

LESSON EIGHTEEN

Here is the second part of the time management training. In the last video, what I covered was keeping a time log for at least two weeks. Then, by keeping that time log, we can now start to identify what are all the activities that you are doing that are bringing no value to either you or your business. I absolutely hope you have kept that time log. Once we have got that then it is a case of, what are the interruptions? Then starting to eliminate the interruptions that are coming our way, whether it be by way of email, social media, and phone calls coming in. What are the activities that are happening that are interrupting us and blocking us from getting our work done?

The next thing then I asked you to do was to start to say no to people when requests come your way to distract your time or pull your time away, and you are being asked to do things that are not within the value of your business or to yourself. It is a case of what can you start to say no to? Then, I also talked about picking your top three. What are the three activities that you want to get done in the next day? So, that is the main part but what I want to cover in this particular training video is what is referred to as time zoning. The time zoning is what you will do when you break your week out.

Let's assume you are working from Monday to Friday. You will break your week out, and you might divide it into half days. Some people may choose to actually divide it into quarters, so they draw another two lines along. If you do it in quarters, it means you are into 90 minute slots and 90 minute slots are the best ones to operate in because your brain starts to get tired after 90 minutes. What you are best off doing is getting up, going for a walk, get a cup of coffee, or whatever it might be, a glass of water, just do some sort of activity whereby you are away from your desk, and you are now allowing the brain to relax.

Once you have gone through maybe 5, 10, 15 minutes of that, then come back to your desk and start doing the next chunk of activity. Ultimately what you want to do is start zoning your diary out. What I mean by that you are breaking your days out but you are allocating four different activities to be covered over the week itself. And out of the four activities that you want to make sure you are covering, one is business development. What are the activities that you are doing to help bring in more clients into your business?

If you are not doing business development on a regular basis, meaning this has to be an activity that you do on a weekly basis. Otherwise what is going to happen is you are going to go into a feast and famine cycle. A feast cycle mainly happens when we deal with a lot of marketing, so it is a lot of business development and therefore, we get a whole lot of new enquiries, or we get a whole lot of new clients coming our way. But then, we get so, so busy in doing all the marketing stuff, that we do not do

any business development. And then all of a sudden what happens is we go into a trough, meaning there are peaks and valleys and then we run out of clients. Then we start a whole lot of new activities by way of business development or marketing activities. And then, we go back into a feast cycle.

That is typically where people will follow a feast and famine cycle. However, if you are doing a regular activity every single week to bring in new clients to you, well then you have got to zone that into a particular zone within the diary itself. Whether it is a half a day or whether it is a 90 minute section, where is the best day for you to carry out business development activities? Find out when are you at your best? When are you the most engaging? When have you got your highest energy? That is what you will need in order to do business development activities, so therefore, zone it out. You might say, well Wednesday morning is when I do all my business development activities and therefore, mark the Wednesday morning out for doing that particular activity.

The next activity that you want to cover is administration. Administration is typically what we don't like to do as human beings -we do not like doing any administration work ourselves. And so what we do is, we let it build up. So, all the letters that come in that need to be answered, or the emails, or surveys that need to be filled out and all those sorts of things, we tend not to want to complete any one of those. What invariably happens is we just let it pile up and then it gets to a situation where we are looking at a pile of all the administration work that needs to be done, and we are getting pressured by way of if you have ever worked in a company, you have got to complete your expense accounts, or if it comes to the end of season you have got to do your tax returns, or whatever it maybe, and now we are looking at this pile of administration work that needs to be gone through and we just dread it.

However, if you are doing a level of administration every single week, what happens is now you are chopping off that particular pile. So, pick a 90 minute section or a half day section for this. You do not need a huge amount of brain power to actually work on administration work, so therefore, what is the portion of the week, or what is the 90 minutes section, or half day section, whereby you do not need a huge amount of brain power. Pick that section within your week and zone it in. Say to yourself that this is when I am going to actually do my administration work. Then, you know in your mind's eye that when you see it in your diary that is when I am going to do my administration work.

