Increasing Productivity

Sometimes called “Time Management”

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TMA Leadership Lab Projects

If you'd like to gain greater expertise using the skills provided during the 2026 Ballad Health Leadership Retreat, the Tennessee Medical Association offers a multi-month course helping clinicians acquire the skills to become effective leaders capable of producing measurable and sustainable organizational improvements.

Entitled *A Blueprint for Creating Operational Excellence in Safety, Quality and Efficiency, the course* develops core competencies in improving care processes, developing a culture of accountability, and successfully leading change initiatives. Each participant undertakes a course project that provides an opportunity to directly apply the skills acquired in the Lab to improve the performance of their own healthcare organization.

The curriculum is facilitated by Steve Harden, founder of Leaders Get Results, LLC. Steve has coached healthcare leaders through 300+ improvement initiatives.

Participants earn up to ***38.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™**** through the program.

Here's what others have to say about the Leadership Lab…

"The Leadership Lab was fantastic. It equipped me with the skills I needed to lead a successful change project. That project laid the foundation for a major workflow change that will further benefit our patients and my ED. Steve is an outstanding instructor who kept me highly engaged throughout the curriculum and was readily available to assist with questions. I can't recommend the Lab highly enough. It's well worth your time and effort."

Tyler W. Barrett, MD MSCI FACEP FHRS
Associate Professor
Medical Director
Department of Emergency Medicine

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"I feel like I won the lottery when I got the opportunity to participate in the Leadership Lab. It was so worthwhile for me that I am sending other members of my leadership team through it."

Giri Korivi, MD
Chairman, Family Medicine
Premier Medical Group

"This Leadership Lab gave me the skills and tools to take a seat at the leadership table in my hospital. If this Lab can work for a radiologist that likes to stay in the reading room and read films, it can work for any physician. I strongly recommend it."

Ina Radtke, MD PhD
Radiology and Imaging Associates
Paris, TN

"The Leadership Lab equipped me with a systems-based mindset, enabling me to lead projects that produce sustainable results. Most importantly, the Lab "filled my bucket" - giving me a greater sense of purpose and satisfaction while establishing me as someone in the organization who can get things done. The Lab is career-changing and definitely worth the investment of your time."

Sarah Essary, MD
Maury Regional Medical Group
Columbia, TN

Here are some of the improvement projects completed by Lab participants:

- Decreased the new patient no show rate from 27% to 7%.
- Increased the number of Chronic Care Management (CCM) calls per month from 49.5% to 95%.
- Increased staff satisfaction with patient communication from 30% to 54%.

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- Decreased the number of days required to contact patients with their biopsy results from 12 days to 8 days.
- Reduced the percentage of patients who received antibiotics for acute sinusitis from 44.95% to 27%.
- Increased the number of avoided hospital admissions per month from zero to 50 per month.
- Increased the percentage of physicians completing the required controlled substance contracts with patients from 30% to 90%.
- Improved the percentage of patients receiving resources to address social determinants of health from zero percent to 2%.
- Reduced the percentage of Medicare patients discharged to skilled nursing facilities from 30% to 20%.
- Improved the percentage of patients properly prepared for eye appointments from 40% to 75%.
- Decreased the average patient wait time from 25 minutes to 20 minutes.
- Increased the "study comments" on transthoracic echocardiogram orders from 15% to 100%.
- Increased the number of patients receiving counseling and genetic testing for inherited cancer syndromes from 15% to 40%.
- Reduced non-EMS arrivals "door-to-bed" time for patients from 29 minutes to 23 minutes.
- Reduced the number of patient scheduling templates from 47 to 3.
- Reduced the number patient scheduling rules from 85 to 6.
- Reduced the number of patient appointment types from 92 to 13.
- Increased the percentage of parents that properly dispose of leftover opioids after pediatric surgery from 30% to 44%.
- Reduced the "Door-to-CTA" time from 118 minutes to 43 minutes.

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- Improved post-delivery mother-baby skin-to-skin contact from 22% to 73%.
- Reduced patient harming events on medical/surgical/ICU units from 8/year to 4/year.
- Reduced the medical/surgical/ICU Mortality Index from .81 to .71.
- Reduced hospital readmissions rate from 4.09% to 2.31%.
- Reduced the time from Computed Tomography simulation to Radiation Therapy from 15 days to 8.5 days.
- Reduced the COPD 30-day readmissions rate from 17% to 7%.
- Increased enrollment in the Chronic Care Management program from zero to 100 patients.
- Increased the percentage of patients receiving a Fall Risk Assessment from 38% to 67%.
- Increased BMI Screening Compliance from 70% to 91%.
- Increased Nurse Retention from 49% to 93%.

For more information, call or email…

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Senior Director, Leadership Programs and Education
Tennessee Medical Association
Beth.Lentchner@tnmed.org
615-460-1661

Steve Harden
Owner, Leaders Get Results, LLC
Steve@LeadersGetResults.com
901-413-8598

Agenda

- Why Productivity Matters
- 9 Productivity Skills
- Q&A
- Debrief

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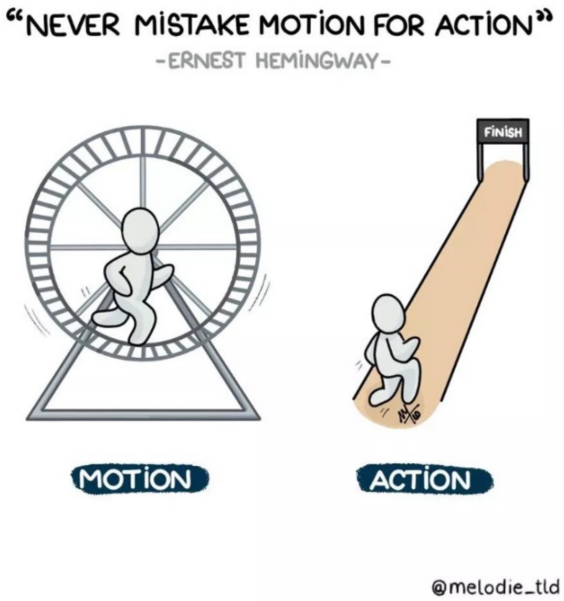
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Cleaned ★ Disinfected ★ Monitored ★ Inspected

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Why “Productivity” and not “Time Management?”

Confusion about “activity” and “accomplishment”



“Activity is often unrelated to productivity, and busyness rarely takes care of business.”

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Being Busy is No Measure of Success as a Leader



"Being busy is a form of laziness- lazy thinking & indiscriminate action."

