

Keeping on top of things

My wife would laugh herself silly if she knew I was writing this – I sometimes let things slide.

That makes it all the more important for me to write this.

Here are some techniques that have worked for me to keep on top of things. It's a pity that I don't always use them – but when I use them, they work well.

We'll call them the "easy eight."

1. Write the tasks down, and check them off. This is such an easy thing to do that most of us don't do it. "I can remember them in my mind," we say. And yet, most of the time, our mental checklists fall by the wayside, as the troubles and challenges of the day intrude.

2. Check your task list at certain times of the day. Set those times, and get into the habit. Habits can rule our lives, so make certain you develop good habits.

3. Attack your bad habits, and turn them around. For instance, I used to neglect balancing my check register, until I actually **had** to do it. Now, I balance my checkbook several times a week. How did I do it? I set a pattern of how often I check my transactions online – Mondays for sure, and at least once during the following Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Ordinarily, I check the accounts several times a week, and balance the checkbook each time. All I did was to decide I was going to do it – and then follow through at least five times. Then I set the day of the week that I'll get into the accounts – on those days, I check.

4. Decide you're going to be a man or woman of your word, and keep the promises you make. Never make a promise unless you know you'll be able to deliver it – and then deliver it for sure.

5. I leave myself reminders of things I was working on in the evening – a note, or a web page up on the screen are enough to remind me and bring me back to speed. When I leave the office, I don't think about most problems until the next morning – and if I don't leave a followup reminder, it might take some time to get back to speed.

6. If you're driving and think of something you need to follow up on, either have someone **write it down**, or call your office voicemail and leave yourself a message. Our thoughts are so fleeting, and unless you do something like this,

you're likely going to lose the thought as soon as someone pulls in front of you on the freeway.

7. Consider establishing a weekly “planning session” with yourself on Sunday night (or some other night or morning), to plan out the week, and what you wish to accomplish.

8. Take a few minutes at the end of the day to review what you've accomplished, and revisit what you need to schedule for the next day.

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