Let's just say perhaps your administration time is Monday afternoon. You do it for that particular time zone, then you finish, meaning if you have zoned 90 minutes to do administration, you start and work through it for 90 minutes. And then you stop it. Even though you might have a huge pile of admin work to be doing, you stop it after 90 minutes. Then you tackle the rest of it the next week, or the week after, or

whenever it maybe. If you haven't got a huge amount of activities to be doing because, let's just say for example, you have got very little clients working with you at the moment. Well then, what you want to do is you want to fill more of your diary with business development. If you have got a huge amount of administration work to be doing, and there is a time frame on it, well then you can have more activities zoned out in order to cover administration work.

However, what you want to make sure is that every single week you have got business development and you have got administration work. The next zone that you will have then is around client activity or client work. That is where you are getting paid for the work that you are actually doing. So again, zone the diary out as regards to when you are actually going to do the chargeable time for your particular business itself within your diary. Now, day to do client meetings, it could be when you are actually doing particular reports or work or you are on site with clients. Whatever day activity it is, zone it into your actual diary itself.

When it comes to business and when it comes to working with clients, what is going to happen is invariably we have meetings. They can be telephone meetings, Zoom, Skype, face to face meetings. What you are better off doing is batching activities, and this applies with everything. If you have got a lot of letters to do, batch that activity of doing a lot of letters because once you start the first one or the second one, it means now your brain has switched into that particular activity and therefore, letter number three, four, five becomes an awful lot easier and a lot faster than compared to doing just one. So, if you are doing a letter on Monday, and a different letter on Tuesday, or a different letter on Thursday, it means it is going to take you an awfully long time to actually get those letters done, or proposal documents, or whatever it might be.

So, what you are better off doing is batching things together and doing them all in one particular zone. When it comes to clients, you are best to batch your meetings as well. Rather than breaking up your days whereby you have got meetings spread throughout the whole week, pick, depending on your level of activity, perhaps two days out of the week when you want to have your meetings. Let's just say it happens to be Tuesdays and Thursdays when you are going to have your meetings. What you want to do is have your meetings run from one to the other, because if you have got, for example, an hour gap from one meeting to the next meeting, there is very little that you can actually get done because you are thinking about that last meeting that you just had and you are kind of doing some preparation for the next meeting. Therefore, the level of time that you have left, you are not really going to get much done apart from maybe looking at your social media, or looking at a couple of emails, but activity wise, you are going to get very little done.

Therefore, look at what you can do to have your meetings back to back, or maybe ten, fifteen minutes in between each particular meeting itself. If it is say Tuesdays and Thursdays, what you are then doing with clients is you are informing them at the very beginning of your working relationship as to when you have your meetings. So what you are saying is, "Okay, Mr. Client what I typically do is I have our meetings on Thursdays and Fridays. So if you are looking for me in between, you will generally get me on the Mondays and Wednesdays, but Tuesdays and Thursdays is when I have meetings. So I will have my phone switched off."

Therefore, what you are doing really is you are educating your client as to when they are best to slot in meetings with yourself, and equally you then do not feel under pressure that if you are not returning their emails or phone calls, because they now know that you are in meetings on those particular days. That is one way of how you can start to educate your clients from those particular activities.

The next thing or the next activity and I have mentioned four. The first one was around business development activity. The next one was administration. Next one was your client delivery work. The last one is what I refer to as me time because, ultimately, we are all serious professionals, and therefore, we are always giving of ourselves.

If we are not replenishing our own energies, we are going to start getting depleted. Then we get to a point whereby it is being either overwhelmed or we get to dislike our particular business itself. We start to dislike our clients, all that kind of stuff. Now it becomes hugely negative because we are not replenishing ourselves. I heard a phrase years and years ago whereby "give from the saucer not from the cup", meaning that when you are filling a cup of tea or coffee, make sure it goes into overflow so therefore you are giving from the overflow, not from the cup itself.

So, what that really means is replenish your energy as much as you possibly can so you are giving from the overflow of your energy, not from your core energy itself. When you start to give from your core energy, that is when you start to deplete and you start getting health issues and so on. What does that mean? Well, in your week itself, zone out a time when you can look after me time, when you can have the activities that you want to have that you know are replenishing your energy. Now, if it is impossible to do that Monday to Friday because you are in a large company and it is not seen correct to be doing personal activities between Monday and Friday, what you then look at is Saturday and Sunday.

