



EBOOK

Unlocking the Productivity Code

Take Control of Your TIME, Get in the Zone, and Achieve
Maximum Results

by Erica and Mike Schultz, authors of *Not Today: The 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity*

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Introduction

This is the part of the ebook where we're supposed to tell you we were never very productive, we procrastinated a lot and found ourselves unhappy and unfulfilled until we learned something that turned it all around...and now we're going to share it with you.

Nope.

While we've always been scatterbrained and had periodic trouble focusing (who doesn't?), we've typically been able to power through it and get some good work done.

But in February 2012 we found ourselves in a war zone. Our son, Ari, was born with a serious congenital heart defect.¹ After having two heart surgeries before he was born, he had a series of complex procedures over the course of his first seven months on the outside, including two major open-heart surgeries to replace three of the four valves in his heart and to cut scar tissue out of his left ventricle.

Fortunately, we own our own company and were able to be with him through it all, essentially living with him at the hospital full-time.

Unfortunately, we own our own company, so during the quiet times—and there were long stretches of quiet time at Boston Children's Hospital—we had to work in order to keep the company on its feet and keep us all in health insurance.

During the stretches we worked, we had to, for the first time in our lives, figure out how to get a lot done in much less time in an environment actively hostile to getting anything done at all.

We only tried to work during the quiet times when Ari was stable and getting better, but even then it was nearly impossible. We were distracted and unfocused. Not at all motivated.

We read time management and productivity books and blogs, but we found a lot of them cheesy, complicated, and too difficult to adopt.

Over the course of Ari's life he spent 430 nights inpatient at the hospital. The majority of that time Ari was doing relatively well, hanging out with family, playing and watching sports, and waiting long stretches for his heart to get better.

Through those 430 days and nights, a system started to emerge where we began to get a little work done, then a lot of work, in short stints of time in an environment in which it was harder to concentrate than most offices.

When we took Ari home after his first seven months in the hospital and life (sorta) returned to normal—here comes the cheese, but it's true—our fascination with the art and science of productivity grew. It turns out there's certainly some art to it, but there's also a lot of science.

We undertook a global research study on productivity, with more than 5,000 participants to date, and studied the habits of the most productive people. What's more, we found the most productive people are also more satisfied with their jobs, more likely to be top performers, and are happier. This makes a strong case to adopt their habits.

This research, and our own personal journey learning how to get work done with heart and purpose through incredibly challenging circumstances, became the basis for our book, [*Not Today: The 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity*](#).

It turns out that applying a few select principles produces impressive results.

The Research Behind The Productivity Code

The research that underpins, influences, and ultimately validates the The Productivity Code was conducted by RAIN Group's Center for Sales Research.

Data was collected during the last decade as we've been studying, testing, and honing a series of habits and hacks that have driven not only our own productivity, but that of teams at dozens of our corporate clients worldwide.



We wanted to know:

- Do those who achieve—those who get the most done—approach work differently?
- If the most productive people do approach work differently, what exactly are their habits, their “settled tendencies”?
- How are these habits different from everyone else’s?
- Are productive people more likely to be happy people?
- Are some happier than others because of how they approach productivity?
- Do extreme productivity, top performance, job satisfaction, and happiness ride up and down together?
- Can those who are not yet extremely productive adopt new habits and become extremely productive?

We collected data from 2,377 confidential assessments (as of this writing, now 5,000) from respondents across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region. The assessment measured 36 productivity attributes, behaviors, and habits, and how they affect performance.

We analyzed the data through multiple lenses to answer several questions:

- What do The Extremely Productive (The XP) people do differently than The Rest?
- Which behaviors are correlated with productivity?
- Which behaviors and habits are likely to have the greatest impact on productivity?

And to get the fullest view possible of what productivity could look and feel like in people’s lives, we analyzed productivity with regard to job performance, job satisfaction, and overall happiness.

Some of our findings were about as surprising as finding that elite athletes train a lot. In other words, some of it was pretty obvious: The XP are very proactive, they write down their goals, and when events derail their day, they bounce back fast.

What we didn’t expect was (A) the chasm between Extremely Productive people and the rest of our sample, and (B) how the Extremely Productive exhibit sometimes obvious but hard-to-achieve behaviors as a matter of course.

Productivity Code Challenges Generate Extreme Results

The team at RAIN Group began testing pilots of The Productivity Code through a series of 90-Day Productivity Code Challenges with our long-time clients.

The results have been eye-popping.

One client whose team participated in the 90-Day Productivity Code Challenge saw a 31% jump in sales activity in their CRM system during the days before their bi-weekly coaching meetings. Shortly after the client noted the activity boosts, they told us they had their best month of sales results ever. No surprise.

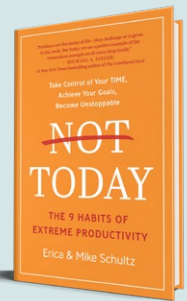
With a second client, we ran the challenge with 20 partners at one of the world's largest accounting and consulting firms. Their challenge focused on proactively growing existing accounts. Only four months later, they reported generating 16 times in additional sales won than what they paid us for the program. They attributed this revenue increase directly to the challenge. Again: that's 16 times return on investment on the program in only four months.

A third client, a division at a very large telecommunications company, reported generating \$100,000,000 in additional sales pipeline in half a year. Yes, that's a hundred million dollars. Based on these results, we decided to take The Productivity Code big and wide.

Not Today: The 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity

Buy your copy today to take control of your TIME, achieve your goals, and become unstoppable.

BUY NOW



The Productivity Code: Easy to Use, Yet Deep and Rigorous

The Productivity Code is built to be simple, easy to apply, straightforward, and without complicated tools, flowcharts, or multiple forms to fill out.

We've applied Ockham's Razor to key points of the system to keep it as simple as possible. After years of research on motivation, time management, and productivity, we've developed dozens of helpful hacks and tips. For those of you intent on digging deep, you'll find a rich toolbox of techniques to sink your teeth into.

But we wanted to create a system that could be applied with minimal effort for those who want to use it the way I (Mike) play video games. I don't play much. When I do—whether with my kids or friends—I like to turn on the game and start playing. I don't want to take 15 hours to figure out the controls before the fun begins. I might not play long enough to become a master, but if the game is designed for it, even I can get the hang of things pretty quickly.

The Productivity Code is built to be, essentially, taken out of the box and applied for those of you who—like me with a PlayStation®—don't want to take a lot of time to learn the controls. However, like a good game, for those of you who find yourself obsessed and seduced by its appeal, you can dig deep, lose yourself in it, and become a master.

The 3 Keys and 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity

The Productivity Code is built on the following 3 Keys:

1. Manufacture Motivation
2. Control Your TIME
3. Execute in the Zone

Key #1: Manufacture Motivation

Motivation is often thought to be largely innate: people either have it or they don't. They're either go-getters or they're not. Self-starters or not. Proactive or lazy.

Not true.

In the last several years, much research has been done to show that motivation is less an innate, immutable attribute and more like a skill: something that can be learned, practiced, and strengthened. Let's say you don't feel as motivated as you want. Or perhaps you've never thought of yourself as very motivated. Too many just accept this and go about their days resigned to whatever level of motivation they believe they have.

In reality, it's quite the contrary. If you apply the right principles and learn certain habits, you actually can manufacture your own motivation. You can create it seemingly out of nothing and build it to whatever you want it to be.

Key #2: Control Your TIME

Productivity has long been thought to be largely a time-management challenge. Learn certain hacks and organize your to-do list the right way and you'll get more done.

True, to an extent. You might get more done, but are you getting your Greatest Impact Activities done? Are you creating more time to work on your Greatest Impact Activities? Are you concentrating deeply and tuning everything else out?

Everyone feels busy, and sometimes it's like there's not enough time in the day to succeed.

Yet some people succeed and some don't. Research shows that people who achieve the highest levels of success have only 24 hours in every day just like everyone else. Shocker, right?

It's not just about getting things done. It's about taking total control over what you do and what you avoid, and not getting derailed by the massive distractions that sabotage so many every day.

Key #3: Execute in the Zone

If you want to get more done in the time you have, and you want to have that euphoric feeling of being extremely productive, you must execute in the zone.

The zone, also known as flow, is the mental state where a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.

In a work context, if you're executing in the zone, you're maximizing your effort per work hour. If you work an hour in the zone, you don't just work an hour, you work an amazing hour.

The zone isn't a new concept. From sports to work to studying to recreational activities, the zone is a well-known and studied phenomenon.

What you'll learn in this ebook are the tactics—exactly what to do—to get in the zone, have the stamina, energy, and focus to stay in the zone, and, should you fall out of the zone, how to get your focus back.

The Productivity Code Model

The Extremely Productive (The XP) use the 3 Keys and 9 Habits to drive durable extreme productivity. The chart below shows how they fit together.



Key #1: Manufacture Motivation

Historically, motivation has been thought of as something intrinsic: you have it or you don't. Recent studies, however, indicate that motivation is less an innate, immutable attribute and more like a skill: something that can be learned, practiced, and strengthened."²

Motivation Definition

Internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role, or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal.³

Habit 1: Recruit Your Drive

Have you ever felt like you're not driven? It turns out you can manufacture your own motivation. Drive is in there somewhere. You can recruit it, mobilize it, and bring it forth—if you know how.

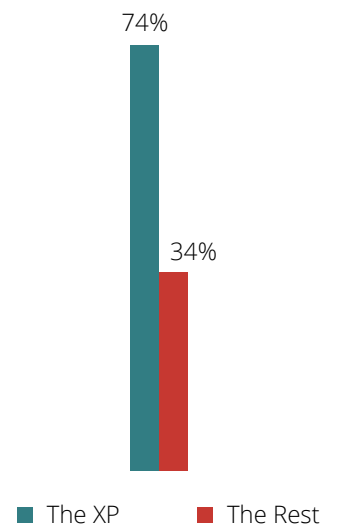
The XP know how. They're more than twice as likely to be very driven compared to The Rest.

Habit 1: Recruit Your Drive is positively correlated with productivity AND a key driver of productivity. It's also among the widest percentage-point differences between The XP and The Rest.

The XP largely weren't born driven. Either their passion develops on its own or they adopt certain habits to *develop passion*.

They recruit their drive.

I AM VERY DRIVEN
% STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE



Hack #1: Choose Your New Reality

Don't you hate when it feels like you have to do something versus choosing to do it? Slogging through a task someone else decides you should do, or doing something that feels mandatory, is deflating.

