickly if you also have time to work towards your personal goals. Take time to define your own personal and career goals, and develop a one-year, five-year, and ten-year plan to implement these goals.

### **SABOTAGE STRATEGY #10: GO IT ALONE**

**SUCCESS STRATEGY:** Don't be a loner when it comes to changing old habits. Research shows that people who enlist the support of others are more successful at turning bad habits into new-found skills. Find a person who will support your successes and encourage you to keep improving despite setbacks. Finding a supportive partner who also wants to improve time management gives you creative opportunities for mutual problem solving, contracting and support.

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