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2 Incredibly Effective Time Management Techniques That You Haven't Heard of Yet

Scheduling a coffee date, outside of work, will actually make you more productive.



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Work-life balance isn't just about getting your to-do list done faster. It's about getting more time out of your day.

As someone who sometimes isn't the shining star example of either [work-life balance](#) or [productivity](#) and organization, I am always on the search for strategies to help me [use my time better](#) and get more out of each day.

For instance, I recently attended my three-year-old's preschool orientation. About midway through, I had a moment of panic because I'd forgotten to hit send on a message that my team needed before I ran out the door late that morning, Spider-Man-clad toddler in tow. I quietly slithered to the back of the room, logged on to my computer, and worked (just a little) while the kids were reading stories. It was not my proudest moment (no one noticed, but I did).

As a mom to three little boys and the CEO of a global over 40 person remote business, I try to forgive myself in these moments where I don't have everything as under control as I would like (as should you). But it's also why I was thrilled when I recently found Laura Vanderkam's new

book: [*Off the Clock*](#). We're all feeling time-starved and craving any technique or idea that can help us not only get more out of the day, but also *get more out of our lives*.

Spoiler alert: Getting better at making to-do lists may help you get more out of your day, but it's not going to help you get more out of your life. And while I love the movement toward doing less--minimalism just feels so *relaxing*--what my inner voice is always telling me to do is more. I'm not really interested in being less ambitious and cutting more out of my day, I just want to enjoy it more, relish in it more.

Vanderkam's premise is that when people say they are craving more time in their day, really what they mean is they are craving *more memories*. All the productivity techniques in the world won't get you that. Investing in relationships and your own plans is what will.

People are a good use of time.

Unfortunately, busy people tend to assume that time for relationships should only come out of the time that is leftover after all other responsibilities are fulfilled. It's fairly likely, then, that people with full lives don't have any time for their friends. Ironically, the people who don't spend time nurturing personal relationships are also the ones feeling their days are short. Vanderkam's research shows that human connection makes the hours "come alive," granting more weight and value to your time.

So, if you want to feel as if you have more time, you need to intentionally and thoughtfully invest that time into your personal relationships. Just be sure that:

1. You are selective, spending time with people who make you feel good.
2. Your relationships with friends, family, and professional peers are wide-ranging throughout every part of life.

Plan it in, do it anyway.

When planning, the goal is never to sit on the couch all week, watch bad TV, and eat chocolate, or to mindlessly alternate between email and Facebook for four hours. But when you get into the moment of truth to tackle your ambitious to-do list, there's a shift: you'd prefer to take the easy way out and not exert any effort.

Vanderkam explains that the reason this happens is there are three versions of self: the anticipating self, the experiencing self, and the reminiscing self.

The anticipating and reminiscing self are usually aligned. If you plan to attend a networking event to meet a business woman you admire, you'll also probably be happy you went to it. Where people get stuck is that the experiencing self (the piece of you that makes the decision, in that moment, to skip the event) is usually too focused on making that moment easy.

So, what do you do? "Plan it in, do it anyway," says Vanderkam.

In short, if you make a plan to do something, even if in the moment you don't want to do it, you need to work as hard as you can to ignore that urge. See it for what it is (inertia), and do it anyway. Don't re-decide, don't re-question. Follow the plan without looking back. Your reminiscing self will thank you for it.

As for me? I learned that allowing relationships to take a much-valued (and sometimes under-represented) spot on my calendar, both actively and unapologetically, is an excellent use of my time.

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