

So, You Want to Start a Business?

Written by Jamie Wolf

Wednesday, 07 November 2012 08:15



Is it time to clock out?

Fail Frequently – Part 2 of 6

Welcome back! We're continuing to do a deep-dive into failure so you can recognize the different components of it and be prepared with solutions. This way you will sail successfully past roadblocks as you start over!

Today's topic is **failure to prioritize**.

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“If success depends on effective action, effective action depends on the ability to focus your attention where it is needed most, when it is needed most.□ This is the ability to separate the important from the unimportant, which is a much-needed skill in all walks of life, especially where there are ever-increasing opportunities and distractions.”

Marc and Angel

We’ve all been exposed to the idea of “time management”. We each have the same 24 hours in a day, and each 24-hour segment is broken into component parts of hours, minutes, and seconds. You already knew that, right? Let’s think of time a little differently so you can be sure to focus your attention where and when it is needed most. What I just described is “clock time” – it’s artificial, a construct we created for the sake of definition. But our experience of time is different, it’s based on our perception, on how we feel in any given situation or moment, so this ‘real’ time becomes relative. Time flies or drags depending on what you’re doing. Two hours stuck in traffic or a meeting can feel like 12 years. And yet our 12-year-old children seem to have grown up in only two hours.

The reason most time management tools don’t work is that you don’t need to manage your clock – all it needs is a battery. You need to manage you and you live in real time; you get in a zone and time flies, you get distracted doing something unplanned and time passes, and when you’re bored, depressed, or sick, time stalls.

The good news is that real time is based on your perceptions, on how you perceive your experience – in other words, real time exists in your head. Consciously or by default you create how you experience real time; anything you create, you can manage. Here’s another way to think about it. Everyone’s heard the expression ‘time is money’ but let’s put a twist on that. Let’s say that real time is a currency and there are only three ways to withdraw it, or to *spend* time:

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thoughts, conversations and actions. Unlike clock time composed of hours, minutes, and seconds, real time is allocated into what you think, what you say, and what you do. You can't stop distractions, annoying people, useless meetings or frustrating traffic jams, but you can *choose*

to control the way you respond, mentally, verbally, and physically. In other words, you can prioritize where you focus your energy.

Which brings us back to time management and prioritizing. How do you choose to spend your time? You are in the driver's seat. Therefore, you can remove any self-sabotage or self-limitation you have around not having enough time.

Decide what you want your time to DO for you, what you want to accomplish with your time.

To achieve success you must first be able to define success so that you know what it looks like and can recognize when you've arrived. It serves no purpose to spend time on thoughts, words, or actions that don't move you closer to your intended goal. You fail when you spend time that doesn't yield what you have determined in advance that you want.

You can fail to have a happy marriage or a good relationship with your kids. You can fail to achieve or maintain good health, to be financially solvent, to perform adequately in school or at work, to start your dream business, to enjoy life, your friends, and your community. However, if you determine that having a happy family and enough money to pay your bills are your definition of success, then you can choose to spend your thoughts, conversations, and actions making those things happen.

For instance, say your family enjoys kayaking together and time spent kayaking achieves your stated desired outcome of a happy, close knit family. To accomplish having weekly kayaking outings you may need to do some or all of the following tasks: purchase kayaks, paddles, and lifejackets, create a place to store them, take lessons so you know how to use the equipment, get charts so you know where to go, get sunscreen and bug spray and water bottles together, get a carrier for your vehicle to transport the kayaks, have a cooler in which to pack lunches. Most importantly, you need to *spend time* actually kayaking as a group on a regular basis. If, rather than prioritizing your time to achieve a state you have placed importance on, you spend time on Facebook, watching Real Housewives, socializing at the office so you have to make up work on the weekend, or volunteering for too many projects, you may not have the time to get your family out kayaking regularly. In other words, you did not effectively prioritize your

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thoughts, words and actions and you failed to accomplish your goal.

Two important things to note in the scenario above: First, the majority of the items were TASKS. Tasks are often items that need doing only once or are very time-delimited. They don't necessarily take mental energy or creativity. Tasks are something that CAN benefit from clock-time. You can schedule them in slots, do them during periods when you don't need focus or have your best energy, and you can check them off. Second, in the above example, if you do spend time kayaking but your thoughts are elsewhere or your words aren't connected to your goal of a close knit family, your paddling actions won't accomplish your stated desire. Once you have labeled something a priority, you must align what you think and what you say with what you do to truly achieve your desired outcome.

What do you deem a priority if you are starting a business? Whatever is likely to bring you revenue in the short term, medium term, and long term. Your goal as a businessperson is to make money and sustain your company. Even if you are running a charity, you must have an efficient business that will still be alive in 5 or 10 years. Focus on attracting prospects, converting them to clients, retaining clients, and improving efficiencies. These are your priorities! (I am making the assumption you already focused on creating a high value product or service as your offering.) Get customers, keep customers, and spend each dollar as intentionally as possible so you know exactly what the ROI (return on investment) is for every effort you make. Remember to say thank you to those who look at your offer, those who buy, and those who come back. And definitely remember to give back. Your community needs you!

Be fully present and conscious with what you think, say, and do. Appreciate the difference between clock time and real time. Set your priorities and regularly measure your progress and your results. Do these things and you will master the art of prioritizing. When you are successful at setting and fulfilling priorities, you are successful!

Beaufort resident Jamie Wolf is the author of 'Start Over! Start Now! Ten Keys to SUCCESS in Business and Life' and ten accompanying guidebooks. ☐ If you're ready to be Master of your Fate and Captain of your Soul, she invites you to come on board! Jamie offers online courses and coaching for entrepreneurs and people interested in starting over or in starting their own business. Visit her at <http://www.thestartover.com>

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