Often this is because what you're doing doesn't feel meaningful. It doesn't feel like what you're doing will get you where you want to go. Even if it will, if you perceive it as being from someone else's agenda, you don't have psychological ownership over it.⁴

It's their task, not your task, so the odds you attack it with passion and intensity are low. (If you've ever seen a seller be told to prospect versus deciding himself to prospect, you get the idea.) How we think about the origin of any task makes a tremendous difference in how motivated we feel to do it.

An analysis of 41 different studies on the effect of choice on motivation found that "choice enhanced intrinsic motivation, effort, task performance, and perceived competence."⁵

The reasons? Choice makes the task meaningful and maximizes psychological ownership of getting it done and done well.

If you want to make work (or any task) meaningful to you, you need to first choose your New Reality. A New Reality is the place you'll be when things change for the better. It's your desired future state. It's your measurable change in status.

If you're happy with the status quo, you don't need to do anything differently. But if you want something else—to be in a different place than you are now—you need to define that different place clearly.

You need to know where you're headed. This will give you the "why" of what you're doing. If you're connected to the "why" of what you're doing, you can bear almost any "what."

Once you know your New Reality, write it down. Having studied over 450,000 sales people, researchers found 82% of the top 10% in sales performance have written goals. Of the bottom 10%, only 34% do.⁶

Hack #2: Plan Actions Weekly

After you've written your goals, build a specific action plan to achieve them.

A study in the *Harvard Business Review* focused on what most motivated sales people.⁷ They looked at four factors:

1. **Task clarity:** Whether people knew very specifically what to do with their time
2. **Intrinsic factors:** Whether people came to the job naturally highly motivated
3. **Compensation and incentives:** How and how much people were paid
4. **Management:** Whether supervisors could fire up their teams

The most motivating factor they found?

Task clarity.

When you know your goals (your New Reality) and connect them to your actions, those actions are meaningful. They feel less like drudgery even if they're the same actions that drained you in the past. When you choose where you want to go, the actions you need to take to get there also become your choice.

If you want task clarity (and you do), the best path forward is to plan your actions weekly. A strong focus on weekly actions—just 20 minutes a week planning them—will focus what you do and help you feel motivated to do it.

Hack #3: Track Progress Weekly

Finally, don't just plan your actions weekly, track them weekly with someone else.

Researchers at Dominican University studied workplace achievement of objectives set in four-week blocks.⁸

One group didn't track their objectives weekly or share their results with a partner. Only 43% of them achieved those objectives.

Another group wrote their objectives and tracked them weekly with a colleague. Seventy-six percent of them achieved their objectives—almost double the success.

Planning actions and tracking them with an accountability partner (even better, with an iron-clad commitment contract—see page 34), is a powerful force in recruiting your drive.

Hacks to Recruit Your Drive

- Choose your New Reality
- Plan actions weekly
- Track progress weekly with an accountability partner

Habit 2: Ignite Your Proactivity

Getting started on hard tasks is hard. Once you start, it's much easier to keep going.

The energy drink market is predicted to be \$84 billion by 2025.⁹ Why do people drink energy drinks? Because they're the best way to hydrate? Because everyone knows how healthy they are? Because they taste oh so good?

No. People choke down energy drinks so they can do things.

Getting started is hard. For most people, an energy drink is a catalyst. It helps them get going.

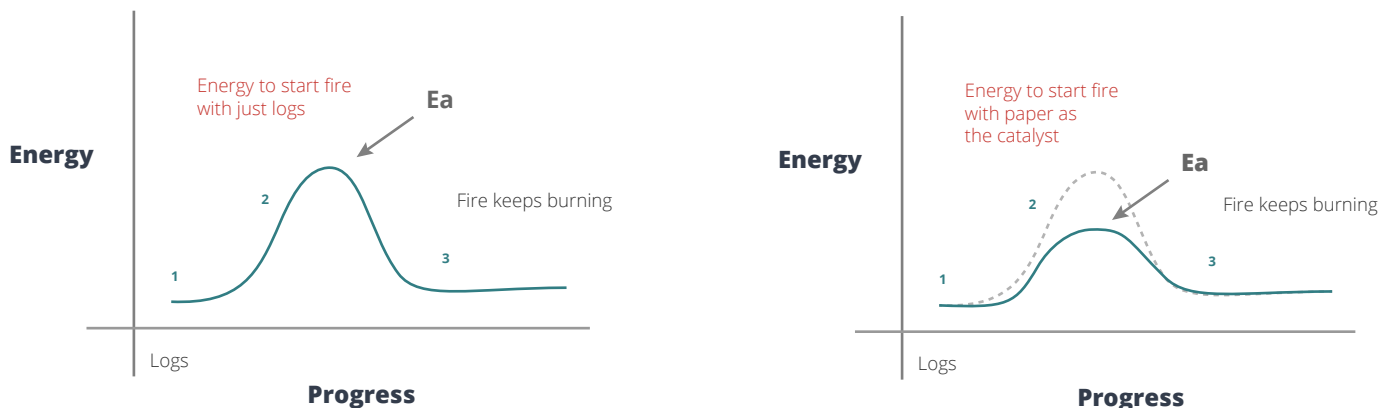
Chemical reactions operate the same way.

Let's say you want to cozy up to the fire in the evening with your General Foods International Coffee and a nice Nora Roberts novel. First order of business: light your fire.

So you put on some logs and take a flamethrower to your fireplace. Right?

That would do the trick, but that's a lot of energy and expense to light a fire. On the other hand, lighting one match under a log isn't enough to do the trick.

However, put some dry paper under the logs and light the paper, and the logs will shortly catch fire and then burn for quite some time.



The paper is the catalyst that helps start the fire. Once it's started, it'll keep burning without requiring much energy.

A catalyst lowers activation energy requirements. It works in chemistry, and it also works with human behavior.

Twenty percent of people are chronic procrastinators.¹⁰ These folks even have a name: procs (rhymes with Crocs). Everyone is a periodic procrastinator. This is because something we want to do or know we need to do seems difficult and requires a lot of energy, so we avoid it.

We've identified three catalysts that can help you get started on important tasks by lowering the activation energy perception and actual requirements. Try them and you'll ignite your proactivity.

20% of people are chronic procrastinators. Everyone is a periodic procrastinator.

Hack #1: Calendar Your Investment Time

A study in the *British Journal of Health Psychology* analyzed the results of people who committed to the following:

During the next week, I will partake in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise on [DAY] at [TIME OF DAY] at/in [PLACE].

Group 1 committed to “keep track” of whether they exercised.

Group 2 committed to “keep track and read a pamphlet on the benefits of exercise.”

Group 3 committed to “keep track, read a pamphlet, and make a plan for when and where to exercise.”

In Group 1 (the control group), 38% of people exercised at least once per week. Group 2 (the motivation group) exercised weekly at a rate of 35%. Group 3 (the intention group) exercised weekly at a whopping rate of 91%.

These results have been proven time and again in different psychological studies and through our own work with clients. Further, our research shows The XP are 2.7 times more likely than The Rest to block off time in their calendar every week to work on their greatest impact activities that will drive the best results. We know this:

If you put it on your calendar, you’re much more likely to do it.

Not everything should go on your calendar, just the important things: the areas where you want to invest your time that will get you outsized return in the form of achieving your goals.

For example, if you’re in sales you might need to prospect. See in the example calendar that prospecting time is noted on Monday. Prospecting could also be your GIA (see page 22) and your other Investment time (see page 19). Or it could be working on strategizing for account growth or winning a big opportunity.

▶ **June 24 - 30** | Washington, D.C. • Today 35°F/32°F • Tomorrow 42°F/31°F • Friday 42°F/30°F

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8AM		Greatest Impact Activity Sprinting	Greatest Impact Activity Sprinting	Greatest Impact Activity Sprinting	Greatest Impact Activity Sprinting	Greatest Impact Activity Sprinting	
9							
10							
11		Daily Huddle	Sales Meeting	Daily Huddle	Daily Huddle	Daily Huddle	
12PM							
1		Prospecting Sprinting		Strategy Time Sprinting		Accountability Check In Action Plan Next Week	
2		Meeting with coach	Strategy Time Sprinting		Strategy Time Sprinting		
3							
4							
5		Work out		Work out			Work out

Hack #2: Talk to Yourself

The United States Navy’s Sea, Air and Land Teams, known more commonly as Navy SEALs, are universally renowned as an elite military unit.

In the early 2000s, the military needed more SEALs, but also needed to keep the elite standards for whom they admitted to the program. They were afraid, however, too few would pass the required tests.

To maximize SEAL candidate success, the military developed a mental toughness program in which candidates learned essential skills. One such skill was positive self-talk.

Passing rates for new SEAL recruits improved from 25% to a third, a 32% increase in passing rates.¹¹ If it works for the SEALs, it can work for you.

The average person says between 300 and 1,000 words to himself every minute and this inner voice can be a harsh critic.¹²

What you're trying to change are self-limiting beliefs; anything you say to yourself that limits you.

For example, you might believe:

- I can't get up early to exercise
- I'm terrible at leading sales meetings
- I'm not good at big-picture strategy and I won't be
- I can't concentrate with all the distractions
- If I try it, it won't work
- I'll never dig out of the pile so I can't be proactive

This turns into negative self-talk. To change the belief, change how you talk to yourself.

Think about some of the ways your self-talk is holding you back and preventing you from being proactive, from just getting started. Here are some examples of negative self-talk and how you can flip those thoughts into positive messages.

Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
I can't get up early to exercise.	Steve, you can set your alarm tonight one hour earlier to exercise.
I'm terrible at leading sales meetings.	Mary, you need to learn what a great sales meeting looks like; then you can learn to lead one.
I'm not good at this and won't ever be.	Jeff, you're not good at it yet, but you can learn and get there.
I can't concentrate with all the distractions.	Emma, other people can tune out distractions, so can you; you just need to research how...
If I try it, it won't work.	Dave, you tried it, and it hasn't worked, but you can learn to make it work.
I don't get this idea—I'm an idiot.	Jeanette, you don't understand this right now, but you can figure it out.
I'll never dig out of the pile on my desk, so I can't be proactive.	Andy, you haven't been able to dig out yet, but you can do it if you get help to manage your time and learn to say no.

In the positive examples, you're referring to yourself in the third person. That's because research has shown that third-person self-talk increases people's ability to control their thoughts, feelings, and behavior under stress, and is a relatively effortless form of self-control.¹³

As you might imagine, The XP are much more likely than The Rest to practice positive self-talk; 2.4 times more likely to be exact. Moreover, the happiest people are 2.3 times more likely to use this hack, as well.

