

# 10 Secrets to Managing Your Time

By Mark Tittley

Over the past 3 decades I have often found myself asked to help people to get better at time management and along the way I have discovered 10 secrets to managing your time. We can't change how many hours and minutes we have in our day, but we can manage how we use the time we are given!

During our time together we will explore 5 secrets and then spend time in breakout rooms to reflect on what we are learning. Then we will explore the next 5 secrets and jump into Breakout Rooms once again. So let's start with Secret #1:

**1. Balance Your Whole Life:** Make sure your productivity system covers the whole of your life and not just your work. Your personal life, your family, your work and your hobbies are all important and need to be kept in balance. Make sure all these areas are reflected in your week.

There are four steps to balance your life:

- (1) Define Your Mission
- (2) Identify Your Roles
- (3) Create Your Goals
- (4) Plan Your Week

## **Step #1: Define Your Mission**

The first step to balancing your life is to define your mission. It is critical that you figure out what you want to achieve with your life. A well written mission statement has four parts to it: a lifetime noun, verbs of impact, people groups to impact and the rest of your impact.

Here is an example of my mission statement: *My mission is to be a Christ-follower who equips family, friends and next generation leaders to be disciplemakers.* Notice how it covers all of my life and the diverse groups of people I want to impact and also speaks of an ongoing end result. This is a significant step towards me living a balanced life!

## **Step #2: Identify Your Roles.** Roles are the contexts in which you live out your mission.

The second step to balancing your life is to identify your roles. Your mission must be lived through your whole life and one way to ensure that happens is to identify the roles you play in life. These are the contexts in which you live out your mission.

There are 3 steps to identifying your roles:

- 1. List all the roles you play in life:** Brainstorm all the possible roles you play in life. Think of every "hat" you wear, every different way in which you show up in life. Keep going until you have identified at least 10 to 15 roles.
- 2. Group the roles into categories:** You may be feeling a little overwhelmed with that long list of roles but don't give up just yet because the next two steps will help you as to group related roles and reduce them to categories.
- 3. Select five or six roles to work with:** If you choose more than six roles you will struggle to actually lead and balance your life.

### Step #3: Create Your Goals. Goals are a key to helping you achieve your mission.

Now that you have defined the roles you play in life you need to create goals for each role. You could use the SMART goal approach where you ensure that your goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. You can create goals by asking yourself: "What is the most important thing I could do this week to have the greatest positive impact on this role." While many goals may come to mind, you should limit yourself to just a few important goals for each role.

Here is an example of my Roles and Goals: (1) DISCIPLE: Devote daily. Practise presence. (2) HUSBAND: Love sacrificially, Listen carefully. (3) FATHER: Engage daily, Help quickly. (4) PASTOR: Encourage people, Equip people. (5) COACH: Develop skills, Promote class. (6) AUTHOR: Share book, Manage list.

### Step #4: Plan Your Week

The fourth step to balancing your life is to plan your week. So far to help you balance your life, you have defined your mission, identified your roles and created goals for each role. The next step is to actually live your mission during your week.

**The Weekly Planner:** Stephen Covey in *First Things First* explored the idea of a weekly planner.

Here is an example of a completed weekly planner - this is a lockdown version and is orientated around my rallying cry for this season which is to add value to people!

JUNE 2020 WEEK 3

Mission	Roles	Goals	15 Monday	16 Tuesday	17 Wednesday	18 Thursday	19 Friday	20 Saturday	21 Sunday
MY MISSION IS TO BE A VALUE-ADDER WHO TRAINS, COACHES AND MENTORS MY FAMILY, FRIENDS & FOLLOWERS TO BE PRODUCTIVE AT WORK & LIFE.	DISCIPLE	DEVOTE DAILY PRACTISE PRESENCE	5 DEVOTIONS	6 DEVOTIONS	7 DEVOTIONS	8 DEVOTIONS	9 DEVOTIONS	10 DEVOTIONS	11 DEVOTIONS
	HUSBAND	LOVE SACRIFICIALLY LISTEN CAREFULLY	12 MORNING HABITS ↓ FAMILY TIME	13 MORNING HABITS ↓ FAMILY	14 MORNING HABITS ↓ SUNNINGHILL	15 MORNING HABITS ↓ MESSAGE 115	16 MORNING HABITS ↓ PREP FOR CALL	17 MORNING HABITS ↓ FAMILY	18 MORNING HABITS ↓ PREP 4 CHURCH
	FATHER	ENGAGE DAILY HELP QUICKLY	2 ↓ SHOPPING	3 ↓ BREAKFAST	4 ↓ REVIEW	5 ↓ SUNNINGHILL PREP	6 ↓ DEPT MEETINGS	7 ↓ FAMILY	8 ↓ MODERATE SERVICE
	PASTOR	ENCOURAGE PEOPLE EQUIP PEOPLE	9 ASHLEY TIME	10 ONLINE STARTS	11 ↓ SUNNINGHILL	12 ↓ LEAD REVIEWS	13 ↓ CALL	14 ↓ REST	15 ↓
	COACH	DEVELOP SKILLS PROMOTE CLASS	16 LUNCH HABITS	17 LUNCH HABITS	18 LUNCH HABITS	19 LUNCH HABITS	20 LUNCH HABITS	21 LUNCH HABITS	22 LUNCH HABITS
	AUTHOR	SHARE BOOK MANAGE LIST	23 PREP FOR TRAINING	24 ↓ YOUTH CHILL	25 ↓ LISTS PREP	26 ↓ SIMON	27 ↓	28 ↓	29 ↓ WEEKLY REVIEW & PREVIEW
	Week Priorities		30 SUPER HABITS	31 SUPER HABITS	32 SUPER HABITS	33 SUPER HABITS	34 SUPER HABITS	35 SUPER HABITS	36 NIGHT HABITS
	END OF DAY'S PREP FOR SUNNINGHILL RAISE MODERATORS LEARN PRESENTATION SKILLS READ for PLEASURE REVIEW HABIT STACKS		37 MOVIE NIGHT	38 DAY CHILL	39 ↓	40 ↓	41 ↓ SUNNINGHILL	42 MOVIE NIGHT	43 ↓
	the productive life		44 NIGHT HABITS	45 NIGHT HABITS	46 NIGHT HABITS	47 NIGHT HABITS	48 NIGHT HABITS	49 NIGHT HABITS	50 NIGHT HABITS
	Day Tasks		51 Rest Prep for Sunninghill	52 Rest Engage Family	53 Review 215	54 Prep for Project Simon Prep 215/115 WORK MESSAGE 115	55 Final Prep TEST/SETUP START CALL	56 Rest	57 Day Tasks ASHLEY 12/14PM TEAM MODERATORS BRAND REVIEWS FOLLOW UP