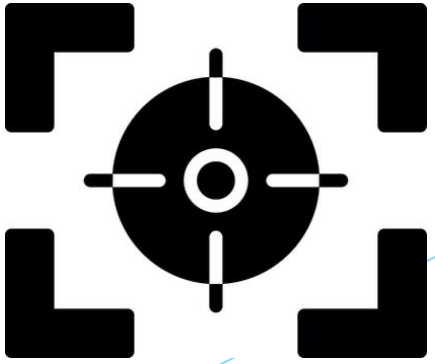
- Tim Ferris

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Productivity is not managing your time, it's managing your focus

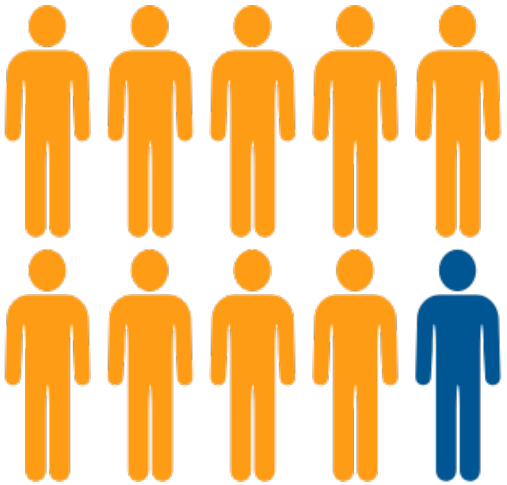


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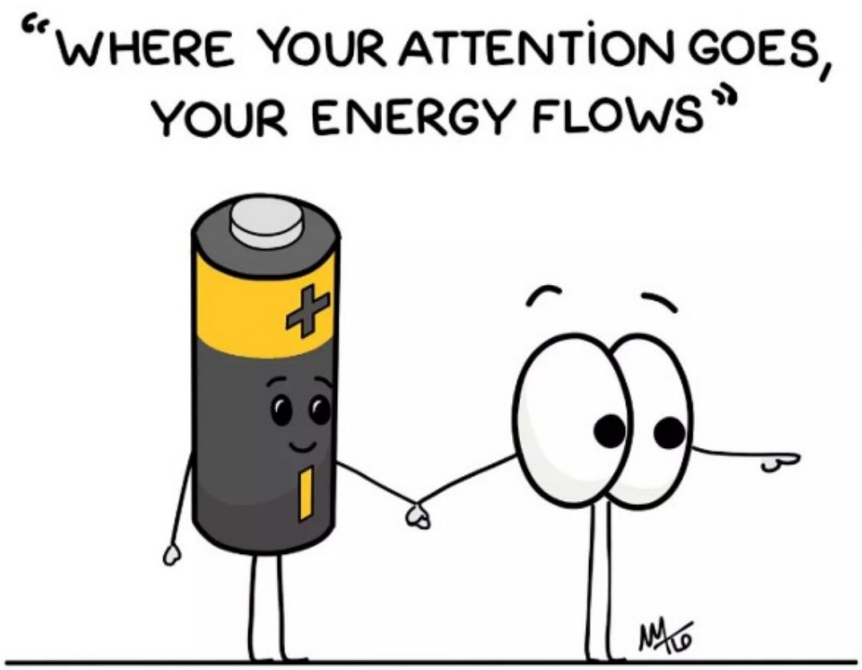


"Only 10% of leaders have the right focus and energy to work on the things that matter."

Bruch & Ghoshal, HBR, 2002

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"Focus on the ONE THING you can do this week such that by doing it everything else would be easier or unnecessary."

Achieving results is directly related to how narrow you can make your focus

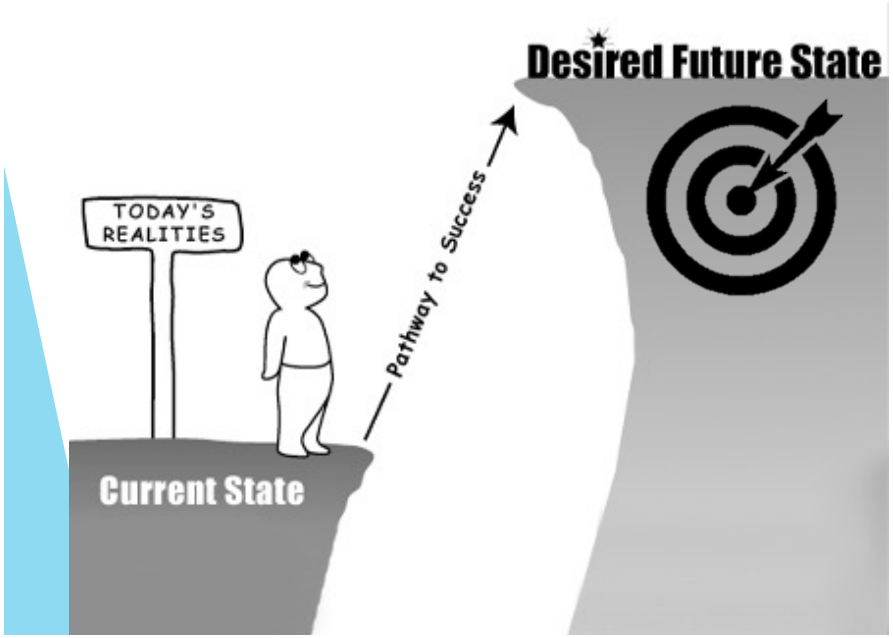
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Fix Your Focus



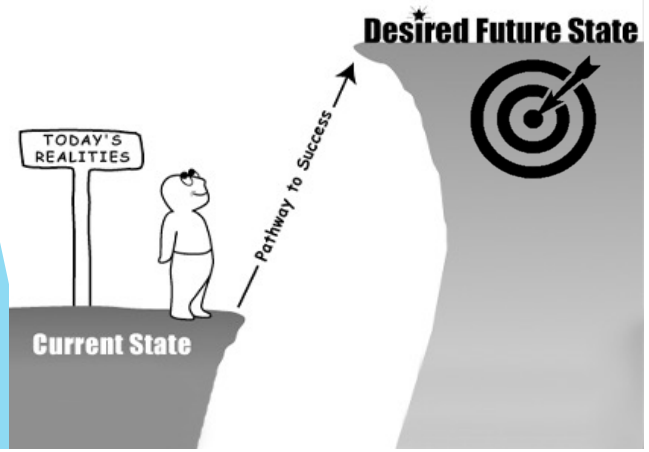
North Star Metrics



- Organizationally (Safety, Quality, Efficiency, Experience)
- Professionally (Certifications, Degrees, Skill, Experience)
- Personally (Health, Hobbies, Travel, Experiences)
- Relationally (Spouse, Children, Grandchildren, Extended Family, Neighbors)
- Financially (Budgeting, Investments, Retirement, Cash Flow)
- Spiritually (Meditation, Faith, Prayer, Obedience, Scriptural Knowledge)
- Charitably (Service, Contributions, Support)

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Fix Your Focus





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Determining the ONE THING that yields your Desired Future State

(or, how to write a Key Result Statement)

"If all other things in this unit were to remain the same, what one thing, if we changed it, would make the biggest difference to our patients in terms of safety, quality, efficiency and/or experience?"