Regarding proactivity, positive self-talk goes one step further.

If you think you can't, you won't even bother to start. And if you think you can, you're more likely to get to it.

Hack #3: Say, "3...2...1...Go!"

Positive self-talk can get you in a success mindset. There is, however, a different kind of self-talk that'll help you get started on important activities. We call it **Rapid Activation Talk**.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio studies the impact of rational and emotional decision making on people's behavior.¹⁴ He states that the "gut reaction" part of your brain has to be activated in the right way if you want to do something that otherwise would seem emotionally difficult.

It's not enough to have the logic; you have to have the right emotion to get started.

People tell themselves they should work out right now all the time, then don't. That's because the thinking part of their brain quickly becomes overruled by the feeling part of their brain.

Here's what happens: you think, "I should work out right now," or, "I should brainstorm strategies to drive account growth for the next hour." Then, seconds later, the emotional center of your brain tries to sabotage you. "This is hard. I don't feel ready. I can do it later (you won't). Something else—like skimming Facebook or checking email—is more important (it isn't)."

In order to pre-empt the feeling part of the brain from shutting you down, you need to head it off at the pass, and you only have a few seconds to do it.

Rapid Activation Talk is the solution. All you have to do—like any school-aged child ready to start everyone racing—is say, "3...2...1...Go!" and immediately get started. There are various ways to practice Rapid Activation Talk. It's worked well for so many people that there's a whole book dedicated to it.¹⁵

For all the various researchers and authors who have their versions of Rapid Activation Talk, the point is universally the same: you have a short amount of time to get started before your brain tells you "that's too hard."

Hacks to Ignite Your Proactivity:

- Calendar Investment Time
- Talk to yourself
- Say, "3...2...1...Go!"

Habit 3: Reengineer Your Habits

You have to do things differently, and do different things, if you want different results.

One of my many productivity killers was losing the first hour of the day to aimless internet browsing. I (Mike) didn't do it every day, but it was certainly a tendency. I'd sit at my desk, turn on my computer, and while my email was firing up, I'd open a web browser and start reading the news.

Next thing I knew, an hour had disappeared.

It was a habit I had to break.

If you want to do something—anything—differently in your routine, you have to understand habits and how to change them.

In fact, having productive habits is the factor that represents the largest difference between The Extremely Productive and The Rest.

Nearly two-thirds of The XP agree that their work habits contribute significantly to their productivity. The Rest? Only 12%. It's also one of the key drivers of productivity.

Too bad you can't teach an old dog new tricks, right?

Wrong! You can change even the most embedded of habits if you know how. Many pundits overcomplicate habit change, or miss crucial elements that limit the effectiveness of their advice.

Our own research and client work have led us to believe that the common habit theories are incomplete. We need better and different words to guide us to choose and adopt new behavioral tendencies if we want to get up and hit the gym at 5:05 am.

Here are three hacks to help you reengineer your habits.

Thought: The Missing Link in the Habit Loop

The 4 Elements of Habit



We believe habits are composed of the following four elements, not three:

1. **Trigger:** Something happens that cues a sequence of actions you usually do. For example, your phone buzzes in your pocket.
2. **Thought:** The cue triggers a thought, even if it's fast or subconscious. The thought might be, "I should reach into my pocket now to check the message."
3. **Response:** Following the thought, you take action. Your hand goes into your pocket and takes the phone. You check the message.
4. **Reward:** This is your gain or payoff. "Oh great. That report I'm waiting for is in. I'll stop what I'm doing and take a look."

If you want to change this or any habit:

- Change the trigger
- Change your thought
- Change your response (of course, this is the key goal)
- Change and clarify the reward

Hack #1: Say, “When I, Then I. Will I?”

In one study, researchers noted epilepsy sufferers had trouble remembering to take their medications on time.¹⁶ In fact, before intervention, they only did so 55% of the time.

Then researchers asked them to make a “When I, Then I” statement, such as, “When it’s eight o’clock in the morning and I’ve finished brushing my teeth, then I will take my prescribed medication.”

Those who made the statement increased their compliance taking their meds to 79%.

This worked for me. It’s how I broke my morning mindless internet browsing habit. I said, “When I turn my computer on in the morning, then I will focus immediately on my Greatest Impact Activity for the day, not reading news stories.”

Habit broken.

Note that “When I” calls attention to the trigger, which is, in this case, turning on my computer. The “Then I” statement introduces the thought of what I should be doing versus something else, making the thought conscious, and directing my response where I choose.

Thoughts act as a cognitive wedge in the behavior. You prompt a decision where before it felt like there was none: do what you have typically done in the past, or do something else you’ve architected in advance to achieve a new kind of reward?

This is what The XP do. They’re 3.2 times more likely than The Rest to plan in advance how they’ll respond to triggers that impact their productivity.

Choosing to focus on our Greatest Impact Activity (GIA) helps us achieve the long-term reward of career success we seek, not the short-term reward of seeing who won the game.

Greatest Impact Activity (GIA) Definition

The one activity that, should you do it consistently at high quality, will get you the greatest eventual return on your time investment.

It’s not, however, just about saying, “When I, Then I.” You must ask yourself, “Will I?”

People who tell themselves to do something (e.g., “When I, Then I”) don’t do it as often as those who ask themselves if they’ll do it.¹⁷

They both work, however, so use them together. Define your “When I, Then I” statements so you know what you want to do when. Then, for the most important of your desired actions, ask, “Will I?” in the morning. You then give yourself the best chance of actually doing it.

Response and Reward Affect Thought

The more often you respond a certain way to a trigger (e.g., working out when you wake up), the easier it is to do it. At first you have to fight to do a new behavior, which feels like a big tax on your brain. Do that behavior every day for 100 days, however, and doing it the 101st day is easier and requires less thought. There’s even a name for this phenomenon: automaticity.¹⁸ It’s not actually automatic, but it feels automatic.

When it feels automatic, what you’ve done is changed the thought that precedes the response.

Reward affects thought, too. Know you’re charging towards a meaningful goal (which is your reward), and you’ll think differently about a task that’ll help you get there. Give yourself an explicit reward (e.g., take your favorite stroll along the river if you achieve your daily work target by 3 p.m.) and you’ll think differently about what you do all day.

For example, you might say, “When I turn on my computer in the morning, then I will get right to work and not read news stories.” If this is a critical habit for you to change, ask yourself in the morning, “Will I actually focus on my GIA and avoid the news stories when I start to work?”

Adding “Will I?” to “When I, Then I” makes the practice that much more powerful.

Hack #2: Change Your Environment

Our environment affects our behavior in two major ways:

1. When we’re in a particular place, we tend to do (or not do) specific things.
2. How the environment is designed drives us to do some things and not others.

I (Mike) don’t like to write at the office. When I’m there, my brain is in grow-the-company mode.

Quality management, product development, marketing, sales, global expansion. These are great investment areas for me, but they’re not writing.

The office environment is a trigger itself. Consciously or subconsciously, it affects my thinking. Which affects my responses.

When I want to write, I go someplace else.

The other way we can change our environment is to be in the same place, but change conditions.

I’m working on losing weight.

Do you think it would be a good idea to have a piece of chocolate fudge cake and a box of chocolate chip cookies on my desk?

Open?

Fresh-baked and warm?

With vanilla ice cream ready to be scooped on both?

Probably not. I wouldn’t make it 15 minutes—never mind a day, a week, a month—without giving in.

Many of us want to be less distracted by our phones at work. Phones are the chocolate fudge cake of distraction.

Why, then, do we leave them on our desks, right in front of us, when we work?

Turn it off and put it in a drawer—better yet, in another room—and you might just find it out-of-sight, out-of-mind.

Noise, music, clutter, phones, browsers, inboxes, chair, computing environment, door-open-or-closed... the list goes on. All these environmental factors affect your productivity one way or another.

35% Productivity Increases with Multiple Screens

Research conducted by Fujitsu Siemens Computers found that workspaces equipped with three-screen displays increase productivity by 35.5%.¹⁹ Small changes to your environment can make a big difference.

The idea behind all of them, however, is the same. Change your environment to change your habits.

As you might expect, The XP are tuned in to their environments, designing them for maximum personal productivity. More than half of The XP organize their work environments to maximize their productivity, while fewer than one in five of The Rest do.

Follow the lead of The XP and adjust those environmental factors contributing to your motivation that are within your control.

Hack #3: Make Your Morning Routine Sacred

A keystone habit of extremely productive people is to have a consistent morning routine that starts the day off right. More than half of The XP have a morning routine that gets them off to a productive start each day, as opposed to just one in four of The Rest. Many people have told us our 5-Step Extreme Productivity Morning Routine has been the productivity hack that has made all the difference for them. Here it is:

1. **Read your objectives.** Know what you want to do this quarter, month, and week. The best practice is to have these objectives listed right above your action plan or to-do list so you're forced to look at them every day. You can keep your longer-term goals there, too. This will help keep you grounded and focused on what's most important.
2. **Ask, "How's my mindset?"** If it's not good, you won't be productive.²⁰ Too many people dive into work in a bad mood, then have bad days. If you can catch yourself early in the day, the simple fact of recognizing that you're not in the best mood is often all you need to shake off negative energy and have a more productive day.
3. **Ask "Will I?" for critical tasks.** You know what you need to do. After all, it's right there on your action plan for the week. But sometimes people don't do what they tell themselves to do. Ask yourself if you'll do it, and there's a significantly higher chance you will.²¹
4. **Ask, "How will I be better than yesterday?"** Ask yourself how you can be better than you were yesterday. What should you do better? Then give yourself one, and only one, piece of advice to be—you guessed it—better than yesterday.
5. **Start with your GIA (Greatest Impact Activity).** Identify your GIA for the day and begin immediately on that. The XP are 4 times more likely than The Rest to begin work every day on the activity that'll contribute most to their overall success. If you must check messages in the morning, question which items—if any—require a response. By questioning and challenging yourself to change what you can, you can potentially save hours.

