

Are You Filtering Your Time Decisions?

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Have you made enough time to conquer your Meaningful Objectives for the year? One of the key mindsets for increasing your personal productivity is to filter your time, email, and task decisions through a few questions according to our workflow decision-making model.

Those questions are: does what you're doing relate to a Meaningful Objective? How about a Supporting Project? In other words, does the meeting you're attending, email you're writing or reading, or the task you're doing matter in the big picture of your annual goals?

At the core, productivity is getting the right things done and using your time and energy well. Ideally the calendar reflects the goals that are most important at work and personally.

When the calendar is filled with meaningless things like excess email checking, low-level tasks, or unfocused tasks, we won't feel the sense of energy and accomplishment at the end of the day. Instead, we'll think to ourselves, I was at work all day but don't recall what happened.

Many people admit to feeling exhausted and overwhelmed from a bunch of little things that didn't add up to making a dent in the big things. It's because the white space on the calendar can be like the kitchen junk drawer, we fill the space with random activities, most unfocused on the main things

Likewise, sometimes our performance reviews don't necessarily reflect other uses of time that we value. For example, if you have a goal of being a great manager by setting and keeping weekly 30 minute one-on-one meetings, then that goal should be clear in your Meaningful Objectives, since it impacts time.

Essentially time decisions must align with goals. And it's our calendar that reflects how we spend or invest our time. Time spent is going to feel depleting, but time invested feels rewarding.

What's on your calendar that matters most? What needs to be declined? What or who do you need to allocate some time to?

For example, if your spouse is important to you, make a time investment into a planned date night to keep that primary relationship thriving. Same thing with your children. Same thing with your colleagues. And same thing with your project team meetings.

To clarify your 2021 goals and get them accomplished this year, take a moment to do the following:

1. Brainstorm everything you'd like to accomplish.
2. Assign a value to its importance to you professionally or personally.
3. Decide your top five goals for the year based on the level of importance.
4. Assign timeframes and deadlines to the goals.
5. Review the calendar to find specific times to block to focus on those goals.
6. During your Weekly Prioritizing and Planning Session each week, review your calendar for when you can work on your goals.

The fundamentals of strategy are all about our Meaningful Objectives and the Supporting Projects to outline how we are going to achieve them. How will you reach your goals? The how is often a set of tasks that constitutes a project. A Supporting Project is a project that supports your Meaningful Objectives.

List out the projects that will help you reach your goals.

If you've felt off track, keep your chin up. You've still got time to re-focus for the future. Celebrate your progress along the way and be sure to follow the steps above to make this year count!