

March 11, 2009

## Can't find the time to do all the things that you think you should do?

Need to network, exercise, catch up with friends or family, clear out that closet, write that book, learn a new skill etc?

One idea is to try to combine some tasks. Best approach for success is to combine something annoying to do, with something fun.

One example is that I recently scheduled a professional networking "Meet-up" (meetup.com) event with a walk around Shelley Lake. It's a beautiful lake. Fresh air is a good stimulus for creativity and inspiration. And I NEED the exercise. I also want to start networking with friendly and valuable folks like you. So, I'm trying to combine the two. By making an external commitment to be there -- it's now something I can't easily wiggle out of. It's not expensive and it's healthy. Not everyone will be attracted to this type of activity. But the folks that are, will be the kind of folks that connect with me.

Other ideas for combining chores and fun activities:

1) Want to get into a new field, but you don't have the "proven experience" that employers are looking for yet? Volunteer to gain that experience. Want to gain more construction experience, volunteer at Habitat for Humanity. Want to gain more website design experience; many non-profits would love someone working on their website. Want to get more experience in teaching, lots of community and church groups foster training for the less fortunate. Want more experience mentoring or working with children, lots of Big Brothers/Sisters, School Mentoring programs out there. You will be getting the experience employees are hungry for – and they will see that you are giving back the community as well. Two very important traits that can help set you apart.

2) Been meaning to write that book that is in you? Have a play-date with a fellow book-writing enthusiast. You attract people like you. Therefore, you probably already know some people that want to write their own book - but can never find the time. Well, schedule a repeating play-date to get together to write those books. Each can be in separate rooms or sides of the room. Each can be writing very separate books and topics. But you have a reviewer, a brainstorm buddy, and a reliable person to "keep your feet to the fire". You can also setup a play-date with someone in a different town, city, state, country. At that designated time, call, instant message, "check in" while you are writing your chapters.

3) Always wanted to take that course in XXX, but just can't get out the door? You have a few options here. You attract people like you. Therefore, you probably already folks that are into the same thing. Ask if they are interested in taking the course with you. If they have already been through the course or can't afford the class, setup weekly discussion groups on the topics that you

are currently covering in class. This way, they get a free refresher course on the topic and you gain more knowledge by teaching this week's lesson. Your study group can also be virtual and not limited to people in your area. Send out your intentions via craigslist or various meetup and networking groups.

4) Have some dreaded tasks that have been on your todo lists for weeks -- but you can't find the energy or inspiration to accomplish them? Swap. Chances are that you know someone that is very efficient in doing these exact same things. They, on the other hand, have trouble with other kinds of things. You have no problem doing those types of things. You actually have fun doing their dreaded items. So -- swap. Have a designated date or time frame to get them done for each other. Periodically report (could even be over lunch or a walk around a near-by park). At the end, call that friend to thank them for their support during what should have been a frenzy day, week, etc.

5) Been meaning to have friends over, but you are uncomfortable with the state of your house? Clean the clutter or fix/build some things with some close friends. Put some old-time music (the kind that you grew up with as a kid). By putting on old music, things will be "coming out of their closets" about their younger days. It will be fun and you'll find out things about your friends and neighbors that you did not know. You might even find that they have the same situation in their home, and invite you the next week to do the same over there.....

6) Having trouble finding time for cooking meals for the family, consider having a "dinner swap meet". You cook a large batch of "something" for the entire week. Your friends do the same thing with a different dish. Then get together and swap meals. Everyone will have a different meal each night, but you only have to cook one dish.

7) Can't find that one-on-one time with the spouse, consider doing some chores together. Swap stories while doing the dishes together, or do the bills in the kitchen while your spouse is doing the laundry/dishes/cooking, etc.

8) Been meaning to build that tree-house for your children? You've also been meaning to meet the neighbors? Invite the neighbors and your children's friends' parents over to co-build it. Your children's friends and neighborhood kids are going to be in your tree-house as well. Have a community play-date to accomplish it.

9) Been meaning to go through those old clothes that you never wear? Getting rid of clutter in your closet, office, house has a similar effect on your mind and spirit. You feel alive, fresh and frisky after such a clearing. Other people are in the same boat. Announce a party and ask people to bring AND MODEL the stuff that they want to donate to Goodwill or the Salvation Army. This will give others incentive to go through their clothes as well. Your group will have fun modeling. You might find some gems, but will definitely have a laugh or two. At the end of the day, drop the clothes off together on your way to some celebratory ice-cream.

**Side Note:** I had a "Brides' maid" party once, where folks wore their old brides' maid and out-of-date suites. At the designated time, we then tore them off and jumped into the clubhouse

pool (we had swim wear underneath).

10) Been wanting to read that book people have been talking incisively about? Get the book on tape or CD. Play it while working on your computer, working out at the gym, driving through traffic, walking the dog, etc.

Play around with this idea. You'll be surprise how many seemingly disconnected things go well together.

p.s. The same people that love to help are afraid to ask for help. Give someone the gift of helping you, and they will return the favor.



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Laura has been in the software and testing industry for over 20 years. She's worked with such companies as IBM, Ericsson, Staples, Fidelity Investments and Sogeti in various client advocacy and project management roles. The techniques she uses in her business coaching and client advocacy work saved these companies both time and money, which resulted in on-time, quality product delivery with higher client satisfaction.

Laura now uses her client focus, project, quality and people management skills in her personal life coaching career. As a personal life coach, she helps people integrate their goals and dreams into their everyday lives. Laura uses creative and practical tools to help her clients realize what really matters to them. They then follow-through with project and time management techniques to create the reality they really want.

Laura authors many articles and workshops on time management and strategic scheduling. She is also the founder of the electronic magazine *the Rose Garden: the Art of Becoming*

Laura offers **one-on-one career and life coaching, small group coaching, seminars and workshops**. You can learn more about her at [www.RoseCoaching.info](http://www.RoseCoaching.info) and contact her at [LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info](mailto:LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info) or <http://thelaurarose.blogspot.com/>