Hacks to Reengineer Your Habits:

- Say "When I, Then I. Will I?"
- Change your environment
- Make your morning routine sacred

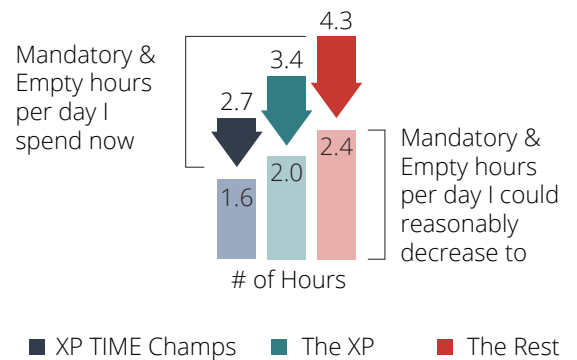
Key #2: Control Your TIME

Our productivity research shows most people spend an average of 4.3 hours per workday on Empty (wasted) and Mandatory (could be delegated or simply not done) activities. That's about half of every workday down the productivity drain.

Productivity has long been seen primarily as a time-management challenge. Learn certain hacks and organize your to-do list the right way, and you'll get more done. This is true to an extent, but there's so much more. With the right mindset and tools, you can completely redefine how you spend your time.

In the first key, Manufacture Motivation, we covered the preconditions (your *what* and your *why*) for spending your time productively. In this second key, Control Your TIME, we'll help you see where your time goes now and figure out how to choose what to do and what not to do.

NON-VALUE ADD (MANDATORY/EMPTY) TIME
HOURS SPENT PER WORK DAY



Habit 4: Obsess Over TIME

Most time management systems are too complex. Do (and don't do) a few simple things and you can reclaim significant lost time, then spend that time the way you want.

Almost everyone at some point in their career will toy with adopting some kind of time-management system. Few stick with it. The challenge is that many time-management systems focus too deeply on the activity level—what to do first, what to do next, what the priority order is—without paying enough attention to the bigger picture.

At RAIN Group, we find it instructive to think of time in the following four levels:

1. **Treasured**
2. **Investment**
3. **Mandatory**
4. **Empty**

How you define activities within the TIME framework is deeply personal. It's also dynamic; it changes depending on where you are and what you need in the moment.

Time is finite. If you're spending it on one thing, you're not spending it on another. Extremely productive people accumulate time in the Treasured and Investment categories, and proactively fight dwelling in the Mandatory and Empty zones.

If you want to be most productive, you shouldn't just make time management a priority; you must obsess over TIME.

Where does obsessing over TIME start? With understanding it, tracking how you spend it, and choosing how you should spend it.

Hack #1: Take T, Increase I, Minimize M, Eliminate E

The 4 Levels of TIME		
Level	Description	Action
Level 4: Treasured	Time you hold dear	Take some now, maximize for future
Level 3: Investment	Time that generates outsized return	Increase: prioritize, calendar, maximize
Level 2: Mandatory	Time you feel you must spend	Minimize/outsource
Level 1: Empty	Time you waste	Eliminate/minimize

Take T: Treasured time is time you hold dear. This is where we all want to get. For different people it means different things. Common examples include:

- Quality time with loved ones
- Vacation with friends and family
- Alone time
- Sports and games
- Work
- Hobbies
- Community service
- Your favorite TV show

If you spend the rest of your time wisely, you'll find yourself with more time available for Treasured activities. Make enough money and you can retire early and do what you want. Build the right work habits and you'll get more done in fewer hours, giving you more Treasured time every day.

Whatever Treasured time looks like for you, if you spend the other categories of your time wisely, you'll find yourself with more time available to treasure. The XP, in fact, are twice as likely as The Rest to say, "I regularly devote the right amount of time for me to do activities I treasure."

The key to maximizing happiness and fulfillment is taking Treasured time.

Increase I: Investment time is the time you focus on becoming more effective, getting the right things done, and achieving top performance. You get an outsized return on your Investment time as it pays dividends to gain skills and knowledge, accumulate experience, and drive priority initiatives forward. Investment time can also be personal, such as Investing in exercise, that can affect your happiness and professional success.

How can you use your time today to achieve your longer-term goals? You need to align your mid- and short-term priorities and spend your hours and days deliberately to help you get there. As our research reveals, maximizing Investment time is the #3 key driver of Extreme Productivity. The XP report devoting 46% more Investment time per day than The Rest.

The key to success and achieving top performance is increasing Investment time.

Minimize M: Mandatory time is time spent doing things you feel you must do (even if, in reality, you don't). Commuting to work, shaving, mowing the lawn, paying bills, filling out expense reports, proofreading your proposals, printing and binding presentation material, etc. All are possible examples of Mandatory time.

The key to success and achieving top performance is maximizing Investment time.

Note that “feels like” is not “must.” You can minimize Mandatory time by turning it into Investment time, such as listening to business books while you drive. You can also turn it into Treasured time by listening to books you enjoy, so you free up an hour in the evening to do something else. You can move closer to where you work and minimize the commute or try to work from home.

You can choose to delegate Mandatory activities by hiring a landscaper to mow the lawn, using a delivery service for your groceries, having your laundry done at a fluff and fold, or outsourcing the proofreading of your proposals to others.

And you can actually reduce Mandatory time by questioning the activity itself. Does this need to be done at all? Does this need to be done by me?

In fact, minimizing and outsourcing Mandatory time makes you happier.²²

Is this just a strategy for the rich? Not at all. People benefit from buying time regardless of where they fall on the income spectrum. Don't rule this out as an option.

Our own productivity research confirms the relationship between happiness and spending less time on Mandatory and Empty activities: the median time the happiest people spent on Mandatory and Empty activities was three hours per day compared to four hours for everyone else.

Lest you think that's not a big difference, going from four hours to three hours is a 25% reduction. Think of it another way: how would you feel if your income went up 25% overnight? Or you lost 25% of your weight? 25% is a lot.

The key to Mandatory time is minimizing or converting it into Treasured or Investment time.

Eliminate E: Empty time is precisely as it sounds: time spent, nothing gained. At least with Mandatory time, if you need to spend 30 minutes to get a haircut, your hair gets cut. If you're just flipping through Facebook, watching YouTube videos, or reading *Us Weekly*, you're simply letting time pass.

Now, it's quite possible you treasure this time. If that's the case, groovy. But most people prefer to decrease the time they spend watching TV, playing games on the internet, scrolling through Facebook, or puttering around the house aimlessly.²³

We all need some Empty time. Doing nothing or being mindless is important for recharging. We all need brain rest. However, most people want to reallocate a good chunk of Empty time to better use.

The key to Empty time is to eliminate as much of it as you can.

Extremely productive people accumulate Treasured and Investment time, and avoid dwelling in the Mandatory and Empty time zones.

Yet even the most productive of us struggle with this; more than one-third of The XP admit they spend a significant amount of time during a typical workday on Mandatory and Empty activities compared to nearly half of The Rest.

Hack #2: Track Your TIME

If you're like most people, changing your Mandatory and Empty time habits will be hard. Delegating, eliminating, or minimizing your Mandatory and Empty time means changing habits.

Where people tend to spend their time on any given day is a reflection of how they're likely to spend time for months and years to come. Time is a habit. If you want to be extremely productive, you first have to understand how you spend your time.

Tracking your time is the best place to start.

The key to professional success is increasing your Investment time. When you do, you'll eventually gain the financial freedom and independence to enjoy more Treasured time and do what you want.

Manage your TIME:

Take **T**reasured

Increase **I**nterest

Minimize **M**andatory

Eliminate **E**rrand

To get started right now, keep a time log. This might sound boring. Who wants to spend time all day recording what they do, for how long, and what TIME level it falls under?

What's not boring is what you'll see, and how you'll feel, after you log your minutes meticulously for a few days. The reality is it doesn't take long, it's Investment time, and it works.

It's similar to keeping a food journal. According to a Kaiser Permanente study of 1,700 people, "those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records."²⁴

Keep a time log now for just two days as you currently spend your time. Change how you spend it later. There's no doubt: if you want to optimize your time, you have to know where you're spending it. Know where your time goes and you'll find more of it.

To track your TIME:

1. Set TIME and activity goals

When you know what you want to accomplish in a given day, you can define activities that will get you there. We call these your Greatest Impact Activities (GIAs). Let's say you're in sales and you need to fill your pipeline. Your objective today is to generate one meeting with a potential buyer. You can set your GIA goal as, "spend at least four hours obsessively prospecting with no distractions."

When it comes to time tracking, focus on activity over outcomes. You can control that you spend X number of hours concentrating on a specific activity, but you can't necessarily control the outcome which, in this case, is how many meetings you set.

2. Track activity and TIME level

When tracking, always note your activity (e.g., tech support) and your category (e.g., Mandatory). Time tracking software and apps (see #3) will allow you to do this fairly easily. By tracking both, you can see what you're actually spending your time on, and you'll be able to make conscious decisions on how to minimize Mandatory and Empty time and maximize Investment and Treasured time. In the words of Peter Drucker, "What gets measured gets managed."

3. Use technology and timers best suited to you

Absolutely use timers. You can use everything from a stopwatch on a watch, phone or desk, an online timer of which there are many, or those built into software like Toggl, RescueTime, TimeCamp, MyHours, or ATracker.

If time tracking software isn't your thing, you can use a simple timer, and track your time in Excel, Word, a physical notebook, or a note-taking technology like Notes on your phone, Evernote, or OneNote.

The method you use doesn't matter; what matters is that you are tracking your activities and TIME categories.

4. Track in periodic, obsessed daily chunks

It's impractical to track your time meticulously every single day. Start with a two-day tracking experiment.

Don't ballpark your time tracking. Recording estimates at the end of the day—"three hours prospecting, two hours meetings, one-and-a-half hours meals and breaks, two hours TV"—is anywhere from a little to extremely inaccurate. People tend to grossly overestimate the time they spend doing anything at work when looking back at activities. *Record the actual minutes.*

Your obsessed tracking days should be the work days or non-work days for which you want to 1) understand where your time really goes using timers and tracking in real time, and 2) focus on changing your time habits.

Don't target zero Empty or Mandatory time. You can't get to zero, and you don't want to. Human brains need down time. But after watching a favorite TV show to unwind, did you really feel good about watching the second, third, or fourth?

In the words of Peter Drucker, "What gets measured gets managed."

Choose periodic days to track obsessively. Make it a priority and track in real-time to the minute.

Fun fact: the average adult underestimates the amount of time they spend watching TV by one full hour per day.²⁵ Most adults actually watch 30 hours of TV per week—an average of a whopping 4.3 hours a day!—but they think they watch closer to 20 hours a week.

The sooner you figure out where your time is going, the sooner you can start maximizing time spent on what's actually important to you.

