



TOP PRIORITY-Secrets revealed!

Have you ever noticed how some people are able to accomplish so much in so little time? Do you secretly wonder how they can get it all done, when you can't even get your bed made? I know, I used to struggle with this too. But I've learned a few tricks and I'm willing to share. These successful people, let's call them the movers and shakers, seem to follow a basic set of rules:

1) They know how to set goals. They live with intention. They know that it's impossible to meet a goal that you haven't set! They visualize their ideal life and then they go after it. They also know that it's important to attach deadlines to their goals or projects drag on and on, or are never completed.

2) They know how to strategize. After they have assessed what their goals are, they rank them in order of importance. They devote the majority of their time to accomplishing their number one priority. Brian Tracy, a successful business author, claims that if you spend 10% of your time planning, you will save 90% of your time overall.

Movers and shakers rank their responsibilities and priorities so that they can make mindful choices. In the words of Goethe, "things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least."

3) Movers and Shakers understand the connection between setting priorities and productivity. They realize that the more efficient they become the more time they have left over for working toward their goals. So:

- **They live by a schedule.** They understand that having a routine built into their life, insures that jobs will get done in a timely fashion. Schedules helps them work more skillfully, so they get more done.
- **They are very selective about their time commitments.** They guard their time. They know how to say no. They turn down the jobs that others perform out of obligation or guilt. When they volunteer, they stick to their strengths and are able to work more quickly and efficiently.
- **They deal with things directly.** They stay on top of small daily chores. They know that if they maintain things routinely it is much easier than waiting until the mail stacks up or the dishes are overflowing in the sink. They have the mindset to "clean as you go" *or* "do it now!" They don't like delay.
- **Movers and Shakers use their talents wisely.** They concentrate their efforts where they have skill and talent. They polish those talents. They do things that they love and which give them energy. Incidentally, anytime that you are doing a job that saps you of energy, it's a sign that this isn't your strongest area of talent. When you find your bliss, you can work endlessly and feel energized.
- **They eliminate unnecessary tasks.** They avoid time-consuming chores so they have more time to pursue the things that really matter. They reevaluate their possessions and eliminate anything "that's more work than its worth." If they hate to iron, they buy

permanent press. If they don't like to dust, they eliminate knickknacks. If they don't like to vacuum, they buy a Roomba.

4) They understand how time works. C.S. Lewis said that "the future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of 60 minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is." Movers and shakers understand this and they maximize that time, for instance :

- **They're not afraid to pay for services.** If they don't know how to do something they have someone else do it for them. They justify the cost by saying that they can earn more doing what they do best, rather than trying to work against their own skill set.
- **They realize that multi-tasking works within reason.** They find ways to combine simple tasks. They make a call while waiting in line or while waiting for the water to boil. They fold clothes while watching TV or write a memo during a commercial. They realize that multi-tasking is best used for simple jobs. When over-done it can actually slow them down and mistakes can be made.
- **They use stray minutes prudently.** When they find themselves with a few extra minutes they use that time to sew on a button, water the plants, do the dishes or make an appointment. As Charles Caleb Colton stated, "Much can be done in those little shreds and patches of time which every day produces, and which most men throw away."
- **They understand their own energy level.** Some people are home-bodies and others love to be on the go. They have identified their type and schedule their lives, (and the lives of their children) accordingly.
- **Movers and Shakers avoid time traps and time drains.** You won't find them laying on the sofa watching four hours of TV or surfing the internet until their eyes glaze over. And they might even screen their calls.

5) They know how to delegate. They understand that many hands make light labor. They find help. They expect family members to chip in. They realize they can get much more accomplished with help and they will be happier if they don't have to shoulder the burden alone.

6) They believe in themselves. In the words of Virgil, "They can-because they think they can."

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