

The Productivity Project: Accomplishing More by Managing Your Time, Attention, and Energy

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Productivity is about how much you accomplish

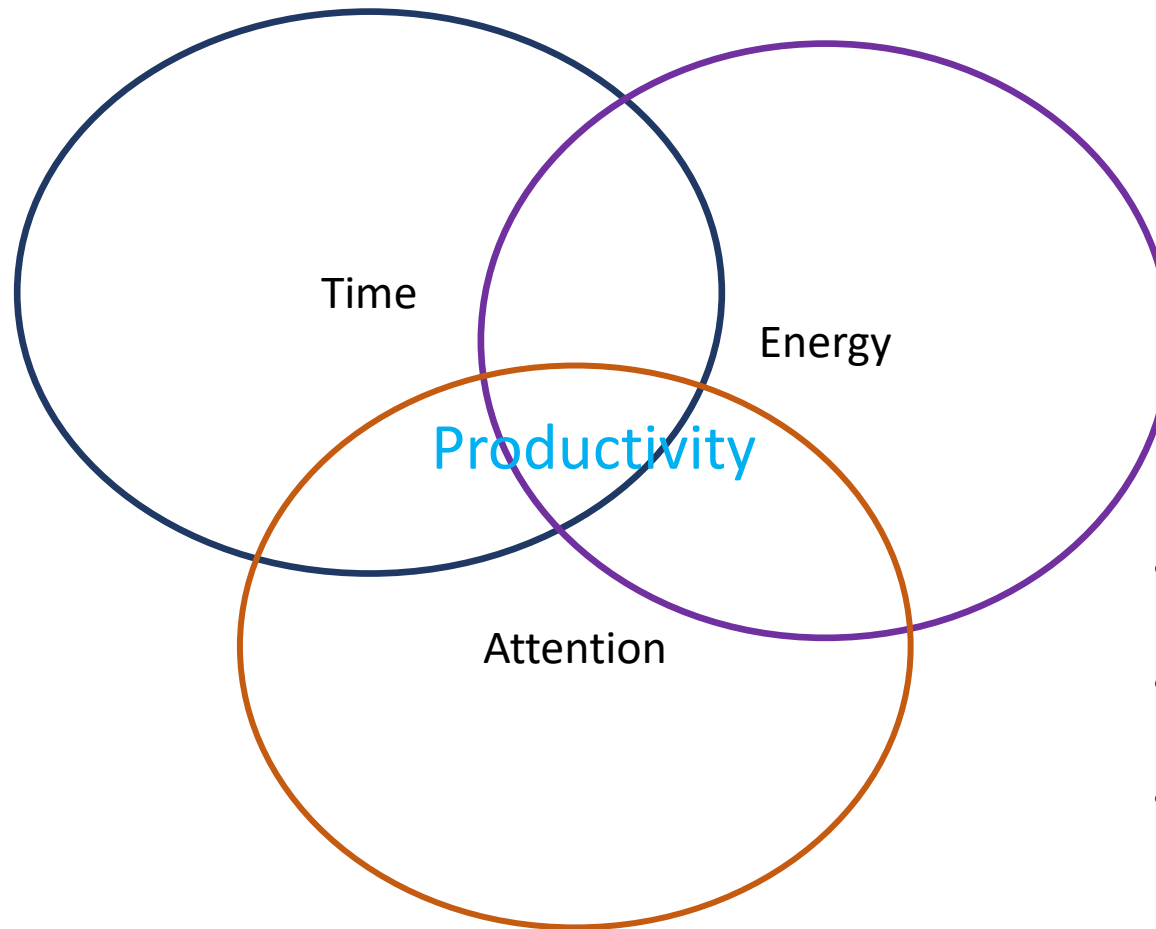
Most productive people work at a pace somewhere between the monk and the stock trader—fast enough to get everything done, and slowly enough so they can identify what's important and then work deliberately and with intention

Devout monk, who meditates all day, and takes an hour to do anything because he wants to do it slowly and mindfully



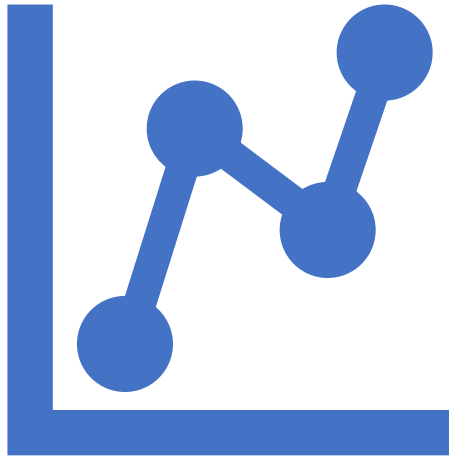
Cocaine-fueled stock trader, who works quickly, automatically, at the most frenzied pace imaginable