Hack #3: Put Your GIA First

During each day, you expend energy. Energy is a renewable resource, but as you're using it, you lose it. If you spend two hours plowing through email, taking care of Mandatory items, or putting out fires, your tank is no longer full.

What should you do? Put your Greatest Impact Activity (GIA) first.

When you work on your GIA first, you start with a full tank.

The body of research suggesting that energy, memory, concentration, and analytical skills are better in the morning for most people is indisputable. For instance, based on a study of two million students in Los Angeles County, researchers found math and English GPAs are higher when students take those classes in the morning versus the afternoon.²⁶ Other studies show task completion accuracy and speed are better in the morning.²⁷ Alertness is better in the morning, too (though with a burst in the evening).²⁸ Doctors diagnose better, and get better surgical results, in the morning, and people's logic is better then, too.^{29 30}

So, if you have something important to do, odds are you want to do it first thing in the morning. The XP do this. Almost half of The XP put their GIA first, but only a little more than one in ten of The Rest do.

While morning is better for most people's energy and concentration, for some people it's better in the afternoon, evenings, or late at night. If this is you, put your GIA at that other time.

That is, if you think you'll definitely get to it and not push it off for another day.

Hacks to Obsess Over TIME:

- Take T, Increase I, Minimize M, Eliminate E
- Track your TIME
- Put your greatest impact activity (GIA) first

Habit 5: Say No

One word will set you free.

Saying no is about boundaries. It's looking at what's really important to you (look back to your goals in Habit 1: Recruit Your Drive), then aligning your time to those things (Habit 4: Obsess Over Time), and setting boundaries around them (right here in Habit 5: Say No).

What should you say no to? Anything that doesn't align with your goals. It's that simple.

- A colleague asks you to join a meeting because they'd value your opinion at the end.
- Your to-do list has 32 items on it and they're all important to one degree or another.

- Your boss came by for the third time today, this time for a status report update since the one he got two days ago.
- An employee of yours is stuck on a problem and asks you to take over on a part they're not sure about.
- You get a satisfaction survey from the health insurance company about your recent doctor visit.
- A potential client reaches out and wants to talk, but you're pretty sure they won't be a good client even if you win them.

Anything here can drain your time and your ability to take the Investment actions you need to achieve your goals. It's hard to do the thing you know you should when other things and people try to pull you away.

Don't let them. Say, "No."

You might read this list and think, "I'm a good team player. I shouldn't say no to my colleague." "I shouldn't say no to taking a meeting with a potential buyer even if they may not be a good fit."

But are you sure? Sure you shouldn't say no?

With your colleague, do you really need to go to the meeting for an hour? Why not ask them to take a five-minute walk with you and summarize the meeting? Maybe they can brief you during an upcoming commute instead.

Hour saved.

Hack #1: Keep a To-Don't List

One of the characteristic behaviors of The XP is maintaining an active "no" list, so they know which activities to avoid. Compared to The Rest, they're 5.5 times more likely to do this.

Be brutal with your priority list. If you have 32 priorities, you have none. Get a colleague or coach to help you be brutal and say "no" to the lower priority priorities.

You don't have to lose them altogether. That's mentally taxing.

Create a to-don't list. We all have to-do lists. We all need to-don't lists. Items on your to-don't list can be temporary or permanent. You can think of your to-don't list as a parking lot for ideas that aren't topping the priority list now. It may not be no forever. It's no for now. Or it may be something that looked like it could be a priority, but after vetting you know it won't yield a good enough return. This one is a no unless something changes.

When it's time for a new priority, with your handy to-don't list, you have a menu of ideas to get you going. The next top priority might just be one you said no to previously. Or it might be something new. In any case, keep a to-don't list so you can know what you're *not* going to focus on.

Hack #2: Do Less. If It's Not Gung Ho, It's No

For your Investment activities, if you're not fully enthusiastic about doing it and the return it'll get you, say no. Don't do it.

Also, even if you're gung ho about more than one priority, trying to do too many will kill them all.

Most people have too many concurrent priorities. As outlined in the article "The Art of Strategy is Knowing When to Say No," Brian Halligan, founder and CEO of HubSpot, really wanted to expand into Europe.³¹ However, he knew he couldn't do it well until he finished changing the company's go-to-market focus. It pained him to say no to Europe (for now) and put it on hold, but he did. A year later, he put Europe back in motion and succeeded.

If you have simultaneous priorities, ask yourself, are they all getting done to your satisfaction? Do you have too many goals, too many objectives, too many projects going at once?

Be brutal about paring the list down. You don't have to delete the priority; you can move it to your to-don't list under the heading, "No for Now."

Then you can focus on the top priorities; the few that will get you the greatest return. The ones that are right for this moment. With each of your priorities, ask yourself if you're gung ho about it. Remember, if it's not gung ho, it's no. This is the best test for deciding whether a priority should remain a priority.

And if you have more than a handful of gung-ho priorities, you still need to prioritize. Then move as many as you can to the "No for Now" list.

Do less. If it's not gung ho, it's no.

Solid advice for all of us.

Hack #3: Practice Saying No

What if you're not naturally assertive? If saying no is a real challenge for you? Happily, with time and effort, you can learn to set boundaries.

Something that can help all of us who legitimately struggle here is to practice saying no. As therapist Darlene Lancer, author of *How to Speak Your Mind: Become Assertive and Set Limits*, writes, "Once you get practice setting boundaries, you feel empowered and suffer less anxiety, resentment, and guilt. Generally, you receive more respect from others and your relationships improve."³²

Here are six ways you can practice saying no:

1. **Low-stake scenarios:** Practice saying no in small, unimportant situations, such as not giving your email address to a retail store clerk when they ask.
2. **Try this at home:** Stand in front of a mirror. Stand tall, smile, and say in a pleasant voice, "No, I can't do that right now."
3. **Take time to breathe:** Stop and breathe for a few seconds before saying yes to anything so you can give yourself a moment to assess your own needs.
4. **Write it down:** How do you want the situation to play out? Write what you'll say, such as, "Thanks for thinking of me, but I'm sorry I have to decline."
5. **Follow your gut:** Look down and ask your gut if it wants to say yes. If it's telling you to say no, listen to it.
6. **Fallout analysis:** How bad will it be if you say no? Take a moment to consider whether this is truly a make-or-break moment. Usually, if you say no, nothing bad happens.

You may also find that working with a trusted coach or accountability partner can help you overcome this challenge by exploring options and practicing your "say no" responses. Don't be discouraged if it takes some effort. It's worth it and you're worth it.

The big point about saying no? It's difficult. It's emotional. But it's necessary if you want to focus on your priorities and not other people's.

Hacks to Say No:

- Keep a to-don't list
- Do less: if it's not gung ho, it's no
- Practice saying no

Habit 6: Play Hard to Get

Be impossible to distract.

Ever hear of Nir Eyal? (Most haven't.) He wrote a book titled *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*. You know who has heard of him? Everyone at every technology, gaming, and social media company trying to get you addicted to their products.

They do it well.

Two decades ago when I (Mike) started working, I was selling. Prospecting. It was just me, a phone on my desk, and a ticking clock. Now we all have email, texting, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, multiple phones, YouTube, and everything we could ever read always available on the internet on our desks and in our pockets.

Deloitte, one of the Big Four accounting firms, conducted a study in 2017 that revealed people check their phones 47 times a day.³³ People aged 18 to 24 actually check them 86 times per day. We have messages coming at us all day, and we're checking to see what we might have missed constantly. We are living in a world of ever-increasing distraction.

Think this has no effect?

- People are distracted every 11 minutes.³⁴
- Interruptions make you 20% dumber.³⁵
- Even three-second distractions double workplace errors.³⁶
- When people get disrupted, it takes on average 23 minutes and 15 seconds to get back to task.³⁷
- After only 20 minutes of interrupted performance, people reported significantly higher stress, frustration, workload, effort, and pressure.³⁸

Distraction is bad, and it's getting worse. (Thanks, Nir.) This is one of the reasons we use strong words in The Productivity Code like "obsess over TIME." Most of us have phone, computer, media, and general habits that allow us to be distracted constantly. We don't think much about constant interruption and rapid task switching, but it's killing our productivity.³⁹

Perhaps you're the exception. They do exist. They're called The XP and they're nearly 4 times more likely to say, "I don't allow myself to be distracted by people or technology when I'm trying to concentrate."

And it's no accident. They deliberately make it difficult for people to interrupt them when they're concentrating by playing hard to get.

Our advice here is simple, powerful, effective, and (emotionally) difficult to do.

Play hard to get. Be impossible to distract.

Hack #1: Be Free From the Shackles of Alerts

Turn off all your alerts. With alerts on (ding, buzz, ring), there's no way to avoid constant distraction. Alerts are shackles.

When email first arrived on the scene, alerts were helpful. Our email would ding, and we'd know to check our inbox. In the beginning, alerts were just a small and infrequent distraction. But now we're fed a steady diet of notifications around the clock—7.4 trillion push notifications per year through Apple's servers alone.⁴⁰ Like many things addictive and pernicious, alerts felt good at first, but ultimately and insidiously, they became shackles.

Be free from the shackles of alerts. Turn them off.

The only way to be free of the shackles of alerts is to turn them off. Close and log out of applications that distract you. Disable push alerts.

Do these things, and you give yourself a fighting chance. Try turning off all alerts except meeting notices.

When you turn off notifications, it's going to feel strange. If you're ready to remove the shackles, expect withdrawal. It won't be easy, but it's worth it. You'll learn to check email on your own schedule, when you want.

Hack #2: Signal "Do Not Disturb"

Most of us signal "disturb me" without realizing it. We try to reply to emails and messages right away, ostensibly telling everyone, "I'm here for you right now." We answer our phones. Our doors are open, signaling, "Come and talk to me."

The XP signal "do not disturb" better than most. Almost one in three of The XP make a habit of signaling "do not disturb." The Rest? Less than one in ten do it.

If it's time to concentrate, change your signal to "do not disturb."

Close your door. Put headphones on even if you're not listening to anything. Put up a sign that says, "On a deadline. Come in if it's an emergency. If not, please check back later."

You can even turn on your email out-of-office assistant. Everyone knows that a day here and a day there you won't be around. Have it say, "I'm not available today and not really checking email. Back on Friday. If you need help, contact my colleague Jim Smith at..."

Hack #3: Be Somewhere Else

If you're in a spot in the office (or home, or wherever) where people interrupt you, and you need to concentrate, don't be there. If they can't find you, they won't distract you.

