

BALANCE & BOUNDARIES



Working Well

- ☐ Rethink your schedule into 3 designated categories:
 - Meeting / contact time (afternoons are better for most people)
 - Thinking time (put your phone in do-not-disturb mode or go walking while you contemplate, problem solve and plan)
 - Action / execution / doing time (e.g. emails, documents, reviewing, preparation)
- ☐ Identify your major distractions and time wasters. What can you remove, delegate, pull out of, scale back, put limits around, empower or involve others in? Be more discerning.
- ☐ Stop justifying being 'busy'; you make the choices in your life. Be more mindful and deliberate about where you choose to place your focus and energy, secure additional resources or renegotiate expectations. Or all of the above.
- ☐ Learn to take "recess" throughout your day. Taking a 15-minute "break" every hour increases productivity and energy by 10-12%. Do something that energises you (e.g. an interesting idea or challenge), something that lifts your spirits (e.g. a call to a close colleague, friend or family member), fill up your water, stare out the window blankly (boredom is a precursor to creativity and innovation). Taking a proper break for lunch (even if only 15 minutes) decreases fatigue and increases afternoon productivity. Embrace "strategic slacking"!
- ☐ Stop the energy suck. Avoid scheduling back-to-back meetings, it means you will always feel harried or be running late, you will never have a breather and you won't get time to decompress and clear your mindset prior to your next audience – very difficult to give your full attention, be 'fully present' or show up with your best self under such circumstances. Work on a schedule of 45-55 minute meetings and use the transition time to take a moment. Give yourself a breather.
- ☐ Consider scheduling a gym session, run or walk into your working day, especially if you have long work days, travel regularly or have other commitments at the start and end of the day that preclude regular exercise. Plan these sessions in advance, get them into your schedule and set reminders.

"IDENTIFY YOUR MAJOR DISTRACTIONS AND TIME WASTERS."

- ☐ Practice not reacting to incoming alerts or notifications like one of Pavlov's dogs. Don't check your phone every time it beeps. In fact, turn off notifications and check on a predetermined schedule to retrain your brain's neurotransmitters (particularly cortisol). Start by checking every 15 minutes, and gradually increase that to 30 minutes or more. Tell your family, friends, and colleagues that you may not respond immediately, but you will within a specified amount of time, such as 30 minutes to an hour later (or be bold and say within 24 hours to the people you can).
- ☐ Use the 15/10 approach: before you leave work, spend 15 minutes making a list of priorities for the next day and leave this at work. This will help you to switch off, and minimise preoccupation or feeling tense. It's especially valuable to complete on a Friday afternoon and can stop the Sunday night blues. When you arrive at work, spend 10 minutes reviewing this list and setting clear instructions to yourself about what is to be achieved or completed in the day.
- ☐ If you think your workload may be placing you at risk of 'burn-out' or you are unhappy with the amount of time you spend working, then stop for a moment and think: is this really how you want to live life? How you fill your days (and nights) is up to you, no one else. If you are experiencing overload, talk to someone, use the other tips in this booklet to really think about what you want from life and how this matches up to your current pattern. To get started, identify one thing you can let go of today.