

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. Please click on our social media icons and also give us the benefit of your thinking in the comment section below. We appreciate that.

This week I want to talk about why you never seem to get it all done. And this is important to you. I'm going to give you five tips for how to get more done and how to have maybe a little more balance in your life.

I found some amazing statistics. This comes also from my peer group member Arlin Sorenson. The digital revolution of the last 10 to 15 to 20 years has made us more productive and more powerful in many ways, but they've also in many key ways, made us too accessible, made us focus on our jobs too much of the time and really create a disconnect between the ability to be an individual and a family person and not just an employee or a leader. So, listen to these. These are five or six statistics that Arlin quoted, and I just found them shocking.

The average person checks his or her cell phone, get this, 150 times a day. 150 times a day. That is shocking. The average person has about three minutes average time during the workday between interruptions. Some of those interruptions might be checking the phone and that pace is accelerated. I remember listening to a time management expert 15 years ago, it was four minutes between interruption. So, now it's down to three minutes. Pretty soon your whole day will be nothing but interruptions. The average worker is interrupted six times every hour. It takes, Arlin says, about 25 minutes to genuinely refocus on tasks at hand and experts estimate that about 40% of the average workers capability is lost, productivity is lost during the workday. So, this digital revolution has been so life changing in so many ways, but they're not all good life changes. Some of these things are really curses upon us, not blessings.

This isn't a permanent condition though. I mean, there are things that you and I can do about it to reduce the interruptions, to reduce the urge to look at your cell phone, all these other things. So here are five tips that I've learned over the years that helped me and have helped some of our clients and I think they'll help you too.

So, the first thing is close your office door. This thing came out of the '70s or '80s that you have to have an open-door policy. I think I mentioned in a blog before, the bank where I worked early in my career at one time took the doors off the hinges. All the managers literally had a no door policy, which was idiotic. If you've got stuff on which you need to concentrate, close your door or better yet, get out of the office completely. Take your work, your laptop over to your CPA's office. I bet he's got an empty office or a conference room that you can use over there. It's probably quiet. Or go to Starbucks or wherever you go but get out of the office where you're not going to be interrupted, where you could really put your head down and focus on as some people find it home, they're more focused and productive because they're not interrupted all the time as they are in the office. Some people go in extra early and get an extra hour or two before anybody else comes in, but first thing is close your door or work elsewhere.

The second thing is turn off your electronics. You don't have to have your email up on your screen at all times. You can minimize it and focus on the spreadsheet you're working on or the drawings or whatever it is. You don't have to have that outlook, which is what we use sitting up there all the time, every time you get a new email, you stop what you're doing and check the email. How many of them are really urgent anyway? In 30 years in business, I can only remember one, in a phone call that was actually an emergency and that was due to a family illness. But I've had thousands, it feels like millions of phone calls over the years. One has been urgent and your email's the same way. How many of your emails are urgent, where you need to stop what you're doing and really check in with them?

So, another thing you could do is batch your emails. Look at your emails at 10:00 AM perhaps for 30 minutes, reply to them, whatever, however long it takes, and maybe once again at the end of the day, right before you go home, get back to everybody. Otherwise turn off your email and turn off your phone.

The third thing is plan your workday. You have a schedule and sometimes people let their schedules get away from them, but plan your work day, what you're going to do when just like you plan a visit to the doctor. Let's talk about your personal health for a minute. Plan your workday maybe you block off 45 minutes to go to the gym and have a 30-minute workout and grab a sandwich and hustle back, well, more than 45 minutes, but you get my drift. We schedule the things that are important. You scheduled your wedding, you scheduled your children's weddings, you schedule doctor appointments, you schedule appointments with customers, you schedule meetings at work, things that are really important get on your schedule. So, use your calendar. And if you find that your whole workday is jammed up with stuff, that tells you that you're trying to do too many things and you need to add white space on your calendar so that you can be a resource for your people. Office hours like college professors used to have, it could be a real thing for you.

The fourth thing, and this is a hard one for so many of our clients, learn to say no. The bank wants you to be on their board, the hospital wants you on their board, the country club wants you on their board, customers want you to come look at this personally and not delegate it to one of your key people. Learn to say no. Learn to trust your people. You only have 24 hours in a day. In your lifespan, your working life span is only so long. So, get jealous about your time and just say no to people respectfully, respectfully. No, I'm over committed. I'm overbooked. I'm not going to be able to do a very good job for you on that. Let me send Sally or Mary or John or somebody and they can help you much better than I could.

People want answers and solutions. They don't care necessarily who provides them. Don't let your ego get in the way, say no when it's appropriate to say no. Also, internally, when people want you to do something, when people are trying to delegate up, learn to ask a really valuable question and that is, what would you do? What do you think we should do in this circumstance? And train your people to make decisions so you don't have to. You don't have to be there to make every single decision anymore. And the final thing is when you're home, be a family man or a family woman, put your cell phone or your laptop or your tablet away, lock it in your safe if you have to keep it away. I put mine in a corner of a room away from everything else and I admit I'm not perfect, I check it a couple times during the evening, I look at it, but by having it away somewhere other than your fingertips, it really makes a big difference. You'll find you spend an hour or two or three with your family and not staring at a screen. So just put it away. Get rid of it, lock it away, leave it in your car or truck, whatever.

So, when you think about how you invest your time and you never seem to get it all done, ultimately you determine your schedule. Maybe these five tips will help you. I'd like to hear what other tips you guys have for making your life more balanced, making it more well-rounded and how to get all the work done and still be fully engaged as a human being and a family person. We'd love to have your comments. Thank you. This is Wayne Rivers.