

How to Create more Time

When I call one of my sitters I often get her voicemail which ends with “Here’s the beep. Take all the time you need.” Even though I’ve heard this message perhaps 100 times I still often find myself taking a deep breath and relaxing into the moment of this one beautiful instant where I have all the time I need. What a concept!

Time has become a valued and valuable commodity in this age of high-speed *everything*. As self-employed business owners we have the unique ability to create our own schedules and yet many of us are frantically trying to figure out how to run a business and maintain our full lives at the same time.

Here are some tips that I’ve used to successfully coach frantic business owners in developing mastery over their time. I encourage you to take one tip and work with it for awhile until it becomes familiar and comfortable and then move on to the next one.

Tip #1: Focus on just one item at a time.

I know, this seems like an impossibility with everyone driving around talking on cell phones and taking notes while driving. This will help you put the multi-tasking into perspective: imagine you are in the middle of a circle of friends. Three of them are all talking to you at the same time. How well can you listen to each one in that very moment? That is how your brain feels when you are doing 3 tasks at once. Just for one day try doing only one thing at a time. When you are writing checks to your staff and the phone rings, let it. Continue writing your checks. When you are done writing checks then check your voicemail and call that client back. When our attention is scattered in many different directions we are not going to excel at any of the tasks we are doing. Focus. Complete. Then move on to the next task.

Tip #2: Realize there will always be the ‘one more thing, thing’ (or know when to stop)

Be aware that most self-employed people have the tendency to be workaholics. This can be a positive trait until we start working more than we are not. For all of us business owners there is

always something more we can be doing to work on our businesses: one more phone call to return, an invoice to mail, marketing to do. The trick is to say to yourself, “STOP! Just for today (or this hour) I am not going to do anything else for my business.”

Tip #3: Don't work yourself harder than your employees. If you don't have employees imagine yourself working at a 'regular' job. Would your boss make you work at 11 pm? Probably not, unless you were paid overtime. Of course once in awhile you may need to burn the candle at both ends, say during the holidays but if you find yourself consistently working 12-16 hour days you are going to begin to hate the job you used to love so much. If you do have employees, imagine asking them to work as many hours as you do.

Tip #4: Get out of scarcity mode. Realize that there is (and always will be) plenty of business out there. When I began to become more successful in my pet sitting business I realized that I had to say no to new clients until I stabilized my business by hiring more staff. Taking on new clients when my business was not prepared to take on extra business only created more stress and less time for myself and my staff. I also began to see that that money earned was earned from stress, not from love of what I was doing.

It is important to remember there is enough time, money, resources.

Tip #5: Decide that you are the most important person in your world.

When we own a service business our job is to take care of our human and multi-legged clients. But who is taking care of you? When I began to treat myself as the most important person in my world then I began to consciously realize that I was worth creating more time for me—away from the business.

Tip #6 Discover your individualized ideas on freeing up time.

Because we all run our businesses differently, what works well for one person might not work well for another. Allow yourself to brainstorm for 10 minutes on some time-saving ideas of your own. Here are mine:

- 1) Do not take on problem clients. Let problem clients go if they begin to cause more hassle than they are worth.
- 2) Raise prices with old and new clients. Right there I give myself a raise of 10-20% without working a bit harder, thus saving me more time. Be willing to have some clients leave if they are unhappy with the price increase. Remind myself that more clients are coming to me!
- 3) What do I want to do with all of this time I have? If I can be clear about why I want it that will make it easier to actively create more time. I want more time to: lunch with friends, horseback riding lessons, reading, running, planting my veggie garden, doing nothing!
- 4) Hire people to help my business grow. Decide what qualities I want in my staff: people who are willing to work as much or as little as I need them, responsible, able to self-manage (big time-saver right there!), good communication skills.

Kristin Morrison is a pet sitting business owner and business coach. *Kristin is a firm believer in working smarter (not harder) and has created a six-figure pet sitting business while working 3 days a week. She coaches other pet sitting business owners on the fine art of creating a successful pet sitting business while maintaining a fun and successful life. You can email Kristin at: Success@SixFigurePetSittingAcademy.com*