**Review:** We have explored four steps to Balance Your Life: (1) Define your Mission; (2) Identify your Roles; (3) Create your Goals and (4) Plan your Week.

That was the first secret to managing your time – here comes number 2...

**2. Get Organised:** Develop a filing system and keep your working or living spaces tidy.

Here are some best practices for filing: **(1) Create Your System:** It should work for you and allow you to retrieve a document in the quickest amount of time possible. **(2) Identify Your Categories:** List the categories you could file items under and create a folder or hanging file for each item. **(3) Clear Your Backlog:** Work through everything on your desk or shelves by picking it up and asking: (a) What is it? (b) Do I need to act on it? (c) Can I file it? **(4) Manage Your Filing:** Set aside time regularly to file material so you don't end up with a huge pile of items to file.

**3. Schedule Think Time in Your Week:** Create a weekly appointment with yourself in your calendar where you can think about what is going on in your life, plan ahead and get on top of your workload.

**4. Work Two Thirds of the Day:** Work morning and afternoon or morning and evening or afternoon and evening but don't work all three parts of the day. There can be exceptions to this rule but don't let it become a regular habit or other areas of your life will suffer!

**5. Take Time to Give Time:** Don't accept invitations or requests for your time too quickly. Think about the amount of preparation time you will need to invest if you accept an invitation. Ask the person to give you some time to respond to their request.

**Breakout Rooms:** We are going to spend 5 minutes in Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of 3 to reflect on the five secrets to managing your time that we just explored – you will mention one area where you are doing well and one area where you need to improve.

*Question:* Which of the five secrets are you doing well in and which do you need to improve?

1. Balance Your Whole Life.
2. Get Organised.
3. Schedule Think Time in Your Week.
4. Work Two Thirds of the Day.
5. Take Time to Give Time.

**6. Work with Check Lists:** Keep a list of everything you need to get done and cross off tasks when you complete them. The trick is to never keep anything in your head! As soon as you think of something you need to do, then put it into your paper or digital To Do list system!

**7. Handle Things Once:** Don't pick up stuff and then put it aside for later - deal with it once! This applies to handling digital material too. David Allen speaks about the 2 Minute Rule where if you can get something done in less than 2 minutes you do it rather than schedule it for later action.

**8. Keep Information Handy:** Develop a good system to keep track of phone numbers, addresses, key information, etc. Reduce the amount of time you spend looking for stuff by getting organised and staying organised.

**9. Confirm Meetings:** Before you leave for a meeting check that the person you are supposed to be meeting is still available to meet. This will often save you from wasting time if they are not available. I am seldom left waiting because I check in to confirm appointments an hour before a meeting and reschedule the appointment if necessary.

**10. Empower People and Delegate :** Don't do everything yourself – give things to others to do. I heard Andy Stanley in a Podcast say: "Only do what only you can do!"

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7. Handle Things Once.

8. Keep Information Handy.

9. Confirm Meetings.

10. Empower People and Delegate.

### **3 Bonus Secrets to Managing Your Time:**

**1. Always Have Something to Do:** Carry something with you that you can do if you are left waiting. It could be a book or an article to read, a project to plan, an email to send, a call to make, etc. Of course, you could choose to spend time thinking or meditating when you are left waiting so that is also an option.

**2. Automate Regular Tasks:** Don't start working from scratch each time you repeat a task. Create templates for tasks you do regularly so you can save time and get things done more efficiently.

**3. Deal with Interruptions:** Here are some ways to handle interruptions so you remain productive and honour people who interrupt you: **(1) Realize that not every interruption is an interruption.** Life is about responding to the needs of people around you. Some interruptions are actually significant opportunities for engagement. **(2) Give people the information they need so they don't need to interrupt you.** Think ahead about information people may need or questions they may ask and be proactive with what you give them. **(3) Set up meeting times.** If people want to meet with you, then suggest a time when you are available to meet with them that is convenient for both of you. **(4) Evaluate your interruptions.** Keep a list of your interruptions for two weeks. You will probably discover that 80% of your interruptions are caused by three or four people. Take them aside and have a conversation with them about respecting times when you do not want to be interrupted and find a suitable time to meet. **(5) Stand up when interrupted in your office.** Most people will feel too uncomfortable to sit down if you remain standing while they're in your office. If you sense that the interruption is really significant then you can sit down and invite them to take a seat. Otherwise, remain standing and schedule a time to meet once you have assessed their immediate concerns. **(6) Schedule your interruptions.** Schedule an "open" time when you are most available for meetings, questions or phone calls. Let everyone know that this is the best time you can be reached. And of course, make sure you are available during those times!

If you want to go deeper into how to live a productive life then grab a copy of my book on Amazon: [http://bit.ly/TPL\\_BOOK](http://bit.ly/TPL_BOOK)