Productivity is better management of



- When we waste time, we're procrastinating.
- When we can't manage our attention well, we're distracted
- When we don't cultivate our energy levels, we're tired

Measure productivity



Best way to measure productivity is to ask yourself a very simple question at the end of every day:

1. Did I get done what I intended to?
2. Observing how productivity techniques affect manage the three ingredients of productivity (Time, energy, attention)

Rule of 3

The rule is simple:

at the beginning of each day, before you start working, decide what three things you want to accomplish by the end of the day

Biological Prime Time

- If you're an early bird, you have more energy early in the morning. If you're a night owl, you have more energy late at night. After you drink a coffee, you may feel a sudden energy boost, and then an energy crash later on
- Different experts refer to this high peak time period by different names - Biological Prime Time (BPT), a phrase coined by Sam Carpenter in his book *Work the System*
- Work on highest impact tasks during BPT

The 6 triggers of Procrastination

Six main task attributes that make procrastination more likely:

1. Boring
2. Frustrating
3. Difficult
4. Unstructured or ambiguous
5. Lacking in personal meaning
6. Lacking in intrinsic rewards (i.e., it's not fun or engaging)

Ways to regain control over Brain



Create a procrastination list - give yourself a choice between working on only two tasks: the task that you're tempted to procrastinate on, and another task that's high return



List the costs Listing every single cost of putting something off is one of my favorite ways to get my prefrontal cortex fired up. It's a simple tactic, but it gives you a much better shot at winning out



Just Get started -If you have a big, aversive task, simply get started on it

Emptying your Brain

- Performing a “brain dump” not only reduces stress and helps you focus, it also motivates you to action, decades’ worth of complex neurological research in one sentence, our brains are built for solving problems, connecting dots, and forming new ideas—not for holding on to information that we can simply externalize
- “Zeigarnik effect” in the late 1920s: incomplete or interrupted tasks weigh on our mind much more than completed tasks

Productivity and control

- Hot spots are the portfolio of your life. From a very high level, all your tasks, projects, and commitments can be categorized into one of seven basic “hot spots” in which we invest our time (and attention and energy) every day:

1. Mind
2. Body
3. Emotions
4. Career
5. Finances
6. Relationships
7. Fun

Examples of Hotspot – Mind

- Learning (books, Instapaper, podcasts, audiobooks, RSS feeds)
- Meditation
- Reading
- Music
- Mindfulness
- Slowing down and working more deliberately
- Making more attentional space between work and life elements
- Stress relief (meditation, reading, listening to music)



Brain – Two modes

- Mind seesaws between two modes throughout the day:
 - a “wandering” mode, which we experience when we’re taking a shower, and
 - a “central executive” mode which we experience when we’re on our smartphones or focused intently on something

Whenever you’re in mind-wandering mode, again, make sure you capture what your brain comes up with, so that no great ideas slip through the cracks



Productivity Quotes from the book

- Productivity is about how much you accomplish
- Productivity isn't about doing more things—it's about doing the right things
- Procrastination gets in the way of accomplishing more since it is, in its simplest form, a gap between your intention and action.
- Sending a letter to yourself in the future is a great way to bridge the gap between you and your future self
- Today, time is no longer money. Productivity is money
- The more you get out of your head, the more clearly you'll think

Productivity Quotes from the book

- “Hot spots” is a fancy name for a very simple idea—an idea that let me feel more in control of my work than I ever had before. Hot spots let you see your work and life from ten thousand feet
- What separates the most productive people from everyone else is that they make course corrections every week to gradually get better at everything they do
- one of the biggest benefits to becoming more productive is having a better grasp of everything you’re trying to do at one time, and the most difficult time to try to make sense of everything is when you’re working at ground level
- It can take as many as twenty-five minutes to refocus on the task at hand after being interrupted.

Additional Resources

- <https://impactivestrategies.com/what-is-your-prime-time/>
- <https://alifeofproductivity.com/>
- Chris Bailey books: <https://alifeofproductivity.com/books/>



Thank you

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Disclaimer: 1. This is just a summary; for better understanding highly recommend reading the full book
2. The summary is based on my learning, what resonates with me after reading the book
3. Please excuse for any errors or mis-representation