We want to _____
(verb)

(Metric) _____
(measure)

From _____(X)
(baseline)

To _____ (Y)
(target)

By_____ (Date)
(deadline)

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Examples of Key Result Statements

- "We want to increase post-delivery mother-baby skin-to-skin contact from 23% to 75% by July 30, 2021."
- "We want to reduce average patient wait time from 32 minutes to 15 minutes by July 30, 2021."
- We want to reduce the days to begin oncology treatment from 15 days to 7 days by July 15, 2020.
- "We want to impro ...reduce the number of major interventions... to 85% of all pts. by July 15, 2021."

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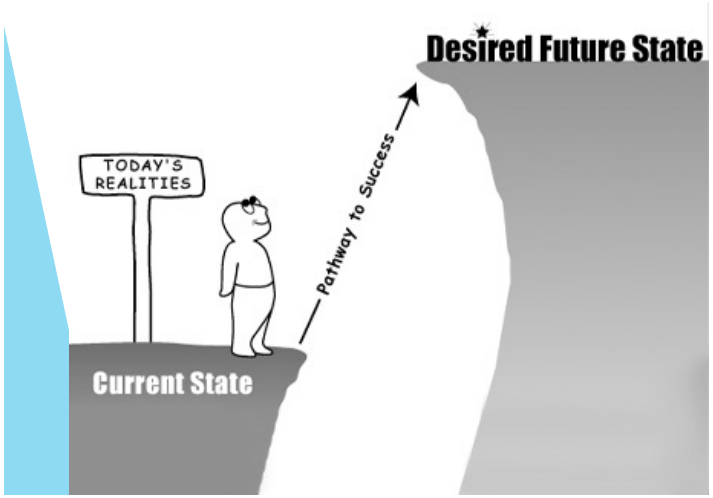
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Exercise:

Write a Key Result Statement for one of these areas

(I want to _____ _____ from _____ to _____ by July of 2027)

verb metric baseline target



- Organizationally (Safety, Quality, Efficiency, Experience)
- Professionally (Certifications, Degrees, Skill, Experience)
- Personally (Health, Hobbies, Travel, Experiences)
- Relationally (Spouse, Children, Grandchildren, Extended Family, Neighbors)
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Fix Your Focus

Always ask, "If I am saying 'yes' to this, to what am I saying 'no?'"

Saying, "Yes" to this meeting means…



…Saying, "No" to something happening at the same time as the meeting

Will doing this help me get to my Desired Future State?

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Fix Your Focus

Ensure those things to which you say "yes" are aligned with your personal or organizational "Desired Future State"



Most people fail from indigestion, not starvation

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Productivity Skill #1

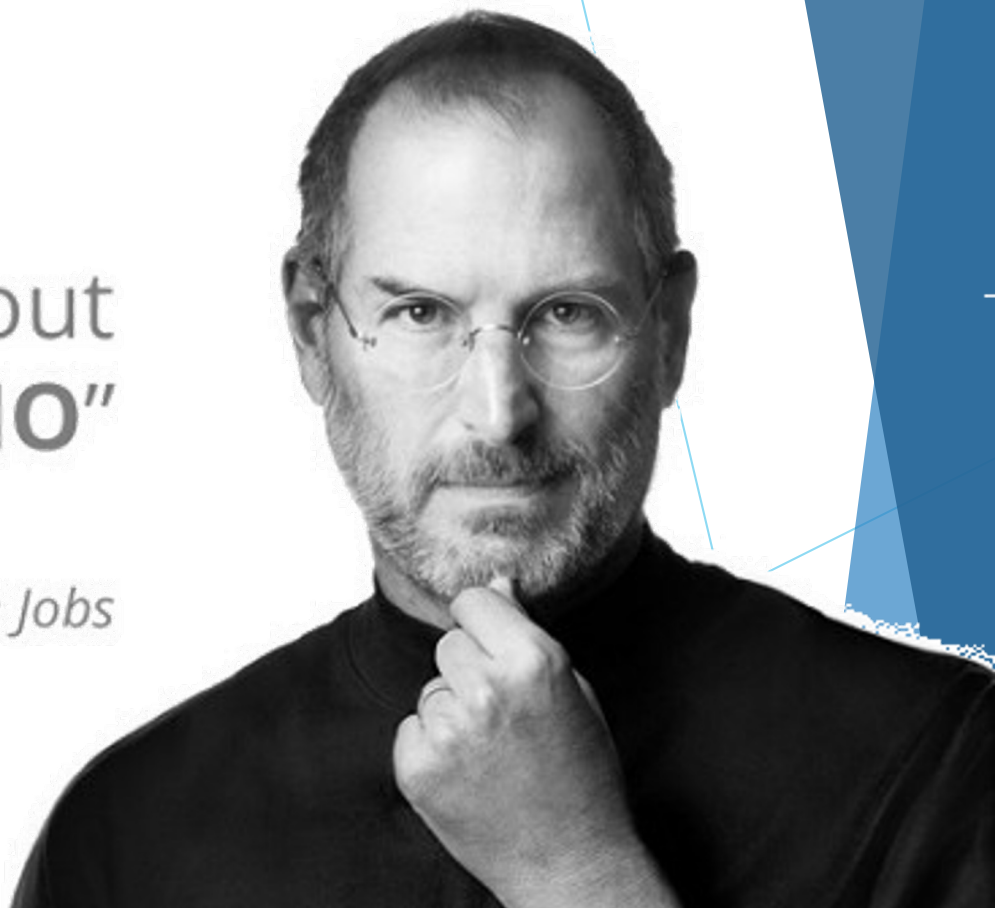
Fix your Focus

"Focusing is about saying **NO**"

