

Book Notes: The 4-Hour Workweek by Timothy Ferriss

<http://fourhourworkweek.com/blog/>

Chapter Five: The End of Time Management

- Main ideas: Define a to-do list and a not-to-do list. Ask two major questions related to the 80/20 rule: What 20% of sources are causing 80% of my problems and unhappiness? What 20% of sources are resulting in 80% of my desired outcome and happiness?
- Thought questions:
 - If you could only work two hours per day, what would you do?
 - If you could only work two hours per week, what you do?
 - If you had to stop doing 4/5 of different time-consuming activities, what would you remove?
 - What are the top three activities that you use to fill time and feel as though you have been productive? Note that these activities are usually used to postpone more important activities.
 - Who are the 20% of people who produce 80% of your enjoyment and propel you forward, and which 20% cause you 80% of your depression, anger, and second-guessing?
 - Think about positive friends vs. time-consuming friends.
 - When do you feel starved for time? What commitments, thoughts, and people can you eliminate to solve this problem?
 - Ask, "If this is the only thing I accomplish today, will I be satisfied with my day?"
- Compile your to-do list for the day the night before.
- Learn to ask, "If this is the only thing I accomplish today, will I be satisfied with my day?"
 - Never have more than two critical items per day to complete.
 - Periodically ask yourself throughout the day, "Am I inventing things to do to avoid the important?"
- Do not multi-task. Do tasks separately from start to finish. Divided attention will result in more frequent interruptions and lapses in concentration.

Chapter Six: The Low-Information Diet: Cultivating Selective Ignorance

- Develop the skill of being selectively ignorant. Learn to ignore or redirect all interruptions that are irrelevant and unimportant.
- Avoid information that is time-consuming, negative, irrelevant to your goals, and outside of your influence.
 - Try to limit TV consumption to one hour of pleasurable television per day.
 - Read fiction books for pleasure before bed.
 - Do not surf the web unless it is necessary to complete a work [study] task for that day.
- Get in the habit of asking yourself, "Will I definitely use this information for something immediate and important?" If no, don't consume it. If you think

you will forget the information before you have a chance to apply it, save it for later.

- Practice the art of *nonfinishing*. If you start reading or watching something that you do not enjoy and/or is not useful, stop doing it.

Chapter Seven: Interrupting Interruption and the Art of Refusal

- Limit checking email to only certain times of the day.
 - Do not check email before completing your most important task of the day.
 - Let people know ahead of time that you will be implementing this system of communication.
- Comfort challenge: Practice saying no to everything extra. Do not make up excuses. Say, "I can't, sorry, I have too much on my plate right now."

Book Notes is a series compiled by Lisa Medoff, PhD, Stanford School of Medicine's Learning Specialist. These handouts are intended to provide at-a-glance suggestions and strategies relevant to the needs of medical students. If you find the handouts helpful, I encourage you to read the original books, as they will offer much more detailed information on the topic of interest.

Please contact lmedoff@stanford.edu if you have a suggestion for a book that should be added to the series and/or if you are a student at the School of Medicine who would like to discuss in person how to implement any of the suggestions listed above.