

THE
Lawyer Life
COLLECTIVE

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The Essential Time Management
Toolkit

THE LAWYER LIFE COLLECTIVE
LIFE & CAREER COACHING
FOR LAWYERS

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CONSTRAINT & PRIORITIES

1. Brainstorm a list of what is important to you in your life.

2. Now prioritize these in order of the top five:



CONSTRAINT & PRIORITIES

- 3. Why have you chosen these five and put them in this order?**
- 4. Now take a few minutes and think about yesterday. How much of your time was spent on each of these priorities?**

CONSTRAINT & PRIORITIES

5. With this perspective, would you change how you are currently spending your time? In what ways would you change it?

6. What things would you like to eliminate from your life in order to have more focus on your priorities?



CONSTRAINT & PRIORITIES

7. Can you think of ways to constrain your focus so it is in line with what is most important to you?

8. How can you make your priorities more constrained, simplified and specific?



CONSTRAINT & PRIORITIES

9. For each priority, how do you have to think, feel and act to get the result you want?



SETTING A GOAL AND DO GOALS

1. What is the goal you have or the outcome you want to create in your life?
2. List everything you need to do to accomplish this goal. If you have a big to do list, break it down by each step. These are you “do-goals”.



SETTING A GOAL AND DO GOALS

4. What are the obstacles that you would face in completing these do-goals?
5. How will you overcome these obstacles? What is your plan/decision ahead of time for each one?
6. How will you need to change to be the person who has achieved this result?



THE GOAL – CALENDARING IT

1. What is the outcome you want to achieve? Why?
2. What are the actions you need to take to achieve it? (List all actions big and small, include things you need to learn and figure out, etc.)
3. Now list these items in order and assign a time frame to each.



THE GOAL – CALENDARING IT

4. **What can you accomplish in the next two weeks in relation to this goal?**
5. **With each item on this to do list, if you schedule this on the calendar how long until your goal is accomplished?**
6. **How could you make this outcome inevitable with massive action?**

THE GOAL – CALENDARING IT

7. How long are you willing to take action to achieve this outcome?



OBSTACLES

List all the obstacles to achieving this goal.



OBSTACLES/STRATEGIES

List any obstacles you might face in achieving this goal, and then list your strategy to overcome those obstacles. (Use multiple sheets if needed.)

Obstacle:

Strategy:

Obstacle:

Strategy:



BURNOUT

1. Are you burnt out, overwhelmed, or have you given up? Why?
2. If you aren't currently one of these things, write about a time when you were.
3. In what ways are you being fueled by stress and scarcity?



BURNOUT

5. Were you working toward a certain result? If so, what did you think the result would provide that you didn't already have?
6. Why were you willing to push yourself so hard for that result?
7. Do you tend to feel sorry for yourself when you work with a lot of stress and busyness?

BURNOUT

9. Are you able to easily recognize when you are doing this?

10. How can you be proactive and prevent burnout in the future?

11. How can you make sure you don't mistake overwhelm for burnout so you can keep working toward your goals?



OVERWHELM

1. Write down all of the things that are making you feel overwhelmed right now. Everything!



OVERWHELM

3. For every item on the above list, indicate the deadline for each item.
4. For every item on the above list, highlight only those items with deadlines that were clear, fixed, and confirmed to you in the last 24 hours.
5. Are there items on this list that could be used as learning opportunities for others? How so?
6. Are there items on this list that aren't the best use of your skillset? Why or why not?



OVERWHELM

8. What could you gain if you delegated some of these tasks or asked for help?

9. Is it hard to bring in support or delegate some of these tasks? Why or why not?



OVERWHELM

11. If you only focused your energies on items with clear, fixed, confirmed deadlines, how could you approach the above tasks?

12. Are there any items on the list that “feel” like they need to get done even if they don’t have a clear, fixed, confirmed deadline? List them here.



OVERWHELM

14. For each item in #9, are there any facts to support your perceived deadlines?

15. For each item with perceived or unclear deadlines, what steps could you take to get clear on the deadline and expectations?



OVERWHELM

16. What would it get you to get clarity around perceived or unclear deadlines?

17. On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to take steps to gather additional information to get clarity around your workload and perceived expectations?



OVERWHELM

18. How else could you think about the items in #1 that are fueling your overwhelm? For example:

I am learning how to resolve an overloaded plate; I can figure this out; I can use this as a learning opportunity to bring in support and be vulnerable; I'm willing to experiment with different things to help manage my life and stress level; Nothing has gone wrong here, this is just a puzzle to be solved

19. When you plug one of these new thoughts into the Model, what changes?



DAILY CHECK IN

Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.

Life can be messy, but we can begin each day with fresh eyes and clear priorities.