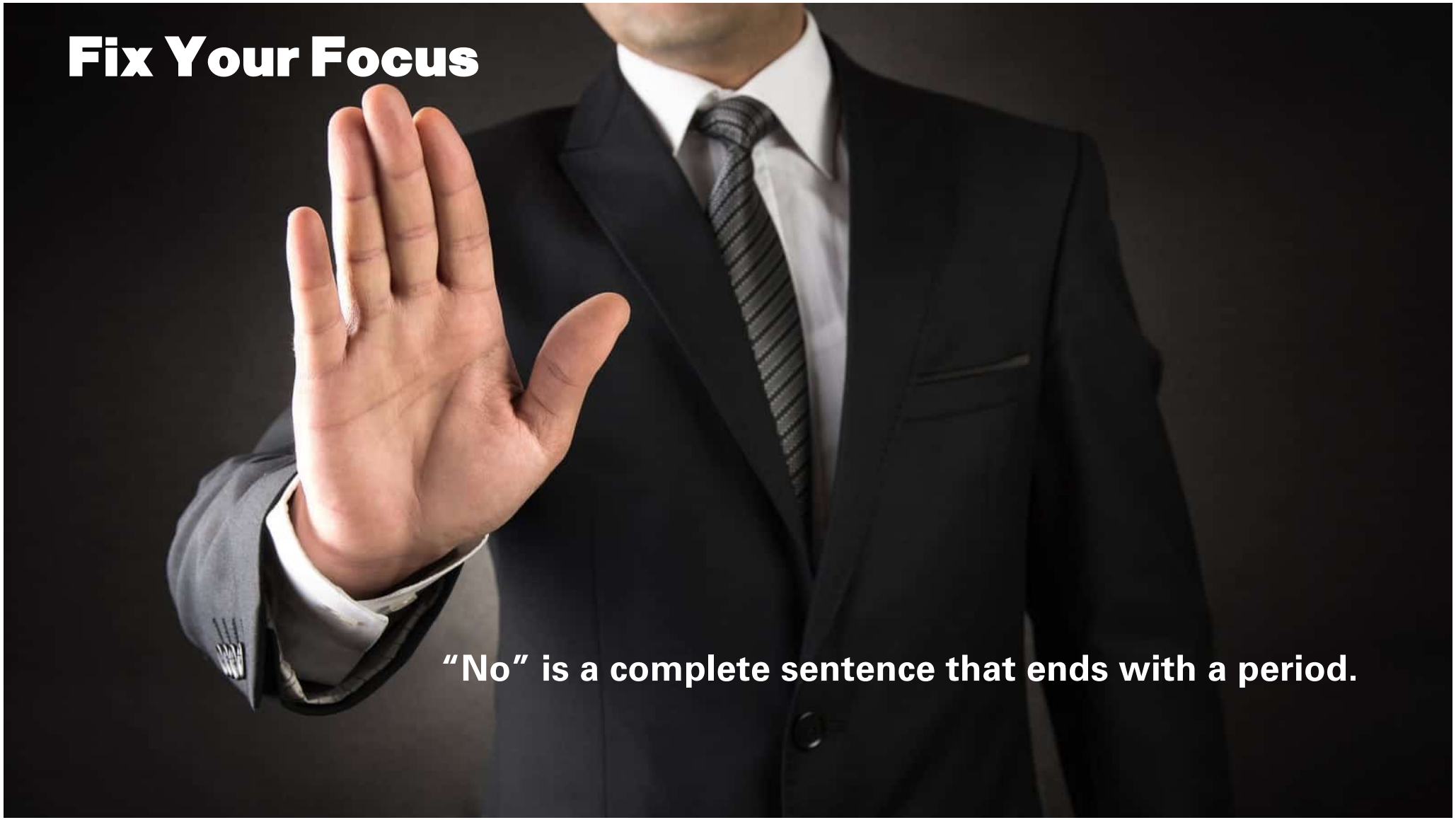
- *Steve Jobs*



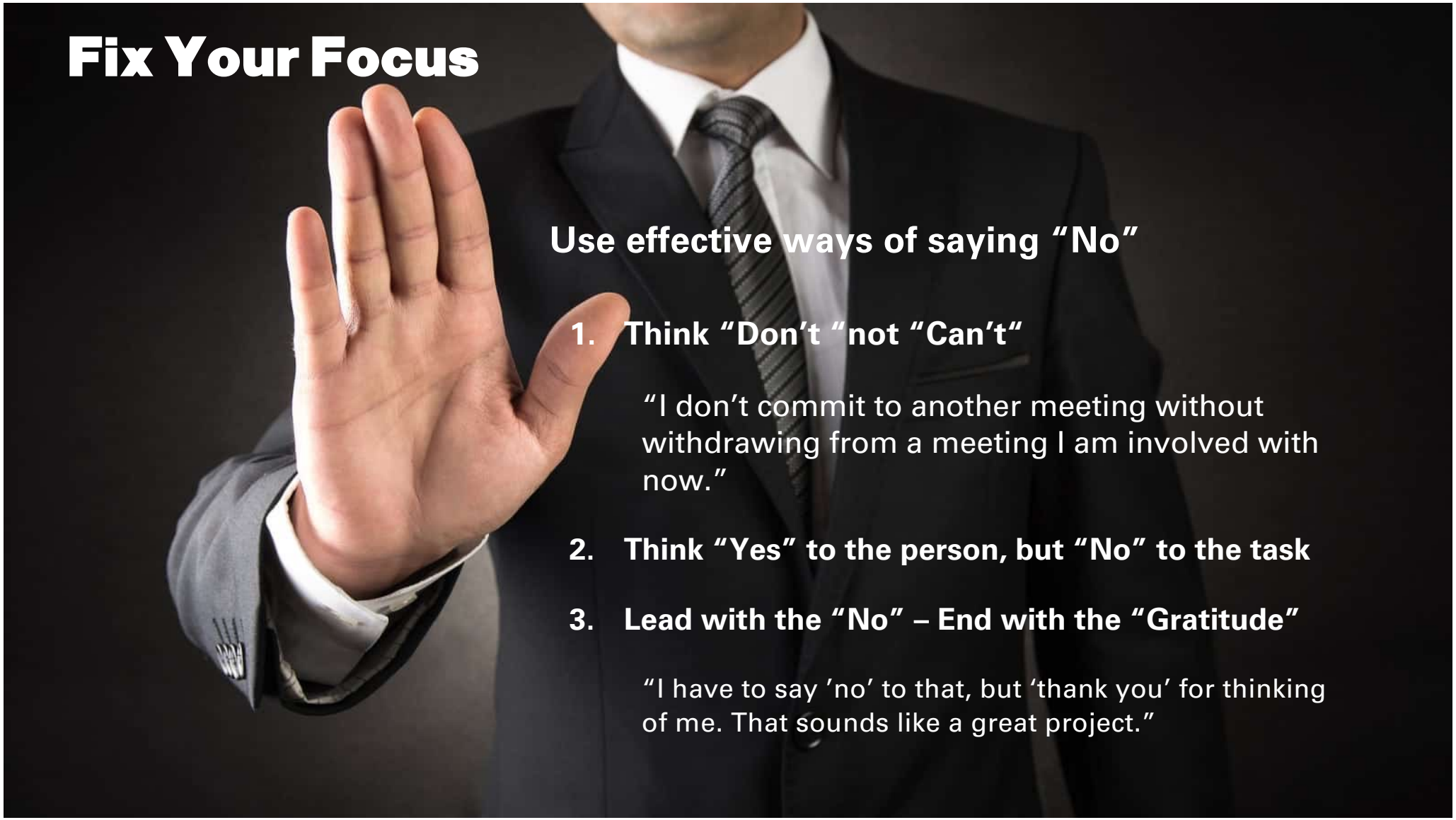
The biggest thief of your productivity



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Fix Your Focus
“No” is a complete sentence that ends with a period.

Fix Your Focus



Use effective ways of saying "No"

1. **Think "Don't "not "Can't"**

   "I don't commit to another meeting without withdrawing from a meeting I am involved with now."

2. **Think "Yes" to the person, but "No" to the task**

3. **Lead with the "No" – End with the "Gratitude"**

   "I have to say 'no' to that, but 'thank you' for thinking of me. That sounds like a great project."

Fix Your Focus

Say "Yes" more slowly…



Stay curious… "I'm curious…"

- …why are you asking me?
- …whom else have you asked?
- …when you say 'urgent,' what do you mean?
- …according to what standard does this need to done?
- …if I couldn't do all of it, what part would you have me do?
