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The key to time management and maximizing your work capacity is separating the little things that matter and the little things that don't. —Unknown

How Do I Make the Most of My Time?

Leadership, *NAD Principals' Handbook* (excerpt)

Principals know that time is a precious commodity—once used, it cannot be recalled. Managing time effectively is of primary importance to a successful principal:

- Attend events where your presence makes a difference.
- Beat procrastination: “just do it!”
- Carve out time for planning, reflection, and creative thinking.
- Delegate tasks that others can do.
- Document, document, document.
- Match effort to importance of the task.
- Organize, organize, organize.
- Implement a system for efficient handling of communication and paperwork.

- Refuse to do other people’s work for them or to make their problems your own.
- Reward yourself for completing major projects.
- Use technology as a time-saver, not a time waster.
- Use your administrative assistant as a discreet “screener.”
- Vary your schedule.
- Keep your to-do list prioritized—important vs. urgent; leadership vs. management.

While taking care of the office duties is important, it is more important to build and nurture relationships with faculty, students, and parents. ☪

“Take Five” Times Two

Rob Robinson, Principal, Bayside Adventist Christian School

School principals wear many hats and can easily become bogged down in the logistics of making a school run efficiently. If you are a teaching principal, you also juggle additional roles. While your prioritized agenda continues to grow, the number of available hours in a day does not. What can help to make every minute count?

- **“Take 5.”** Begin the day with your own personal quiet time—aside from faculty worship. Sit for a few minutes to rest and be refreshed by God’s Word. Begin with a prayer of surrender, “God, today I am Yours again. Use me.” As instructional leaders, our call is to both lead *and* feed. It’s difficult to live, love and lead like Jesus if we are not spending time with Him every day.
- **Preview the week.** Take time before the week begins to review your calendar. Confirm appointments or touch base as needed. Develop a prioritized plan for every day—most important tasks to accomplish; appointments that must be met; and approaching deadlines. In addition to planning “What do I need to *do*?” think through “How do I need to *be*?” As a teaching principal, I also focus time on planning “when” I am going to get administrative tasks

accomplished. Take advantage of those spare moments and any “free time” you may have. Time spent planning your week and each day is one of the most important things you can do to better manage your time.

- **Create monthly folders.** When something comes to you and you are not ready to work on it, or you will need a reminder months from now, or you have work to complete during a specific time frame, put it in that month’s folder and forget about it until that month comes along.
- **Know your deadlines.** Keep a master calendar of when forms and reports are due. Use technology to remind you of upcoming deadlines. In fact, target to be early. My grandfather instilled in me, “If you cannot be early, at least be on time.”
- **Make trades, not sacrifices.** The space in a day is similar to the space in a closet. There is only so much room. You need to get rid of things before anything else can be added to it. When my schedule feels cluttered and overwhelming, I need to let go of some things of a lesser commitment. I

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Managing the “Must Do’s”

Mark Witas, Lead Teaching Pastor, Pacific Union College Church

Before I became a principal, I was a youth pastor. I do not know if you know anything about youth pastors, but if you do, you know that we are not known for our organizational and management skills. Time management as a youth pastor was an especially challenging part of my life. When I was a youth pastor, I did not have a set schedule, except for Sabbath or when there were evening meetings I had to attend.

Then, I became a principal.

I do not know why anyone would hire a youth pastor to be a principal, but they did. And I quickly discovered that principals have a lot more to do than youth pastors on a day-to-day basis. I was way over my head and I knew it. So, for my personality, I knew I had to have a schedule that, barring unforeseen happenstance, was thoughtful and productive. Planning would make me a better principal than flying by the seat of my pants.

The “must do’s” of my schedule were:

1. Every morning at 7:25 I met with my staff for a short **time of prayer for staff and students**. Starting each morning with that time of worship was indispensable.
2. Every morning after worship I stood in the parking lot entrance to the school and shook hands, greeted students, and caught up with parents. Being the **visible greeter** was time well spent.
3. I had a hard time wanting to sit in my office. I am not much of an office sitter. But I found that I owed it to my staff, parents, and students to have **regular hours in my office**, toward the beginning of every morning and about

20 minutes after the last bell rang.

4. Another lesson learned about morning time in the office had to do with productivity. Often there would be nobody needing my attention. This gave me **time to do paperwork, go over our school action plans, and sit with our school treasurer and office manager**. As it turns out, being disciplined about that office time made me more productive than I thought a youth pastor could ever be. Once in a while, I would flip my afternoon and morning schedules for purposes that are detailed in my next point.
5. Afternoons were a different story for me. Knowing that I had to do teacher evaluations, most afternoons were spent **wandering the halls and visiting classrooms**. I would have a note pad or my laptop with me and I would pop into classrooms unannounced to observe and take notes. I never felt that I could evaluate a teacher fairly by setting a date weeks ahead of time so that they would be expecting me or even dreading the experience. I felt it was a better assessment of the classroom dynamics and teacher goals if I were to pop in unannounced and sit for 10 to 20 minutes observing. My walk-a-bouts also gave me a chance to notice things about the facility that needed cleaning or repair.

To help me, I posted these hours and expectations so that my staff, parents, and students had reasonable expectations of me. When posted, I also felt more pressure to keep to these commitments myself. I hope these time management tips help you in your journey. 🌟

It's difficult to live, love and lead like Jesus if we are not spending time with Him every day.

“Take Five” Times Two

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make some hard decisions and choose what is better.

- **Delegate.** Get over the fear of handing work off to someone else. John Maxwell suggests, “If something can be done 80% as well by someone else, delegate!” Delegate some of your responsibilities to another staff member or volunteer so you can effectively manage your time and not feel so overloaded. By relieving your workload, you have time for the more important issues.
- **Control distractions.** Use a timer to split up work into uninterrupted periods of 25 minutes, with a five minute break in between, or use software like *SelfControl* that limits your use of social media sites to predetermined amounts of time.

- **Learn to say “no.”** The word “no” is not always easy to say, but you must learn how if you are going to get the most out of your time at work. Effective leaders know how to get the most amount of productive work done in a day. This cannot be done if the principal takes on every task requested. You may even have to say “no” to something that might seem like a good thing so that you can say “yes” to something even better which God has planned.
- **“Take 5” again.** End each day by reviewing what you accomplished and what might need to be readjusted on your schedule for the next day or week. End the day with prayers of thanksgiving for God’s care, guidance and protection throughout the day, and for His mercies that will be new tomorrow morning. 🌟