Today, my top three priorities are:

-
-
-

Today, I am grateful for:

Today, I look forward to:

Today, I will avoid:

Today, I will practice believing:



Organize, Focus, Find More Time

Friends,

Below are the steps I use (and I teach my clients to use) each week to reduce stress, increase focus, find more time, and throw away to do lists. If you commit to this process, you will have a renewed focus and more time to spend on the things that are most important to you. Enjoy!

Busyness is not a badge of honor or a sign of importance, it is the sign of mismanaged time.

Step 1: Brain Dump

List every single to do list item swirling around your head. Everything that is causing you stress. Everything. No matter how far off in the future it seems. If it is taking up your mental energy, write it down. I find it best to separate professional and personal to dos so I create two separate brain download lists.

Example: Order favors for NYE party, call mom, schedule gutter cleaning, go to the gym four times this week, walk the dogs (they are getting fat!), laundry, pick out outfit for Sarah's party, organize materials for taxes, finish the prohibited transaction memo for Client X, prepare speech for ABA section meeting, lunch with client prospect Q...



Break down every large project into smaller chunks and add each chunk to your list.

Step 2: Identify Priorities

Rate every item on your lists one of the following: Immediate, High Priority, Medium Priority, Low Priority

Nobody is too busy, it's just a matter of managing priorities.

Step 3: Look at the big picture

Evaluate the number of items in each category. Too many Immediate or High Priority items means either (i) You need to develop a game plan (see below) or (ii) you are treating too many things as Immediate or High Priority. (Usually it's a combination of both.)



Organize, Focus, Find More Time

GAME PLAN

DELEGATE AS MANY OF THESE ITEMS AS YOU CAN

DISCUSS YOUR IMMEDIATE AND HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS WITH OTHERS INVOLVED – CAN THE ITEM BE DOWNGRADED; CAN OTHERS SUPPORT YOU?

RE-EVALUATE THE ITEMS AND HOW YOU HAVE CLASSIFIED THEM. FORCE YOURSELF TO ASK “IF THIS DOESN’T GET DONE RIGHT NOW, WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?” THEN RE-EVALUATE YOUR LIST.

IF YOU DECIDE TO DELEGATE ITEMS OR DISCUSS THEM WITH THE TEAM, ADD THOSE ACTIONS TO YOUR LIST.



Too many medium or low priority items?

These items are ripe training opportunities for your team members. If they aren’t a priority, consider whether they could be used as a learning/training experience for those around you.

It’s not the load that breaks you down, it’s the way you carry it.

Lena Horne

Step 4: Allocate Your Energy

Assign an amount of time to each item on your list. Try to limit yourself and focus your energies. Force yourself to focus, act quickly and produce. If you give yourself too much time to do something you will use it. If you squeeze yourself you might be surprised at your efficiency.

Starve your distractions, feed your focus.

Step 5: Schedule It!

Put each of your tasks on your calendar. For me this means putting all tasks on my Outlook calendar and also recording all tasks for the next week on my written calendar. (Yes, overkill but that’s how I do things.)

Step 5 Tips: Plan your work week; focus on your priorities. First, schedule time to work on each high priority client project for the week. Second, add preparation time for each meeting on your calendar. Got a meeting with the team about a new client lawsuit? Schedule 20 minutes to review the case – whether that is immediately before the meeting or the day before, it doesn’t matter, just make time to be prepared and show up as your best.



Organize, Focus, Find More Time



If you can, schedule 1-2 hour “work blocks” in each day. These blocks will insulate your day and allow you to make time for unexpected client needs or impromptu projects. Same thing for your weekends – reserve blocks of unstructured time for yourself.

Step 6: Be Kind to Yourself

Include unstructured free time during each day. The goal is not to find ways to overload yourself more; it's to find ways to **set yourself free**.

Identify items that are recurring and set up a recurring calendar appointment.

Example: I schedule 1 hour every Thursday night to plan meals for the following week, order groceries and schedule their delivery for Saturday morning. I schedule 1 hour every Friday afternoon to do my calendar work for the following week. I schedule 2 hours every Sunday to meal prep and/or cook for the upcoming week. (I watch Sex and the City re-runs the entire time. It's fantastic.) I schedule 1 hour each week to read important legal updates and newsletters that I accumulate during the week.

Build in your meals and plan to be healthy.

Nothing can crash your schedule more than starvation or dinnertime audibles. Plan ahead; decide what you will have for each meal and include it in your calendar.

Step 7: Honor Commitments

Once your calendar is set – honor it. Respect yourself enough to stick to the plans you have made for yourself. If you can honor the commitments you make to yourself and can trust yourself, you are one step closer to tackling that big dream. Without commitment you will never move forward. It's a skill. Practice it.



**For every minute spent in organizing,
an hour is earned.**

- Benjamin Franklin.

