

## Self-Discipline

Why is it that some of us have loads of self-discipline and others have absolutely none? Ever notice that some people hop right out of bed when the alarm goes off in the morning and others hit snooze about fourteen times? Aside from what time you went to bed, how well you slept, and whether you're a morning or an evening person, I think self-discipline has a lot to do with it.

Self-discipline is something we acquire and teach ourselves; it's not something we're born with. Have you ever seen a child look at the TV, shake her head, and say: *Nah! I need to do my homework first?*

Unlike me, one of my employees is nowhere near middle-aged—nor is she blessed with an abundance of self-discipline. She decided to come to the office before hours one morning last week to make phone calls. So, what did she do? **She answered the incoming calls—before the office was open—and handled those calls, never making her own sales calls!** A lot of people, especially salespeople, fall into this trap. Rather than perform a chore that's difficult or unappealing, even when they know they have to do it, they do something else that's more enjoyable.

I schedule all my business duties and responsibilities into my calendar or into my daily task list and treat them as if they were appointments with clients or prospective clients. I do the same with my time off, vacation, and personal appointments. When these events pop up on my calendar or task list, I DO THEM; I don't dismiss or snooze them.

Sticking to this routine was very difficult at first. Temptation always flirted: I really needed to catch up with a business associate—what better way to do that than to meet him/her

for breakfast or lunch? What about all that scanning I need to do? Oh no! It's raining! I can't go out and make cold calls in the pouring rain!

At times, it's still difficult. But I find that the more I stick to my calendar and task list, the more I accomplish. The more I accomplish, the less stressed I feel. The less stressed I feel, the happier I am. Which, therefore, makes the people around me that much happier. (Just ask my husband and employees!)

I've become a stickler when it comes to time, especially my own. Ever hear someone apologize to you for being late or, worse, cancelling their scheduled time with you because they're *so busy you wouldn't believe it* and then rattle off all the things they have to do? I hate that. Do they have fewer hours in their day than you do? As the sign in my printer's shop says: *Poor planning on your part doesn't constitute an emergency on our part.*

Exercising a little self-discipline in your work schedule **always** leads to higher levels of production, less stress, and more free time. It's also called Time Management.

In summary, schedule your duties and responsibilities right into your schedule like appointments. Get there on time, do your job, then move on! I promise you, checking off the items on that To-Do list and Xing off the appointments on your calendar after you've actually accomplished your tasks will be enough motivation to keep it going.