- …what do you want me to take off my plate so I can do this?

If it isn't a "Heck Yeah," it's a Hard "No"

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Productivity Skill #2

Never immediately accept responsibility for the care and feeding of someone's monkey



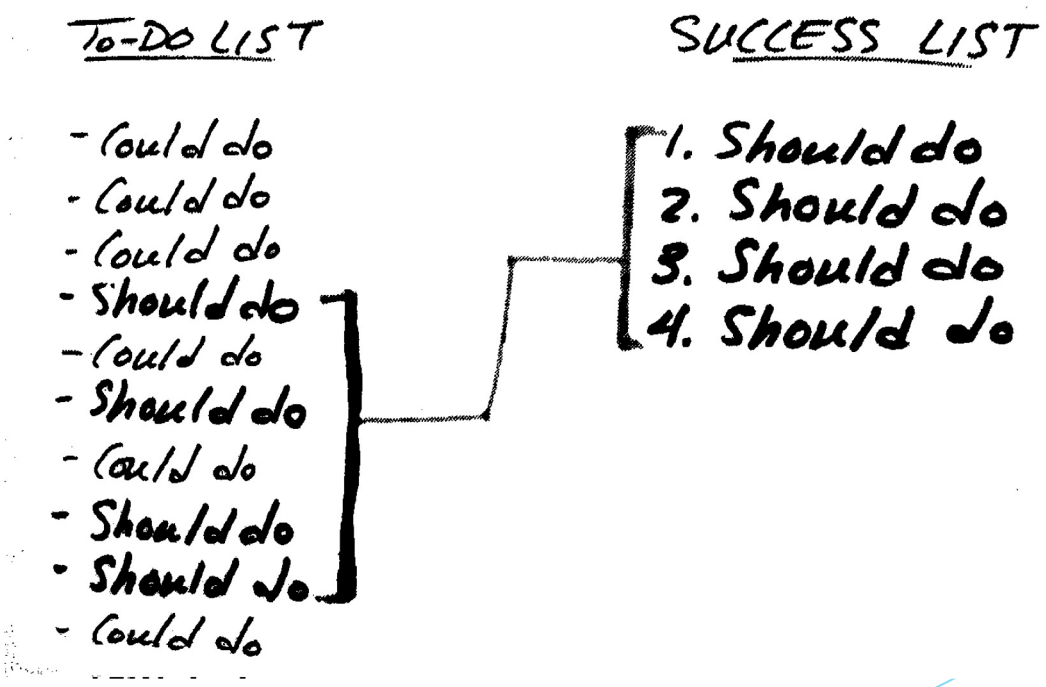
Rather, respond with…

"Let's set an appointment to discuss this. Please come prepared with at least 2 possible solutions."

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Productivity Skill #3

Prioritize your To-Do List

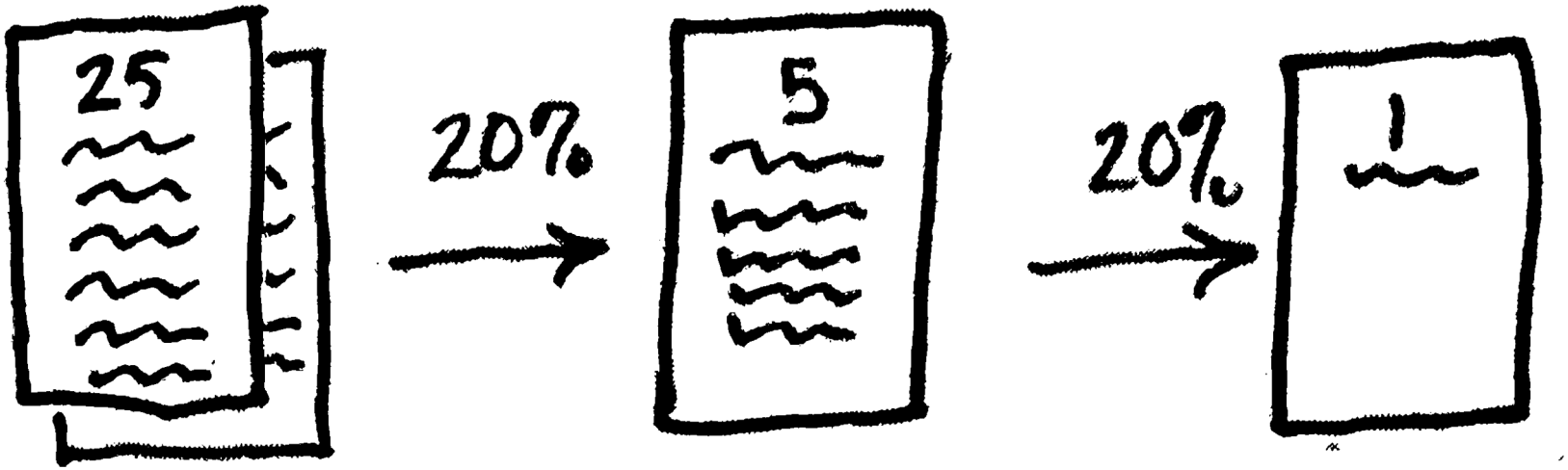


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Productivity Skill #3

Prioritize your To-Do List



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Productivity Skill #4

Manage your email… don't let it manage you

23 minutes



- This is the cost of every "quick" inbox check
- 11 checks per hour X 10 hours = 110 interruptions/day

