

Stop Wasting Your Time!

We all have a limited amount of time. From my perspective you can never get enough practical advice on how to improve your personal efficiency, be happier and increase your free time. I encourage you to read these pearls of wisdom and put them somewhere where you can review them often.

To paraphrase the words of Ben Franklin, the *one currency of our lives is our time*. How we spend that time is the truest indicator of how we value our lives. To be successful, I believe you need to spend most of your time doing three things:

1. Generating new ideas
2. Solving problems
3. Pushing people to make things happen

The last, though the least creative, is probably the most important. It will (and probably should) take up the lion's share of your productive time.

That's why it is imperative for you to do this one today: **Make a frank assessment of your productivity**. Are you making the best and most efficient use of your time? If you're unsure about the answer, ask yourself these questions:

- Are you planning your days or do you let your days plan you?
- Do you put out fires, believing you have no other choice?
- Do you take care of the small things because they are there, and leave the big things for another day?
- Do you avoid the difficult conversations, hard phone calls and tough decisions?

Do you spend time defending yourself? Resenting criticism? Rationalizing mediocrity? Do you daydream? Do you piddle? Do you take and make personal phone calls during work hours? Do you play computer games or surf the Internet on company time?

Believe me, it is easy to rationalize wasted time. However, at the end of the day, at the end of the year, at the end of your life, those rationalizations **won't do you any good**. When it comes time to look back and reflect on your accomplishments, you will not be able to count all your dreams and desires. You'll have nothing to count but what you have actually done -- and recognizing all the things you didn't.

Stop right now and ask yourself this: If I died tomorrow, would I be satisfied with all I've done so far?

If your answer is "yes," you are a rare bird indeed. If "no," it's time to get to work. The time left to you may be less than you imagine. Each year that passes will disappear more quickly than the last. The time to get going on your important goals -- especially the ones you haven't started on -- is now.

Now means **today**. Identify the goal you've left behind. Do one single, positive thing to advance that goal.

Do it today! Not this evening. Before the sun goes down.

