



Rose Coaching

www.RoseCoaching.info
Life_Is_Fun@RoseCoaching.info
LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info

Copyright 2009, Rose Coaching

[HOME](#)

Tips that keep your attention, and on target.

By Laura Rose, CTACC

Certified Business and Personal Life Coach

We often feel pulled in multiple directions from time to time. This is often because we're talented and very much in demand. But sometimes we worry that something is actually wrong with us -- because we can't seem to accomplish as much as we want during the day. Here are some quick tips to help us stay on track. Let me know what you think.

- Divide tasks according to your strengths. Doing things you are best at first will help increase your chances of sticking to them through completion. This may help you finish unwanted chores as well.
- Take control of your calendar. Consolidate like tasks. Example: Instead of having your entire day "peppered and interrupted" with email/phone calls/instant messages, deliberately choose to respond to email at end of day (reserve an appropriate block of time). Instead of answering individual questions one-by-one, consolidate in a FAQ for regular newsletter. Instead of meeting clients ASAP or whenever you have available, reserve either a day or two for "all your meetings" for "**NO CLIENT MEETINGS**" (whichever makes more sense for your industry). This allows you a block of interrupted time to get actual work done.
- Transform big projects into smaller fun events. Invite others to be part of large projects, from "clean out files day" at work to cleaning out the basement at home. Play music, serve food, and make it fun.
- Avoid the "10 pounds of stuff in a 5 pound bag". Many of us carry 20-30 items on our todo lists. How can we feel a sense of accomplishment but crossing 2-3 things, when we have 2 dozen items left to do? Select only 2-3 **MUST DO** items for the day, with 5-7 "nice to complete" items. Focus on getting your "MUST DO" done. Forgo your "nice to do" items until the next day if you have to. Then at the end of the day, you will have accomplished what you have set out to do!
- Write in daily appointments, important dates to remember, and time allotted for important **MUST DO** tasks to be completed. Be sure to include personal things you want to get done as well, like working out, kids' activities, etc.
- Don't critique what you're doing until you've completed it. That way, you can avoid getting distracted by perfectionism or frustrated at how much you have left to do.
- Release early draft versions often to your clients/accountability partner/etc. Releasing early and often avoid the "perfectionist trap". Folks have tangible evidence that you are making progress. They can make use of the early versions as you are completing the follow-up phases (which increases their productivity and efficiency as well). They also have the opportunity to redirect or modify as you go along – which increases final client satisfaction when you finally do complete. And early drafts versions give you a better idea of how long the entire task will ultimately take you.
- If you tend to get distracted with other things, set a timer to go off in 15 minutes and stay with the task for those 15 minutes. Don't drift off and do something else. And reward yourself after it is over.
- Do the reverse as well, allow yourself to "be distracted" for 15-20 minutes on anything that catches our attentions, but set the timer to distract you back into your life. If you need to leave the house by 11:00 am – set the timer to 10:45am and allow yourself to be distracted until the timer goes off. Then hit the road as previously scheduled. This allows a "deliberate sort of spontaneity" in your life.
- Try not to schedule early morning or late day meetings. Give yourself the best chance to be alert, on time, and firing on all cylinders.
- Build in extra time. Allow more time than you think you'll need for a project. Plan for the unexpected. Build buffers between projects to take care of interruptions, etc.
- Realize you can't say yes to every request that requires a time commitment. But we often have trouble saying "no". Before you make a new commitment, think of all your current commitments. You can still say "yes" -- but also give a time frame in which you can safely schedule it. Explain your other projects and priorities and tell them up front that you can get to their request on XXX date. If that date doesn't fit in their plans, they will find someone else to ask. You can even suggest another replacement person that would do a good job for them, as well. This is a good way to still be a team player, and stay on your target.
- Build extra time into your schedule for the unpredictable – things like traffic jams, unexpected phone calls or visitors, or activities that take longer than expected.

- Remember the 4 Ds (Delay, Discard, Diminish, and Delegate): Sometimes we think something is “urgent” because it’s happening “right now”. Just because it’s “in our faces now” – doesn’t mean it’s urgent. Consider its importance and priority against your overall goals. Although it may be an important think to accomplish, it may be more beneficial to delay until you meet with XXX or have collected additional information, etc. Discard tasks that do not align with your overall goals and mission. Ask yourself “why are you doing this”? If it’s because “you’ve always done it” and it’s no longer supporting your new goals and visions – maybe you have outgrown this task. If you have a large project, split into mini-tasks. Often time, you’ll discover that many of your mini-tasks are no longer required, or have mutated in such a way that they no longer support your overall purpose. You can eliminate those unnecessary steps. Some steps may be more beneficial as learning or mentoring activities for others. Consider delegating those mini-tasks to others.
- Keep a tape recorder or notepad in your car, by your bed, and in your pocketbook or jacket. You never know when a good idea will hit you, or when you’ll want to remember something else.
- Begin with the activity you are dreading the most. Once done, you’ll feel a huge sense of accomplishment and will more likely have the energy and confidence to tackle the rest that are on your list.
- Paraphrase what others are saying to you. When someone makes a request, repeat it out loud to make sure you correctly heard what they said. Ask them to repeat what you have just said to them, as well. This is a great way to make sure the two of you are on the same page and understand each others’ expectations.
- If you’re not good at estimating, ***PRACTICE***. Have a little bet with yourself about how long you think it will take to pick up the dry cleaning, or call your mother, for example. Then make a note of how long the activity really took, and plan for that amount of time in your schedule the next time you have to perform that task.
- Experiment with a slice of the task to improve your estimation accuracy. For example, if you have 7 months of back checks to balance spend 1 hour and see how much you can accomplish in one hour. Then interpolate how many hours it will take for the rest.
- Consider your ROI (Return On Investment). Do a “good enough” job to get you to your next step. It doesn’t have to be perfect. You’re just want that next bounce you to the next step. Don’t compare yourself with others; make it work for you. Review the “why you are doing this” – and stop when you’ve accomplished enough to propel you forward. Getting something perfect often stalls your progress versus propelling you forward.

About the author

Laura is a certified personal life coach. She is also the Time Management Advisor for National electronic magazine: eXaminer.com. Read more of her time management articles <http://www.examiner.com/x-16459-Raleigh-Time-Management-Examiner>

She 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 and contact her at LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info