Look at the weekends or in the evening time. What are the activities that you can do that replenish yourself? You are basically nurturing the soul to say, "You know what? I'm looking after myself." You are pampering yourself. I have done many activities over the years, one whereby I might be horse riding, because I know when I am

horse riding, I have to switch my brain off. Let's say you are doing wood turning, again, you have got to switch your brain off when you are doing wood turning. So, look at different activities of when you can do that through either hobbies, sport, or whatever it might be, but time when you are getting completely zoned out from your business itself and you are allowing your brain to switch off.

Some people will do meditation, they will do meditation in the morning and the evening time. So again, all it is about is actually switching off your brain so that you can actually replenish your energy.

So, there are the four activities that you want to have zoned out within your diary. Now, what you are doing at the very beginning is you are mapping out when are you going to do each of those four activities? Now, this is just a practice. What I mean by that is do it for the first week, and you will find that didn't work and things that did work really, really well. Then the next week, you can change your zones as regards when you are going to do those four activities.

You will tweak this as you go along. It does not have to be hugely rigid, but it just means that you are getting into a practice whereby actually you know it yourself when you are going to cover particular activities. What it gets to a point of is when you are working with clients, they know how you work as well. Meaning, you do your meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You have got to communicate this to your staff, your assistants, your secretaries, whoever you have within your business itself that is working at a close proximity to yourself. What I mean by that is that you have got to tell your staff, please do not disturb me, on for example, a Wednesday morning because that is when I'm doing my marketing activities and therefore I do not want to be disturbed by meetings, phone calls, emails when I am going to be zoned in a particular activity and everybody knows around you not to go near you because you are doing your business development activities. The more focused you are, the better it is and more productive that you are going to be. And your secretaries and your staff, if they know that you do your meetings, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, well then if they have to make an appointment for yourself or arrange a client meeting on your behalf, well then they know to slot it into each of those two days.

If you are talking to a client, and let's just say it happens to be a Friday or a Wednesday, and your Thursdays are completely booked out and your client says to you, "Look. I want to have a meeting with you." You can say to your client, "Look. I can't meet you tomorrow. But I can meet you the following Tuesday." And that typically will be sufficient for your clients. Because they do not want a no, meaning your clients do not want to receive a no. They want to receive a solution. So therefore, what you are saying is, "I can't meet you tomorrow but I can meet you next Tuesday."

Now you have given them an alternative, and that is what clients much more appreciate. So again, make sure you inform your staff and inform your clients of when your meeting zones are. And have your meetings back to back. And look at all your activities, or what you can do to batch your particular activities up. Then, when you are having your zones and you have got say a 90 minute zone of doing business development or meetings, have a focus time. Switch off everything else between your emails, your phone calls and everything else that you feel could interrupt you. Start to switch all of those off, and therefore you can actually just focus your time on doing that particular activity.

If it is the case that you have access to another meeting room, perhaps you can get away from your desk or you can go to a hotel and use their meeting areas, or go to a coffee shop when you want to get a particular activity done, but it is easier to go somewhere else, to basically change the geography of where you are currently located. Go to a different venue, to purely just do that activity itself. That can be a lot more productive for people. So look at it from that perspective.

What I will say is that time zoning works and what I mean by that is it becomes less stressful for yourself to try and manage your time if you have done all the activities that you have planned you would. When it comes to time zoning, it absolutely works for people and professional sources because it gives them more comfort in how they actually manage their week itself.

When it is in the evening time or at the week end, you know "So, what have we got next Tuesday or next Thursday or next Wednesday." And you can say, "Okay. Wednesday, I am doing my business development and this is the activity I am going to do on it. Tuesday I have got my meetings with these particular clients and so on."

It becomes a lot easier to actually manage or take control of your time itself when you start implementing your time zoning. Start mapping out what does your particular week want to look like? Then, make sure that you alter it. See what works and what doesn't work, but alter it onto such times so that you get a week that actually know that is the way it actually works because that is when you are best at doing business development. That is when you are best at doing administration. That is when the best day is of when you are going to do your client meetings itself. So start implementing that and I will see you on the next video.

Exercise 25

My Zoned diary

	Morning	Afternoon
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Exercise 26

What activities can I delegate or outsource?

Notes
