

By Coach Mack Arrington

## The Myth of Time Management

**Time itself is not manageable, but our choices and actions are.**

Because you cannot command time to go backward or forward by even one second, can you really call it time management? If we drop the illusion of time management and call it what it is—choice management—how does it feel different to manage your choices?

**How important is it to take control of our choices?**



Image from Speech Tmr App

Do the Math: 10 minutes per average workday equals 40 hours per year—a whole week!

People spend an average of 10 minutes a day looking for their keys (1 week / year).

Executives waste an average of 60 minutes a day looking for documents and information (6 weeks / year).

How much time do you waste, not because you choose to do so, but because you lose control of priorities?

## Choosing Your Priorities + Three Tools

Even though you will not always be able to give your priorities the priority they need or deserve, it helps to know what your priorities are for each day. Every minute you spend planning saves between four and twelve minutes of implementation. For example, if you invest in a 15-minute Daily Staff Meeting with yourself, this will return between one and three hours to you by the end of the day—potentially 18 weeks per year!

### Tool 1: Your Calendar

It is important to keep all your schedules, personal, business, children's, etc., on a single calendar. Life is fragmented enough without you losing track of which thing is on multiple calendars. I recommend you have a calendar handy at all times, including vacation times when you panic because you can't remember if you scheduled that important meeting or not. The calendar can be a paper and pencil version, notebook, on your phone or on another portable device as long as you are comfortable using it.

### Tool 2: The Daily Staff Meeting with Yourself.

Critical to your sanity is having a daily planning time where you review your tasks and your schedule and set your priorities. The Daily Staff Meeting with Yourself might be the only time you will have to reflect, review and organize yourself. Since it's YOUR meeting, include those things needful to your success—read a trade publication, have a quiet time, call your coach... This meeting is just as important as meeting with clients, customers, and colleagues, and the day tends to fly out of control when you miss it.

### Tool 3: The Daily Prioritized Task List (Play List).

If you write something down you are 37% more likely to get it done. Do a fresh Daily Play List and prioritize your tasks for the day. This will help keep your priorities fresh in mind and let you shift gears faster when you have open time during the day because it handily lists your choices or—lets you take a break. Include things on your list to take some steps to achieve your priorities. Classify items on your list by ABC:

A = Always do this today; B = Better to do this today; C = Can you do this today?

## General Direction

Be kind and gentle to yourself when developing new habits, change can be difficult. It takes practice, so don't expect to get everything perfect the first time out. Since this is for **your** life, you have three options for each item.

1. When you become consistent with that item, check it off.
2. If an item does not fit what you need, write your own version, check it off when consistent.
3. If you decide an item does not really matter to you, check it off because it's not an issue for you.

### 10 Lifechecks for Choice Management

- I have a calendar, and I am comfortable using it daily.
- I schedule and have a Daily Staff Meeting with myself every work day.
- I do a Daily Prioritized Play List for my tasks, every day.
- I keep my work and personal schedules on the same calendar.
- When I have extra time, I have prioritized choices listed to do from my play list, or not.
- I schedule appointments with myself to prepare for meetings and to do the tasks I need to get done.
- I have a consistent place to put my keys so I seldom have to search for them.
- I have a consistent place to put my phone and calendar so I seldom have to search for them.
- I have identified time-wasters, and I choose which ones to eliminate, which ones to enjoy.
- When needed, I schedule my breaks and fun times to be sure I have some down time.

### Create your own LifeChecks:

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Notes:

Date Completed 10 LifeChecks: \_\_\_\_\_

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