HOW TO STOP PROCRASTINATING AND DO WHAT YOU REALLY LOVE

Andrea Updyke

**THERE AREN'T ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY.
IF I COULD FIND TIME, I WOULD LOVE TO DO MORE.
I WISH I HAD TIME FOR A HOBBY.**

If you're like me, you've said all of these things at one point or another. Whether you need more time for work, recreation, travel, hobbies or even just some good ol' Netflix, I'm going to show you where to find it.

I've been self-motivating since the 3rd grade when my parents switched me from public school to home school. And after a brief stint in Corporate America, I returned home where I have worked as a Freelancer for the past eight years. Yet even I struggle with the temptation to procrastinate.

>> Keep reading for my tried-and-true tips on how to find time and make the most of each day.

HOW TO FIND TIME FOR YOU

Before you can start analyzing your days, you need to first set some realistic expectations. To help you do this, I have a few questions for you to answer. Whether your goals are business-related or you're looking for time to read a book or exercise or take daily walks, we'll start at the same place.

>> What do you want to make time for? _____

>> How many hours each week will you need? _____

>> Is the timing fixed or flexible? (circle one)   FIXED   FLEXIBLE

>> Is this an ongoing project or do you have a deadline?   (circle one)

                                                ONGOING   DEADLINE

>> What do you hope to gain? (Income, rest, strength, etc) _____

>> Are you a morning person or a night person? _____

By identifying what you want, why you want it and how much time you need, you are building the foundation for making it happen.

In my experience, procrastination is born of last-minute decision making. But if I give a name to my dream and make a place for it, I'm much more likely to see it through.

HOW TO FIND TIME FOR YOU

Now that you know what you want and how much time you need, let's take a look at your daily obligations to see how much we can squeeze it.

Remember, your situation can only change if you are willing to make some changes, so be honest with yourself about your commitments. You may be surprised where you can find time!

With the basics down, here's how I take that information to make more time in my day.

Do a time audit

The first place to look for more time in your day is at mindless activities like TV, social media, and what I call "the in-between" which includes things like waiting in carpool, for dinner to cook, while you are on hold, etc. Take a look at your typical day and write down what you do and when you do it. This may be all you need to do to find an hour in your day where you could work on your goal.

Find your alert time

I am a morning person by nature and my most productive hours are before 1pm. For this reason, when I need to squeeze something into my schedule, the best thing for me to find that time is to wake up an hour earlier than usual. I can get more done in that hour than 2 hours at night. If you are a night owl, make sure to minimize distractions at the end of the day and use this time to your advantage.

Don't skimp on sleep

This is so important! In fact, probably the most important tip I can give you. Because when you are burning the candle at both ends you'll work twice as long and do half as much. When you are rested, your mind and body only get stronger and more efficient.

Set realistic expectations

If you write down that a task will take you 30 minutes but really it takes 45, you are setting yourself up for stress and disappointment. Be honest with yourself about how much time things take and schedule a buffer.

HOW TO FIND TIME FOR YOU

Make a plan and stick to it

As a freelancer, it's so great to have a flexible schedule....until you look up and 4pm and wonder what in the world you did all day. By setting a schedule, even to the half-hour if it helps, you won't waste your precious time deciding what to do next. You already know. That said, don't overly stress about this. You can be as detailed as you want. Or you might block out in categories like "me time" or "reading" or "exercise".

Let some things go

I want to travel more and read more and do yoga and play with my kids and try new recipes and clean the house and purge my closets and paint the basement and write more and attend networking events and get coffee with my local friends and volunteer at the kids' school and get a pedicure and take a nap. And I can do all of those things.

But not at the same time.

It's not wrong to want to make time in your life for the good stuff, but it's important to understand that you are just one person with the same 24 hours as everyone else. Those people who do it all? They are not doing it all at once.

Decide what you want to do and when you will do it. Prioritize your list and let the rest go FOR NOW. Its time will come and you will enjoy it all the more.

Write it down

As you accomplish a goal, make sure to write it down! I like to add a note in my planner at the end of each month with a quick list of what I did. It's so helpful to look back and see something positive and get motivated for the next adventure!

Andrea Updyke is an author, blogger, and self-proclaimed social media nerd. She published her first book, Klout for Dummies, in 2013. Her personal mission is to celebrate the big and the small moments of life as a working parent. Visit her blog; Just is a Four Letter Word or follow her on Twitter @AndreaUpdyke.