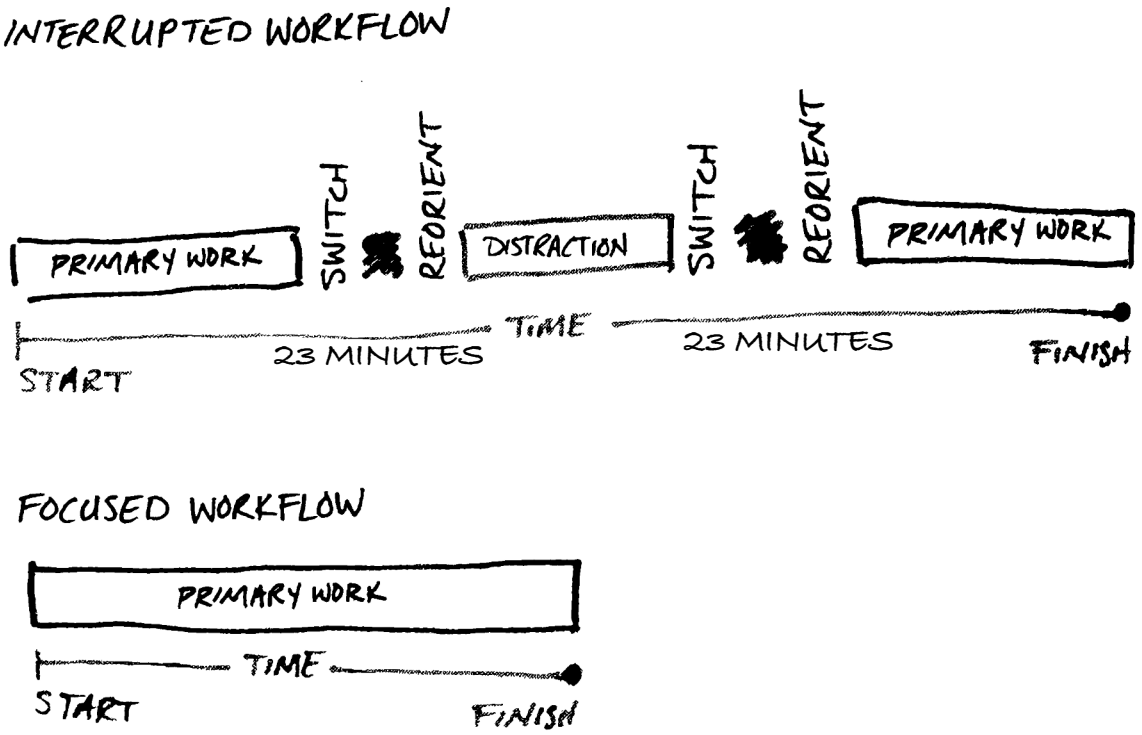
Mark, UC Irvine, 2024; cloudHQ 2025

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Productivity Skill #4

Manage your email… don't let it manage you



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Productivity Skill #4

Manage your email

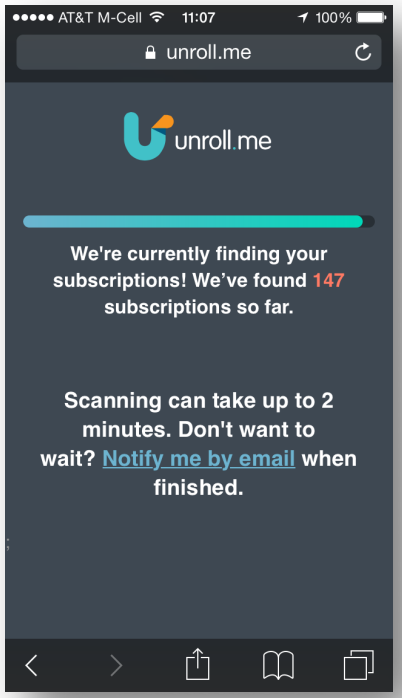
A. Put it on your schedule as a defined task (3X day)
B. Quit the CC (lowers your traffic by up to 50%)
C. Stop using your inbox as a "to do" list
    - Use the 4 D's – Delete, Delegate, Do (5 min rule), Defer to calendar with specific day/time
D. Use a coding system in subject line with frequent emailers
    - Red – immediate
    - Yellow – 15 minutes
    - Orange – 1 hour
    - Blue – Today
    - Green – Whenever
E. Set up rules/filters

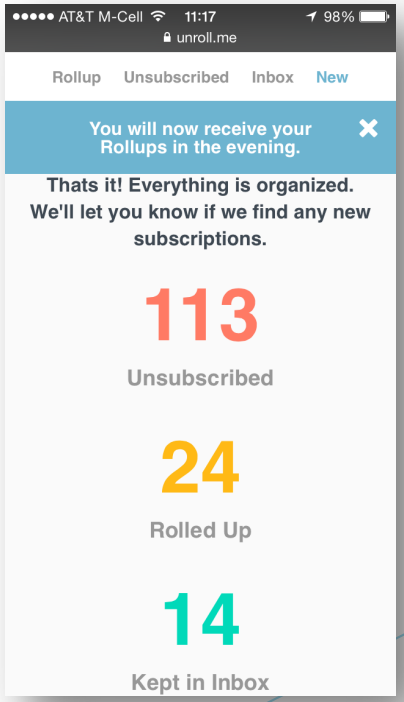
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Productivity Skill #4

Manage your email – Set up rules – unroll.me





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Productivity Skill #5

Turn off your notifications – You decide when you want to connect



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Productivity Skill #6

Curate your social media – Feed your mind (is this feed helping you accomplish your ONE THING?)

