

Simple steps to save seconds

by Jackie Moyer

You see them every day. People on their way to school, on their way to work or even on their way to the same destination as you. Those crazy people on the highways and byways cutting you off, passing in a "no passing" zone, cussing and cursing trying to get ahead of you. All the while putting on makeup, shaving, reading, making their imperative phone calls, brewing a pot of coffee, never realizing that there are other people on road besides them. Who are these people?

Commuters. Commuters trying to squeeze in a few extra minutes during the day to get things done while on their way to school or work. If there were only one more hour during the day! Ah, sweet bliss! Here are a few tips on time management published by Robert W. Bly, president of the Center for Technical Communication, and Amanda Sprecher Bly. A much healthier alternative than trying to apply mascara or making a meal on your commute.

First and foremost, set priorities. Begin by deciding what tasks must be done today, this week or this month. If the project seems too complex, break it down into manageable steps that can be handled one at a time. Compile a "To Do" list, then follow it.

Do not procrastinate. Putting off unpleasant, routine or difficult projects is human nature. Do not obey this beast! Attempt to

discipline yourself to tackle these tasks. When you do, you will gain self-confidence and make better use of your time. Here are some techniques that may help those of us who fall into this pit of procrastination:

-Think about how great you'll feel when your project, paper, task, etc. is completed. Think positively about its outcome.

-If the project/task is overwhelming, break it down into a series of steps to be entered on your "To Do" list. Set up a specific time and date to begin working on the first step and follow through as if it were an appointment. Promise to spend at least 15 minutes a day on the task until it is done.

-Create an incentive by promising yourself a special reward for getting the job/task done (complete body massage, chocolate covered cherries—pick your poison).

-Strive for excellence, not perfection. We sometimes set unrealistic goals for ourselves and then are ultimately defeated when we don't meet these expectations. Remember, stay positive.

When you can, avoid distractions. Outside distractions can be time wasters — if you let them. Take control! The key is to physically block out disturbances as much as possible. This can be accomplished by simply closing a door, if you are at home or asking people to be quiet. Sometimes this is impossible when you are in the library at school or



in the lounge, but for the most part, your mind can successfully tune out a great many signals if you tell it to. Find an empty classroom, close the door and get to work.

If you have to work on a group project with other students (yes, I understand how difficult this can be to schedule a time to get together!) try and delegate the responsibilities. Get your group together, piece out the parts of the project to accomplish and then set a time when your group can get together and compile all the data each of you have accumulated.

This not only takes the stress off from the group, but also takes the stress off the impending doom you may feel due to an over-

whelming project you feel is insurmountable. Groups have their pros and cons. We all know the cons, no time to get together, but the pros are that you have different perspectives and viewpoints on the same subject that you may not have realized. We all must learn delegation skills and teamwork sometime. Start cultivating this ability soon.

Finally, take care of yourself. Learn to relax. Take time out and maybe that one hour you're trying to add to the day will suddenly present itself. Meanwhile, when you are waiting for that one hour to magically appear, be careful while applying makeup or shaving on your commute to school. No need to be blinded or suffer a flesh wound.

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