If what you need for work are your phone and your computer, you're in luck. You can bring them anywhere you want and work. If you don't want people to find you, be somewhere else. This, of course, requires buy-in from a boss for many people, but "somewhere else" can be a quiet spot in the office where you normally aren't, or home, if that's allowed.

Explain what you need and what it'll let you accomplish and many bosses will help find a solution.

Some people make up little excuses about why they can't work somewhere else, such as, "I use a second computer screen; I'm more productive with it." Perhaps, but you're less productive when people bother you if they know where to find you. If you really need it, get a portable second screen that fits in your laptop bag. The point is, if you want to work somewhere else to concentrate, you probably can.

You don't need to do these all the time (yes, keep your alerts off all the time), but practice these strategies and gift yourself the space to focus, concentrate, and get done what you want to get done.

Play hard to get and you'll be impossible to distract.

Hacks to Play Hard to Get:

- Be free from the shackles of alerts
- Signal "Do Not Disturb"
- Be somewhere else

Key #3: Execute in the Zone

Steven Kotler, author of *The Rise of Superman*, describes the zone, or flow, as “an optimal state of consciousness, a state where you feel your best and perform your best.”

When you can get in the zone at will, you become unstoppable.

Research—both our own and by many others—confirms that most people, even with no external distractions poking at them, are rapid media switchers, rapid task switchers, and generally have difficulty shutting down their inner critic, who lobbies them incessantly to block their respective mojos. All of these are barriers to getting in the zone, stopping you from becoming unstoppable.

In Key 3: Execute in the Zone, we share the most effective approach we know for helping people get in the zone at will, stay there, and fuel your energy all around. Also, while getting and staying in the zone, and during all habit change commitments, people lose their way. They fall off the wagon. Habits 7: Sprint into the Zone, 8: Fuel Your Energy, and 9: Right the Ship address all of these stumbling blocks.

If you want to become unstoppable, keep reading.

Habit 7: Sprint into the Zone

Maximize your effort per work hour.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has developed the most well-known, fully fleshed-out theory of “the zone” in his book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.⁴¹ As the subtitle suggests, the zone is about much more than being productive, because when you find yourself in it, you’ll feel more confident, engaged, and happy. It’s why Sprint into the Zone fits so well with The Productivity Code: it adds becoming happier to the process of accomplishing more.

If you want to get more done in the time you have, and you want to have that euphoric feeling of being extremely productive, you must execute in the zone.

The zone (also known as flow) is the mental state where a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. When you’re in the zone:

- Time feels suspended—you don’t notice it passing and yet it’s really flying!
- You feel extreme focus
- You achieve exceptional clarity of goals, actions, and rewards
- You’re not just happy, you feel euphoric just by focusing on and working on the task
- The task feels increasingly effortless
- You feel in control and confident the activity is doable
- You feel rewarded simply by the fact of engaging the activity⁴²

If you want to maximize effort per work hour, get in the zone.

Getting into the zone is one of The XPs’ most powerful and effective strategies. It’s not only a key driver of Extreme Productivity, but also one of the most significant differences between The XP and The Rest. Forty-nine percent of The XP make it a regular practice compared to only 19% of The Rest. The XP are not only 2.6 times more likely to get into the zone, but also 3.8 times more likely to concentrate for long periods of time and 2.6 times more likely to devote their undivided attention to the activity at hand.

If you want to get in the zone, establish a daily routine of obsessed, planned Sprints.

Sprinting is a form of timeboxing. A popular technique in many project-management and software-development methods, timeboxing allocates a specific time period (or time box), to a pre-planned activity.

TIME Sprinting Definition

20 minutes minimum of obsessed focus on a planned activity.

Here are the three guidelines for TIME Sprinting:

1. **Sprint:** Work on a planned task for 20 minutes minimum with a visual stopwatch on and counting up. If you reach 90 minutes, take a break.
2. **Relay:** Perform four TIME Sprints in a row with up to six-minute breaks in between. Each four-Sprint-in-a-row sequence is a Relay.
3. **Block distraction by keeping a distraction capture list:** If you feel a distraction, don't switch tasks. Keep a notepad handy and write down the distraction. Return to Sprinting on your chosen task.

Hack #1: Establish a Daily Routine of Obsessed, Planned Sprints

TIME Sprinting is one of the most powerful and effective strategies of the The Productivity Code. If you do it, you need to obsess over it just like you do when deciding how to spend your time.

Here's what to do: work obsessively on one planned task only for 20 to 90 minutes with a visual stopwatch on, counting up. If you reach 90 minutes, take a break. By using a stopwatch instead of a timer, your concentration won't be interrupted by a timer going off. Using a stopwatch may seem like a small change, but it feels significantly different.

When you're using a stopwatch, you might glance over at it and see that only five minutes have gone by. This is your signal to keep focusing.

You still have fifteen minutes before you allow yourself to pour that coffee, check your messages, open a browser, or do anything except obsess over your selected task.

Next thing you know, you may be flying through work. At that point, if the work is flowing, you can keep going until the 90-minute mark. Or take a break. Your choice.

The suggestion that you stop at 90 minutes is based on the cyclical rhythm of human rest and wakefulness. Your attention and focus will naturally decline at this point. Of course, you can keep going, but 90 minutes is generally a good time to take a break.

Hack #2: Do Four Successive Sprints in a Relay

Think of a relay as interval training for productivity. Just like a runner or a swimmer, you're building up stamina by doing four Sprints in a row.

Once you've done four sprints in a row with a maximum six-minute break between sprints, take at least a 15-minute break. Peretz Lavie, who researched ultradian rhythms (biological cycles occurring within 24 hours), identified 20-minute "troughs," periods of drowsiness in between the cycles when we naturally feel more alert and productive.⁴³ A minimum 15 minutes between relays gives your mind what amounts to a catnap: a brief refueling so you can dive back in and continue to be productive.

Note that this 15-minute break should be a break—not an excuse to check your email.

During the course of any normal workday, plan for a maximum of four Relays. Try to do it too much every day and you'll find it difficult to maintain as a habit. Plus, you need time to allow your mind to wander outside of the full concentration of a Sprint. And some activities—from meetings to classes to phone calls to meals to correspondence—don't lend themselves to TIME Sprinting.

However, TIME Sprinting using Relays is ideal for longer projects that require ongoing concentration.

Hack #3: Block Distraction: Keep a Distraction Capture List

In the first few weeks of adopting TIME Sprinting as a habit, I found that I (Mike) would choose an activity, put a stopwatch on, and start in. Often, three to four minutes later, I'd find myself opening a web browser, checking email, or picking up my phone by reflex for no reason.

Three minutes! I found myself having to practice "free won't" (see page 33) to stay focused on the Sprint.

The inner critic in your head never stops telling you to do things right now that'll take you away from what you've already told yourself you're going to do.

Here are two powerful yet simple ways to shut down these voices of your inner critic:

1. Write down task-switch-inducing distractions as they come to mind.
2. Get in the zone.

No kidding. That's it! These hacks work amazingly well.

If you let distracting thoughts build up or simply try to remember them, they'll tax your ability to concentrate, acting like a mental magnet to pull your attention away from your chosen TIME Sprint task, and toward the squirrels, until you attend to them.

Few mental distractions are urgent items. Perhaps you do need to get cleats before the end of the day. The challenge here is not getting cleats today, it's the mental itch that trying to remember will produce. All you need to do is keep a list handy, either physical with a pen and paper, or on your computer, to write down the distraction. Writing it down is close to 100% effective for scratching the mental itches of must-remember items that stockpile as you try to concentrate. Further, once you get in the zone, your inner critic will calm down as your dorsolateral prefrontal cortex goes quiet.⁴⁴

When you're done Sprinting and Relaying and you've taken a break, you can review your distraction capture list and do anything you choose.

Take five minutes and order the cleats. Often you'll find yourself saying, "Uh, do I really need to look up the temperature in Boca right now?" What seemed so compelling an hour ago suddenly doesn't need action at all.

Hacks to Sprint into the Zone:

- Establish a daily routine of obsessed, planned Sprints
- Relay: Do four successive Sprints throughout the day
- Block distraction: Keep a distraction capture list

Habit 8: Fuel Your Energy

It's 106 miles to Chicago, we got a full tank of gas, half a pack of cigarettes, it's dark, and we're wearing sunglasses. Hit it! - Elwood and Jake Blues

Energy—and the stamina to sustain it over long periods—is the fuel that drives productivity. If you don't have the energy to get started with something, or the energy to stick with it, don't expect to be productive.

It's no surprise, then, that our research reveals energy is a key driver of productivity.

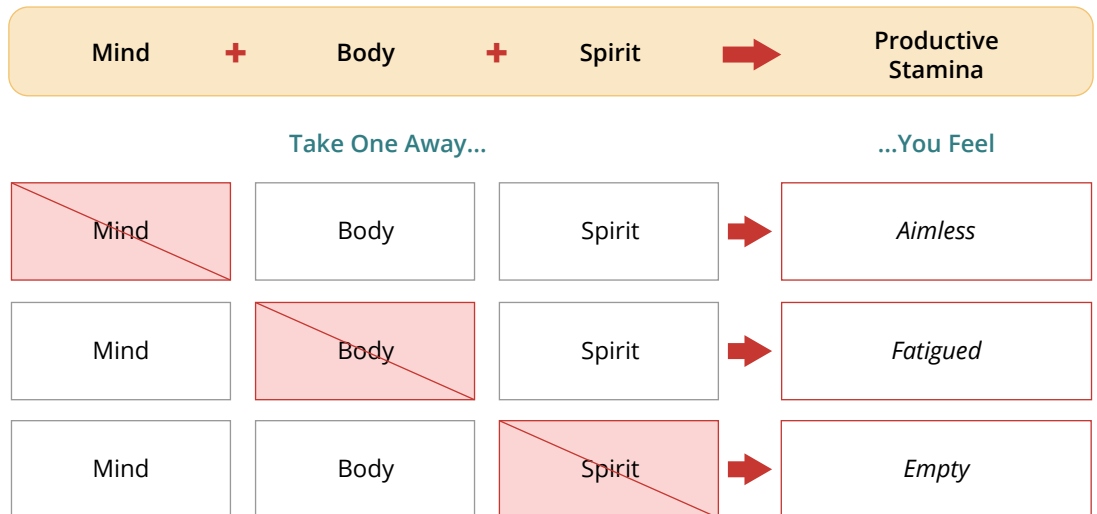
Not only that, but there's a stunning gap between The XP and The Rest in their agreement with the statement: I regularly sustain energy for long periods of time. More than half of The XP agree that's very much like them compared to just 15% of The Rest (that's less than two out every ten people).

