



Why You Aren't Getting Things Done

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Your typical day starts in a whirlwind of alternating yelling and cajoling to get everyone out the door on time. You meant to pack lunches and lay out clothes the night before, but it never happened. A quick trip through Starbucks after the school drop off gets your day going. You rush into work a few minutes late, fielding a call from your partner about the after-school/work schedule you meant to discuss before starting your workday, and juggling your cold brew. You reach your desk two-minutes before your first client walks in the door. During the day, you rush from call to meeting to email to answering employee questions as you run past. You head out of work in a whirlwind with a messy desk. The evening consists of fast food, kids' activities, and homework help until you crash into bed, your mind churning on everything that didn't get done. Finally, you read a chapter or two in her most recent book to quiet your mind enough for sleep.

I may be off on the details, but I bet you understand the emotional landscape. A day like this means you are reacting to everything coming at you. You will not feel accomplished or successful when you lay your head on your pillow at night after a day like this.

Let's pick it apart and see why.

1. **You leap into your day with action.** Taking a few minutes to settle your mind before starting your day makes a huge difference. Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and sit in stillness. Read something that you connect to on a deep level. Take a quick walk around the block. Do a few yoga stretches. Do what works for you, but you want to connect to your mind and body before getting input from other people or media.
2. **You don't have a plan.** You haven't given sincere thought to what you want to accomplish in the day. You have a to-do list that isn't realistic for a single day. You haven't decided when you are going to do each item. You haven't scheduled any overflow time in your day to deal with things that come up. You didn't plan your breaks, a chance to eat a relaxed lunch, or the time you need for email or voicemail.
3. **You aren't committed to your results.** You have tasks to do, not results you want to see by the end of the day. You aren't crystal clear on what your tangible results should be at the days' end. You spend your time on other people's expectations. You spend time "working on" your tasks but not completing specific steps.

4. **You don't have an evening ritual.** Getting adequate rest is critical to operating at your best. When you fall into bed with your mind churning, it is difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. Figure out what soothes you. Read fiction. Meditate. Take a warm shower or bath. Do a mental download before falling into bed. Write down everything on your mind, so you know you have captured it, and you don't have to remember it all night.

If you get control of your time, you can produce any result you desire. It's why I start with learning how to make schedules and commit to yourself. The skills you learn translate to anything you want to accomplish, and this is how you create the time and mental space to get it done.

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