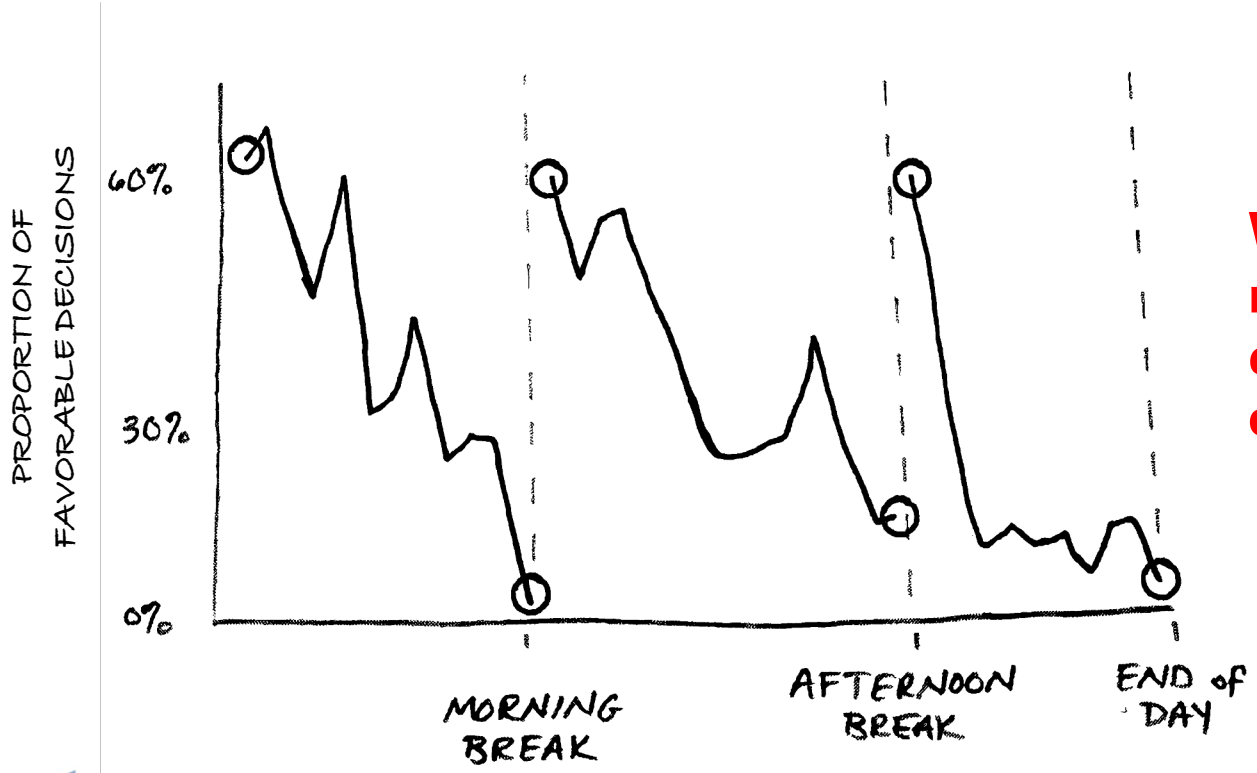


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Productivity Skill #7

Work on the ONE THING tasks when your willpower is strongest



Willpower is a muscle… needs energy, fatigues quickly

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Productivity Skill #7

Work on the ONE THING tasks when your willpower is strongest

Known to tax willpower

- Implementing a new process
- Doing something necessary but not enjoyable
- Choosing to do something with long term rewards vs. short term dopamine hit
- Filtering distractions
- Resisting temptations
- Working on projects with many sub-steps

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Productivity Skill #8

Get three "wins" per day

- 3 "accomplishments" in ONE THING tasks that move you closer to achieving a "Desired Key Result"
- Tangible
- Take small "bites" when needed
- Plan it the night before



Focus – Get it Done - Backfill

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Productivity Skill #9

Use AI

- Writing – Claude
- Learning – Gemini Notebook
- Search – Gemini/Grok
- Making/manipulating spreadsheets – Copilot or Gemini
- “Mining” your Gmail/Drive – Workplace Intelligence
- Creating slide decks – Beautiful.ai

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Exercise:

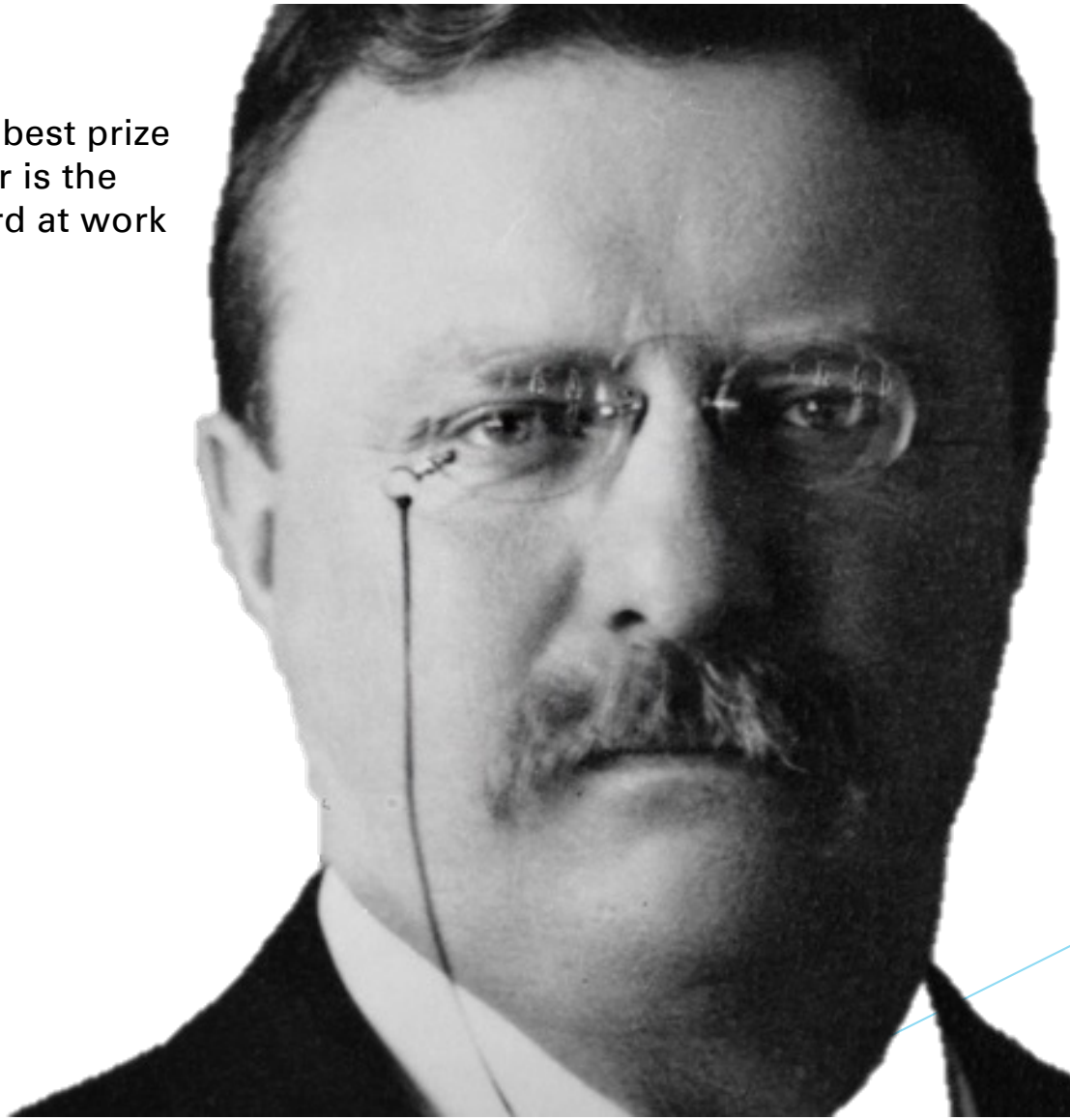
Which of these skills resonates with you the most (to the point you will commit to putting it in action)?