Energy is also a key driver of top performance, job satisfaction, and happiness. What's especially notable when it comes to happiness is that the ability to sustain energy for long periods is second only to devoting time to Treasured activities as a key driver of happiness. Your path to sustainable energy puts you on a path to not only extreme productivity, but also well-being and happiness.

While there's a vast body of research and inquiry into this topic, we tend to think of it simply. The best way to maximize energy is to focus on your mind, body, and spirit.

You need all three to achieve productive stamina. It's easiest to understand why when you see what happens when one of the legs of the energy triad stool is missing.

XP Energy Triad



Take away mind and you don't have clarity. If you aren't supervising your inner critic well enough, she can spin you around in circles. Without clarity in your mind, you become aimless.

Take away body and you're physically tired. Fatigued. You might feel well connected to the universe and know what you want to do, but your get-up-and-go musta got-up-and-went. Note that your mind can get tired, too.

Take away spirit and you might know what you want to do and your body might be ready to act, but at best you move around like an empty shell. At worst it's so debilitating that you can't bring yourself to act at all.

Here is how to affect all three:

- **Mind:** Concentrate early in the day, minimize decisions, and practice positive self-talk and mindfulness.
- **Body:** Eat well, sleep well, and take care of your body.
- **Spirit:** Feel connected. Take Treasured TIME, find your spiritual path.

Hack #1: Mind. Concentrate Early in the Day, Minimize Decisions, Practice Positive Self-Talk and Mindfulness

Concentrate Early in the Day

Early in the day, at least for most people, energy is highest. Typically, you're rested in the morning—after you've slept and before you've made a lot of decisions that tax your mind and deplete your energy. If you need to concentrate, do it in the morning when both your physical and mental fuel tanks are full.

Minimize Decisions

For each decision you make, you pay a biological price. Decisions tax the brain. They make you mentally tired. When you're mentally fatigued, one of two things are likely to happen: you either avoid doing anything at all, or you make impulsive decisions.

This is why we suggest you create your weekly action plan once a week in advance and calendar your Investment activities, and why you should tackle your Greatest Impact Activities early in the day before you've made too many decisions.

Use Positive Self-Talk

If you're feeling down, negative, or otherwise not in a good emotional state, it's nearly impossible to be energetic and engaged in a task.

You get to choose the story you tell yourself. For the best mental energy, make it a positive one. Step 2 in the 5-Step Extreme Productivity Morning Routine is to ask yourself, "How's my mindset?" If you don't feel your mental energy is in the right place, take a walk to clear your head, practice positive self-talk, meditate, breathe deeply, say, "3...2...1...Stop!"

Once you start working, Sprint and Relay. When you get in the zone, you can temporarily shut off your inner critic. This is why getting in the zone often yields 5 times more productivity than a typical minute. TIME Sprinting is a harnessing of mental energy.

Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness—being aware and present in the moment—is a great way to fight anxiety and increase energy. A growing body of research supports this, along with its productivity and happiness benefits. In fact, in our global research study, we found The XP are more than twice as likely to practice mindfulness than The Rest. And the happiest respondents are almost 3 times more likely than everyone else to do so.

Hack #2: Body. Eat Well, Sleep Well, and Take Care of Your Body

Let's assume you've been working to adopt the 9 Habits.

You've recruited your drive. You're feeling proactive, and you've replaced unproductive habits with productive ones. You're obsessing over TIME, and consistently eliminating distractions as you focus on Investment activities.

This is all great, but if you don't sleep well at night, or are tired during the day for whatever reason, it's unlikely you'll get much done. Likewise, the food you put in your body matters both directly and immediately, and over the long term.

There's no shortage of experts who'll have different systems to help you eat well, sleep well, and exercise to maximize your energy. Find a system that works for you and you'll improve your ability to become extremely productive and feel a whole lot better. In fact, our research confirms that not only are The XP 2 times more likely than The Rest to be active and physically fit, but those qualities are also key drivers of happiness, with the happiest people 1.7 times more likely to possess them.

Hack #3: Spirit. Take Treasured Time, Find Your Spiritual Path

Finding spiritual energy is an incredibly personal journey and too big a topic to cover here. But here are six practical actions you may find helpful:

1. **Take Treasured time:** The mental health benefits of leisure activities include lower levels of depression and improved physical and psychological status.⁴⁵ Our XP research shows taking Treasured time is a key driver of happiness and that The XP take Treasured time more than twice as often as The Rest.
2. **Find meaning in your time:** Set goals that, should you achieve them, really mean something to you. If you have a specific life destination, and truly want to arrive there, energy will find you. If this is something you'd like to do, revisit Habit 1.
3. **Go outside to feel alive:** Being outside in nature makes people feel more alive.⁴⁶ Just 20 minutes outdoors is often enough.
4. **Breathe:** Relaxed breathing techniques are an excellent way to reduce stress and anxiety.
5. **Try yoga:** Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine have shown that yoga practitioners revealed an increase in GABA, a brain neurotransmitter that helps to control fear and anxiety responses.⁴⁷
6. **Find your personal spiritual path:** Whatever the journey is for you, if you can find and connect with your spirituality, you can find peace, focus, and the foundation for ongoing sustained energy.

You've set your goals, feel motivated to tackle them, identified exactly what to do, and tuned out distractions. If you've done all these things, you have a great start on being extremely productive. But if your fuel tank is empty, all of this is for naught. You must fuel your energy. To do so, focus on your body, mind, and spirit.

Hacks to Fuel Your Energy:

- **Mind:** Concentrate early in the day, minimize decisions, and practice positive self-talk and mindfulness
- **Body:** Eat well, sleep well, and take care of your body
- **Spirit:** Take Treasured time, find your spiritual path

Habit 9: Right the Ship

It's easy to quit smoking. I've done it a thousand times. - W.C. Fields

Changing habits and being productive isn't easy. We all get derailed and lose focus sometimes.

Even The XP go off course, but they're 5.3 times more likely than The Rest to recover quickly. They describe it like this: "If I find myself doing an activity or continuing with a habit I want to stop, I usually stop quickly once I realize I should."

The following hacks are highly effective for righting the ship when you find yourself not doing what you know you should.

Hack #1: Practice Free Won't

Deeply ingrained habits—e.g., checking your phone while working—happen almost without thought. The thought is there, but it's so fast that we start doing the behavior without seeming to initiate it consciously.

In the late 1970s and early 80s, Benjamin Libet conducted a series of experiments to see whether conscious thought initiates physical behavior. His experiments showed that some triggers make some behaviors happen seemingly without thought.⁴⁸ He concluded (not without melodrama) that we may not actually have free will.

That's not the interesting part though. What's fascinating is that while conscious thought may or may not cause us to initiate certain behaviors, conscious thought can conclusively cause us to stop that behavior. So perhaps we have no "free will," but we certainly have "free won't."

On page 13 we outlined how saying, "3...2...1...Go!" can get you started on an activity. If you want to stop an activity, it works in reverse.

Say, "3...2...1...Stop!"

Start browsing on Facebook during a TIME Sprint? "3...2...1...Stop!"

Start eating Doritos at 8 p.m. after a good day of healthy eating? "3...2...1...Stop!"

Reaching for your phone while you're concentrating? "3...2...1...Stop!"

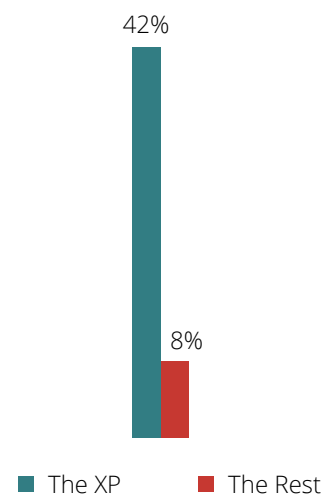
Excessive TV. Drinking too much coffee. Task switching. Losing focus. Not starting with your Greatest Impact Activity. Doing something better delegated to someone else. Joining an hour-long meeting that, after 5 minutes, you can't add to or get anything from. Say, "3...2...1...Stop!"

Hack #2: Make Micro Change

As we discussed on page 10, getting started on anything takes activation energy. If you know you're getting started on something difficult, it takes that much more. We've talked to people who are daunted by the idea of focusing for at least 20 minutes so they don't start a TIME Sprint.

Where 20 minutes might seem like a lot, five minutes almost never does. If you're having trouble getting into difficult tasks, make the task smaller. Here you can shrink the Sprint to just five minutes, and lower the activation energy bar significantly.

RECOVER WHEN DERAILED
% STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE



Micro Change

If something you want to happen isn't happening, make micro change. Examples:

- Having trouble getting into the groove of prospecting? Make one call, send one email.
- Having trouble getting started working out? Do three push-ups.
- Want to get good at piano? Take one lesson. Practice once.
- Want to clean the house? Start in one room for five minutes.
- Want to read one business book a month? Get a book and read the first page.

Breaking down large tasks into smaller ones is a behavior we see The XP demonstrating regularly. When overwhelmed by a large task, The XP break it down into smaller, more approachable tasks. Make it a micro sprint and you'll achieve micro change. Tell yourself you're only committing to five minutes of focus. Or five minutes of exercise. Or five minutes of anything you want to do but are having trouble starting or getting back to.

We're not the first to suggest this. The FlyLady has done great work here, too. She's a home-clutter busting expert who gives the following advice: put a timer on for five minutes and start cleaning.⁴⁹

You can't finish in five minutes—everyone knows this—but the point is that nobody stops when the timer is up. Once you're in it, you keep going because you're over the activation energy hump, and you're getting satisfaction and pleasure from the progress you're making.

Same idea works with TIME Sprints and any seemingly large tasks. Don't go 20 minutes. Go five. Make micro change.

Your productivity house will be sparkling clean in no time.

Hack #3: Make a Commitment Contract

Losing weight has been a challenge for me (Mike). I fluctuate up and down 10 pounds, but I want to fluctuate down 20 and have for years. I haven't been able to see it through yet.

Ian Ayres, Jordan Goldberg, and Dean Karlan are Yale economists. They surmised several years ago that people who sign iron-clad commitment contracts would be more likely to stick to a commitment they made to themselves than if they didn't make a contract.

