

# Time Management: Myths, Magic & Strategies That Work!



# The “Time Management Made Easy” Myth

ALL you need is to...

- figure out your life’s priorities
- get organized (file or toss those evil piles!)
- start using that new planner/calendar/datebook

...right!

# Self Discipline & Time Management

- Consciously *choose* to manage time and stop procrastinating
- *Change* your thoughts and behaviors to support your choices
- Employ your *willpower* or inner strength
- *Accept responsibility* for your actions and take control

*“Self-discipline is teaching ourselves to do the things necessary to reach our goals without becoming sidetracked by bad habits.”*

*– Denis Waitley*

# Time Management Types Activity

- Complete exercise on Time Management Types
  - What is your type?
  - How do you put your type into practice?
  - Is your Time Management style problematic?

# Time Management – Real or Myth?

- No matter WHO you are, you have 168 hours in a week. No more, no less.
- When you begin each day, you have the same 24 hours as everyone else with which to work.
- Each hour is 60 minutes long. Some fly by, others drag on and on.
- A Bing search on time management this week = 118,000,000 hits!
- So can you *really* manage time?

Managing priorities →  
less stress + improved  
balance and health  
in your life

# Accomplishing Priorities: Two Key Factors

- *Timeliness* - accomplishing goals in a timely manner, without guilt or self-punishment.
- *Procrastination* - deliberately choosing not to do the necessary action to reach a goal in a timely way.



# Procrastination: Common Causes & Irrational Thoughts

- **Perfectionism** – *I have to make everything perfect.*
- **Fear of Success** – *If I succeed then I have to maintain this high level of achievement.*
- **Unrealistic Goals** – *I can push myself to do more and more.*
- **Inappropriate Commitments** – *I can do it all.*
- **Minimizing** – *I have plenty of time.*
- **Disorganization** – *I'll find it when I need it.*

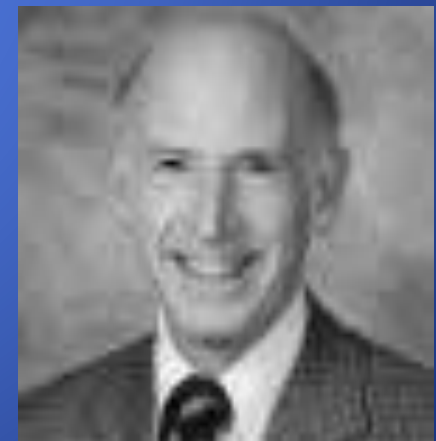
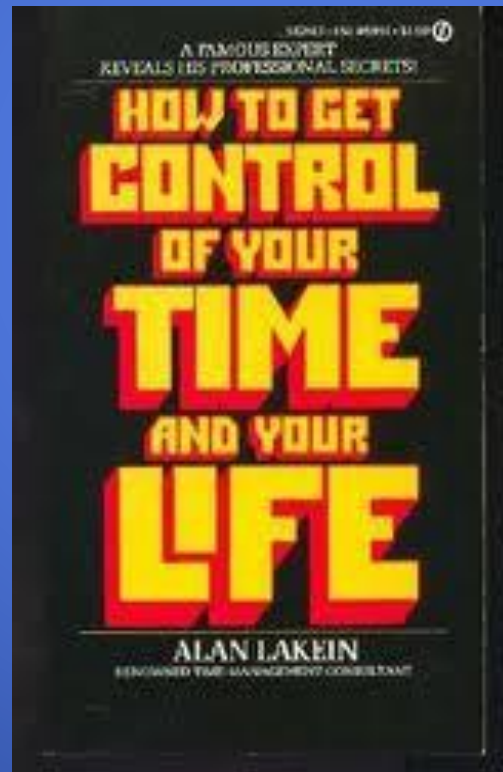
# Procrastination: Common Causes & Irrational Thoughts

- **Lack of Rewards** – *I need others to motivate me.*
- **Low Frustration Level** – *I am no good at this task.*
- **Lack of Self-Efficacy** – *I can't do it; I am not good enough.*
- **Fear of Failure** – *I failed before so I will fail again.*
- **Rebellion/Anger** – *This will hurt them more than it will hurt me.*

**PROCASTINATOR? NO. I JUST WAIT  
UNTIL THE LAST SECOND TO DO MY WORK**

**BECAUSE I WILL BE OLDER,  
THEREFORE WISER.**

# Alan Lakein: 70's Time Management Guru



# Strategies That Work!

Lakein's Question –

*“What is the best use of my time right now?”*

Ask often. Answer honestly.

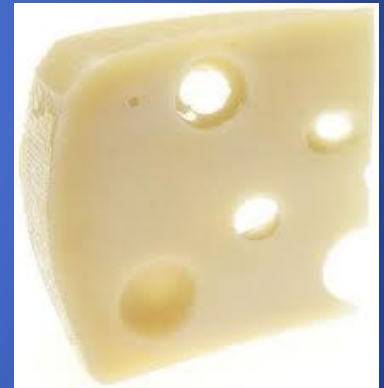
*\*Look at the holes in your day\**

# More Lakein Contributions

Use an “**ABC Priority System**” to prioritize tasks.

Example: A-1, A-2, A-3; B-1, B-2, etc.

Use the “**Swiss Cheese**” method to poke holes in tough A-1 tasks.



Holes = “**instant tasks**” that can be done in 5 minutes or less. Then *keep going* or *stop*.

Getting started is the hardest part!

# More Strategies That Work!

- Write tasks down! (to do list, Post-it notes)
- Estimate time needed to complete tasks
- Identify one main task for the morning, afternoon or entire day
- Set a timer and strive to accomplish a task in the time allotted with no interruptions
- Block off time segments of uninterrupted time on electronic calendar if applicable

# An Important Distinction

Recognize the difference between...

“**multi-tasking**” - doing two things at once to save time, and

“**continuous partial attention**” - staying aware of everything but rarely focusing on any one thing...and when to use them.

Switching time → 25% more time to complete a task!



# Use Communication to Your Advantage

- Enlist help of others to minimize interruptions
- Ask supervisor/professor/advisor to help you prioritize tasks
- Rethink processes/procedures in ways that might take less time
- Delegate or share tasks when applicable
- Practice assertively saying “no” or ask for time to make a decision (then practice saying “no”!) when you are already feeling overwhelmed with work

# Use Positive Reinforcement to Shape Behavior 😊

Acknowledge your time management accomplishments – large or small – with positive reinforcement that suits the task.

Treat yourself to a magazine, a hot shower, 30 minutes of “me time,” a sweet treat, or playtime with your pet for smaller accomplishments.





# Additional Resources

Extensive time management & controlling  
procrastination web site

[http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/guides/time\\_management/](http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/guides/time_management/)

Extensive website created by the Graduate  
Educational Information System (GEIS)

<http://www.timemanagementadvantage.com/>