- Fix Your Focus (Knowing your Key Result, Saying “No”)
- Don’t Feed Another’s Monkey
- Work on ONE THING tasks when willpower is strongest
- Managing Your Email (Only Do it at a Set time, Color Code System, Reduce CC’s, Delete/Delegate/Do/Defer, Unroll Me)
- Turn Off Notifications
- Curate Your Social Media Feed
- Prioritize your To-Do lists (Pareto Sort)
- Get 3 Wins per Day
- Use AI (with caution)

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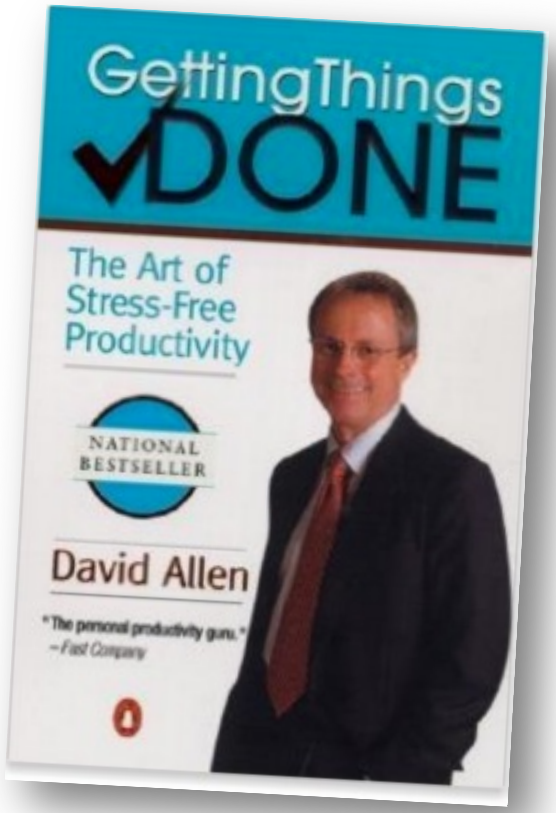
"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."



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In the meantime…



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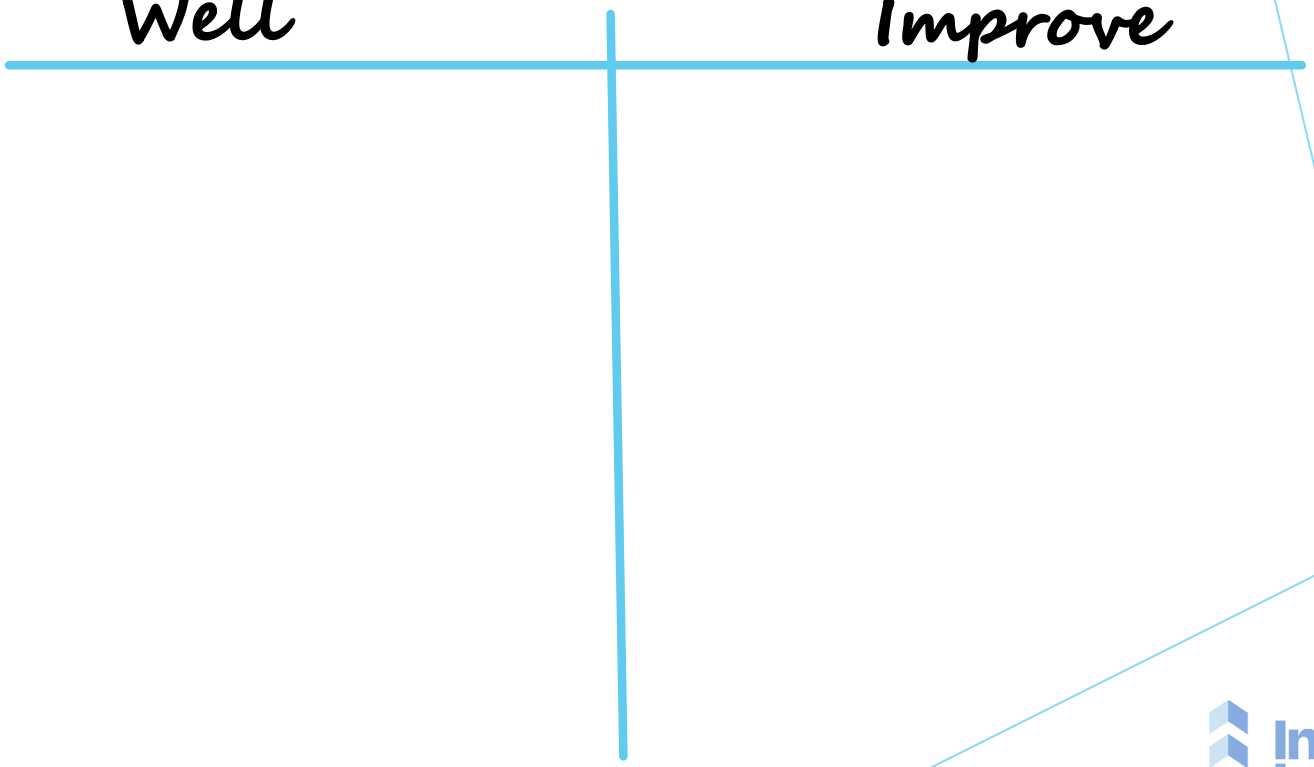
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Questions?

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Debrief



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