They found that those who make a commitment contract with a referee (i.e., an accountability partner you report to every week) increases chances of success by up to 200%.

Putting money at stake increases chances of success by up to 300%.

They've now studied 400,000 commitment contracts with over \$35 million dollars on the line.

According to Goldberg, when a referee is used in the commitment contract, the average success rate is 61% for goals related to money and finance.⁵⁰ (For those wanting to lose weight, the success rate is a not-too-shabby 47%.) When the goal involves using both a referee and a financial stake, the success rate for financial resolutions is 87% (and a healthy 73% for pound-droppers).

I gave it a try. To right the ship that was sinking due to my outsized waistline, I made a commitment contract. If I didn't make my weight every week, I had to send money to an organization I despise. I lost the weight, and am now where I was just after my senior year of high school.

You can make a commitment contract late in a process like I did when dieting alone wasn't working, or you can do it early to prevent commitment failure.

In any case, if you want something badly enough, put your money and reputation where your mouth is. Make a commitment contract. Put something at stake. Have an accountability partner.

A commitment contract could give you the incentives (or disincentives) that put you over the top to bring to life the change you want.

Hacks to Right the Ship:

- Say, "3...2...1...Stop!" Practice Free Won't
- Make micro change
- Make a commitment contract

Conclusion

The pursuit of productivity isn't new, but it's more important than ever. Today, distraction is endemic in our lives. At the same time, we all have more demands on our time than ever before.

Everyone says it's difficult to change. Everyone is right.

It's difficult to get motivated enough to make the change. It's no easy feat changing how you spend your time, and maximizing effort per hour is so much harder in our new never-ending-distraction world.

However, if you have the right roadmap, you can manufacture your own motivation, control your TIME, and tune out all distractions while you execute in the zone.

And you'll become extremely productive.

Summary of Key Points: The 3 Keys and 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity

Manufacture Motivation

1. **Recruit Your Drive.** Motivation is more a skill than an innate have-it-or-don't attribute. You can recruit your drive, building your motivation like a muscle.
2. **Ignite Your Proactivity:** How you manage your calendar and your expectations of what you'll get done every week drives whether you get it done or procrastinate.
3. **Reengineer Your Habits:** Understand habits and you can change them as you wish.

Control Your TIME

4. **Obsess Over TIME:** Know where your time goes and you'll find more, and then devote that time to your Greatest Impact Activities (GIAs) that'll help you achieve the best return and success.
5. **Say No:** People and activities will try to derail you from what you should be working on. Not all, but a lot, of time loss is preventable if you say "No."
6. **Play Hard to Get:** People and technologies will try to interrupt you. If you're not available, signal "Do Not Disturb," and turn off your technology alerts. You'll be impossible to distract.

Execute in the Zone

7. **Sprint into the Zone:** Sprint and Relay and you will get in the zone. You'll feel an energized focus, achieve full concentration, and enjoy the process as you maximize your effort per work hour.
8. **Fuel Your Energy:** You can't be extremely productive if you feel tired and sluggish. Take care of your mind, body and spirit, and you'll feel energized.
9. **Right the Ship:** We all lose focus and fall off the wagon. The secret to long-term extreme productivity is not to be perfect all the time, but to get back at it quickly when you fall into unproductive habits and patterns.

TURN THE PAGE!

On the next page, we outline the 3 Keys, 9 Habits, and the 27 hacks of The Productivity Code. Print it and hang it by your desk for a daily reminder of how to improve your productivity.

9 Habits to Take Control of Your TIME, Get in the Zone, and Achieve Maximum Results

3 Keys

1 | **Manufacture Motivation**

9 Habits

1. Recruit Your Drive

2. Ignite Your Productivity

3. Reengineer Your Habits

Hacks

- ◆ Choose your New Reality
- ◆ Plan actions weekly
- ◆ Track progress weekly
- ◆ Calendar Investment Time
- ◆ Talk to yourself
- ◆ Say, "3...2...1...Go!"
- ◆ Say, "When I, Then I, Will I?"
- ◆ Change your environment
- ◆ Make your morning routine sacred

2 | **Control Your TIME**

4. Obsess Over TIME

5. Say No

6. Play Hard to Get

◆ Take I, Increase I, Minimize M, Eliminate E

◆ Track your TIME

◆ Put your G.I.A. first

◆ Keep a to-don't list

◆ Do less: If it's not gung ho, it's no

◆ Practice saying no

◆ Be free from the shackles of alerts

◆ Signal "do not disturb"

◆ Be someplace else

◆ Establish a daily routine of obsessed, planned sprints

◆ Do 4 successive sprints in a relay

◆ Block distraction: Keep a distraction capture list

◆ Mind: Practice positive self-talk and mindfulness

◆ Body: Eat well, sleep well, and take care of your body

◆ Spirit: Take Treasured time, find your spiritual path

◆ Say, "3...2...1...Stop!" Practice free won't

◆ Make micro change

◆ Make a commitment contract

3 | **Execute in the Zone**

7. Sprint into the Zone

8. Fuel Your Energy

9. Right the Ship

Not Today: The 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity

When their five-year-old son fought for his life, business leaders Erica and Mike Schultz learned a new way to live, work, and succeed—discovering how to achieve extreme productivity with heart and purpose.

Ari Schultz was an extraordinary baby, beginning life in a pitched battle against heart disease. The same year, his parents launched their business. They had no choice but to keep it going. For the next five years, Erica and Mike Schultz learned how to balance the demands of their jobs, commuting to the hospital, and spending time with their growing family—along the way, noting the tricks and techniques that allowed them to get work done, even while living in the cardiac ICU and later after heartbreaking loss.

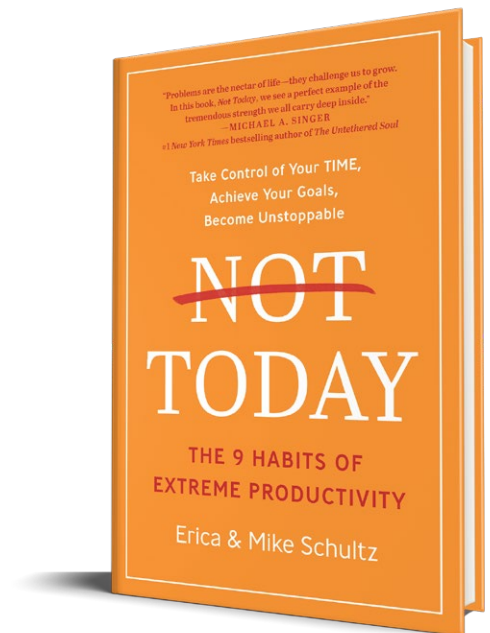
After reflection and recovery, Mike and Erica codified their method of coping and working, and set out to study the work habits of extremely productive people. In *Not Today*, they reveal the 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity along with easy-to-apply techniques, including:

- Staying focused—and positive—even in difficult times
- Clearly defining your motivations through written goals
- Ending procrastination with helpful hacks
- Disrupting unproductive thought cycles and break bad habits for good
- Becoming impossible to distract
- Working in powerful planned “sprints” to get in the zone
- Finding ways to refuel your mental and physical energy
- Interweaving their son’s poignant story with effective productivity and happiness strategies, *Not Today* shows how anyone can better manage their time—while living a more energetic and meaningful life.

Plus, when you buy the book, you’ll get access to:

- TIME Tracker
- TIME Table Worksheet
- New Reality Exercise
- Goal Setting Worksheet
- Productivity Code Planner
- Self-Talk Exercise
- Habit Change Blueprint Worksheet
- Productivity Code Quick Reference Guide
- 90-Day Productivity Code Challenge

Buy your copy now and take control of your TIME, achieve your goals, and become unstoppable.



BUY NOW

Take the Productivity Code Challenge

Help Your Team Achieve Exceptional Increases in Productivity and Results

Today's workforce is more distracted than ever. The never-ending dings, rings, and buzzes that interrupt workflow every few minutes are killing focus and productivity. And they're killing your results.

You need a highly-motivated and focused team that brings its A-game day in and day out. In a unique, transformational experience, The Productivity Code Challenge teaches your team how to get more done in the time they have, helping them to achieve exceptional increases in productivity and results.

In The Productivity Code Challenge, participants learn how to:

- Maximize motivation, make consistent progress, and achieve goals
- Control TIME with the simplest, most effective time management system
- Ignore distractions, focus, and get in the Extreme Productivity Zone
- Master the 3 Keys and 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity
- Implement an accountability system to maximize execution
- Achieve maximum output per work hour by focusing on the activities that get outsized returns

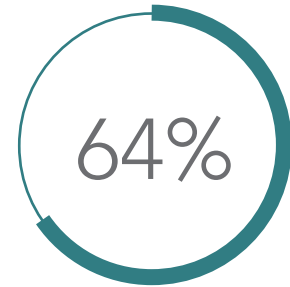
Your team will be introduced to the Productivity Code Planner, which will help your sellers internalize their new knowledge, practice their new habits, and maximize their efficiency and productivity.

Contact Us to Transform Your Team

If your team needs to learn to:

- Develop quarterly, monthly, and weekly productivity plans
- Change habits
- Recover lost TIME and regain focus

Contact RAIN Group today at 508-405-0438 or info@raingroup.com.



of companies do not believe their sellers manage their time, focus, and personal effectiveness well.

Program Approach

For individuals: Join the 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity online self-paced course designed to help you take what you've learned in this ebook to the next level.

For organizations: Bring The Productivity Code Challenge to your team to drive exceptional results:

- 9 Habits of Extreme Productivity Training
- 90-Day Productivity Code Challenge Coaching
- Ongoing reinforcement

RAIN Group Unleashes Sales Potential

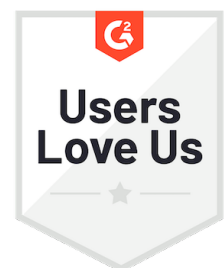
We help organizations:

- Develop and improve sales strategy, process, messaging, and talent
- Enhance sales capability with award-winning sales training
- Design and execute strategic account management initiatives
- Increase effectiveness of sales management and coaching

Best IP: We study buying and selling relentlessly through the RAIN Group Center for Sales Research. Our research and field work allows us to create industry-leading intellectual property to help our clients achieve the greatest success.

Best Education System: We use the best education approaches, methods, and technologies to make training work, stick, and transfer to the job.

Best Results: We make it our mission to drive value and achieve the highest client satisfaction through excellence in quality and producing transformational results for our clients.



Endnotes

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