

JUMP START TO GETTING ORGANIZED

Taking Control of Your Time

When you say you are organized it means that you have systems and structures in place to support you in terms of your time, tasks and things. Technically they are three separate areas but they are certainly interconnected.

When you are in control of your time it means that you can allocate time, accurately estimate time and be aware of the passage of time. It means that you understand time and can approximate how long something will take you to do. Be aware that it does not mean you can do it automatically or without support.

Not being in control of your time has far reaching effects. You run late, your self-esteem suffers, you can be losing money, you feel stressed or anxious and it may harm your reputation.

To a large degree when we talk about time management we are talking about scheduling; getting places and doing things "on-time".

What to do about it?

1. Use a calendar
2. Schedule your time so that you can handle similar activities together
3. Wear a watch and hang analog clocks on the wall (clocks with hands)
4. Schedule your time "backwards" in order to make sure you have enough time before and after appointments to get there and back. Use these questions to help guide you:
 - a. When do I want to be there?
 - b. What do I need to do in order to get there?
 - c. How long do those things really take me to do? Double it!
 - d. What time do I really need to leave?
5. Use timers to help you "hear" the passage of time.
6. Leave time in your day between tasks for transition time or to allow for the things that are unexpected or simply run long.

Biggest mistakes I see:

- Spending your time on "squeeze-ins" instead of what you mean to be doing.
- Not including setup/put away time when scheduling a task.
- Assuming time is infinite. You will never "find" the time to do something. But you can allocate your time to do it.
- Not scheduling down time or fun time. You need to schedule it to make it happen. AND as you start to use your calendar more effectively you will feel better about taking it!
- Not honoring your own boundaries. There are things that you simple need to say "no" to.