



My Work/Life Balance Lessons by Dewey Newton

Because I enjoy my job so much, it would be easy for me to work more than I should. But because I enjoy my family more, I've had to learn how to manage my schedule so I get enough time with them.

Here are some things I've done that have worked for me and might work for others facing similar issues:

- All of my direct reports have access to my calendar on Outlook.**

It includes my professional *and* personal commitments – everything from client meetings to my coaching schedule for my daughter's volleyball team. People understand that the personal information is there to help them plan and that it can't be changed by anyone but me.
- When I need to work on weekends, I do it at home.**

I work between 7:00 and 10:00 a.m., when the kids are still sleeping. When they get up, I put the work away.
- I make sure I take a vacation.**

When I'm away, I check in with the office every day between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. That's it for the day. Calling the office while my family is sleeping relieves some of my anxiety about being away while it gives my

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Thinking - The Will to Prepare to Win

At the end of our last newsletter, Stop Worrying & Start Thinking, we promised a method to accomplish more in 15 minutes of Think Time than most people accomplish in months of typical re-thinking, re-worrying time. Here it is. (Reading time 180 seconds)

In the United States we are in the midst of college basketball's annual march to crown a national champion. This tournament offers up superior individual and team performances rarely seen even at the highest levels of amateur sports.

Quoting a prominent basketball coach who is participating in this display of competitive excellence,

*"It is not the will to win that is important, it is **the will to prepare to win** that is critical to success."*

Based on that quote, let me ask you a question. How do you prepare to win in life?

The answer to that question is as vital as it is simple.

The will to prepare to win in life is best reflected by **the will to think!**

The will to reason through your options and decide how to exploit opportunities and overcome the challenges life offers up.

When was the last time you exercised the will to fully think through a challenge or opportunity? NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT. But to actually set aside even 15 minutes to focus fully on reasoning a key life issue to a conclusion you will act on?

Most of us too rarely muster up the will to fully exercise the most important part of our bodies. That is the region of our brain that gives us the ability to reason. A major cause of our neglecting to focus regularly on sound thinking is we often find it very difficult. There is a reason for this.

In grappling with daily issues the most active part of your reasoning brain is your working memory. This is a very specific part of the brain that has a surprisingly limited storage capacity. The average individual can hold only seven pieces of simple information in his working memory at time. Even if you are 50% above average, you would be limited to

staff a scheduled time to talk to me if they need to.

- **My wife and I take long weekends away to recharge.**

We go away in February to break up the winter monotony and again in October, before the chaos of the holidays. It gives us a chance to get re-energized without spending – or packing – a lot.

- **I'm exercising.**

I'm enjoying a 12-week program that I think will not only help with stress management, but will also improve my overall health. If I'm not healthy, I can't do my job properly or take care of my family the way I want to.

Dewey Newton is vice president and general manager of the Kansas City business unit.

eTip -- Shower Power

You, like many others, may find that you often get good ideas while in the shower. Why would this be? A shower cuts us off from all the outside sounds, sites and distractions. Our minds actually relax and clear out the buzz and fuzz for just a few minutes and ...wow...a good idea has a chance to get into our working memory. If you need some fresh ideas for a tough issue...unwind. Take a long relaxing shower.

Jim Bird, Publisher

ten.

When you think through a subject of any complexity just using your available working memory you are greatly restricting your opportunities for a successful outcome. It's as if you were trying to put a puzzle together with your eyes closed. You can't see and remember all the pieces, so you may never find the one that fits best, or at all.

Wouldn't it be nice, when thinking through a major decision, to have all the relevant pieces to the decision laid out in front of you? Then you could see them all clearly, sort them, rearrange them, and connect them in the most effective way.

Fortunately, there is a very quick and easy way to supplement your working memory and at least double your ability to arrive quickly at a positive solution. It is called

Thinking by Writing It Down Too often we stew over things and consider it thinking. It is not! Thinking is "reasoning to a conclusion." Stewing is "fretting, fuming, worrying." When you stew too long, you dry up, you lose all your mental juices, your brain seems to shrivel. STOP! Think by writing it down. The specific way you do that is to use

The List and Prioritize Method This is a very important but extremely simple habit to get into. It exponentially increases the effectiveness of your thinking by multiplying the number of things your working memory could otherwise effectively deal with. It is also a very enjoyable way of Thinking.

One of the things that makes it fun is there are no rights or wrongs when you begin listing possibilities. Write down whatever comes to your mind no matter how wild or crazy it may seem. After you have made the list, sort through the pieces by prioritizing them. This is when you decide whether a particular piece is too off the wall to fit into your picture.

Here are the simple steps. Each one is critical to very quick and effective thinking.

Thinking On Paper - The List and Prioritize Method

1. List as many options as you can (Relating to your issue, project or relationship)
2. Prioritize each option as an A, B, or C. Prioritize each "A" option as A1, A2, A3, etc.
3. Write at least your A1 in your planner now, on the day you will do it.
4. Guarantee: Take 15 minutes now to apply these steps to an important issue in your life and you will accomplish more than weeks or months of worrying about it.

All you have to do is focus for a moment on a problem you've been stewing about. Take out a piece of paper and just start listing what you might do to solve it. Get all those pieces out of your brain, on to a sheet of paper and then prioritize them A,B,C. Then just focus on the A's and tag them 1,2,3 etc.

Quote from Voltaire

"No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking."

Voltaire (1694-1778) was a French author, humanist, rationalist and satirist.

Write at least your A1 in your calendar on the day you will do it. You are on your way. You have shown the will to prepare to WIN, and win you will.

More importantly you will be starting a habit to consistently make real the wins you want from life. By putting these four simple thinking steps to paper you will regularly create a more successful Big Picture for yourself and those around you.

Please don't ponder this. Take 10 or 15 minutes to do it now, or write down a time in the next 24 hours to do so. Print out the four steps above so you can reference them until they become habit. You will be amazed at the clarity of thought and immediate positive actions that results.

Jim Bird, Publisher

To view the Four Life Quadrants click here: [Big Picture](#)

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