

# TRANSFORMING PRODUCTIVITY

The Entrepreneurs Guide To  
Getting Things Done

---

GUIDE AND WORKBOOK  
INCLUDED

**Keith Lamont McMillian**  
Founder/ Director





4101 Northview Drive, Suite C9, Jackson, MS 39206



1- 888-553-5757



[www.KDMackFoundation.org](http://www.KDMackFoundation.org)



[info@KDMackFoundation.org](mailto:info@KDMackFoundation.org)



[@KDMackFoundation.org](https://www.facebook.com/KDMackFoundation.org)



[@KDMackFoundation](https://www.instagram.com/KDMackFoundation)

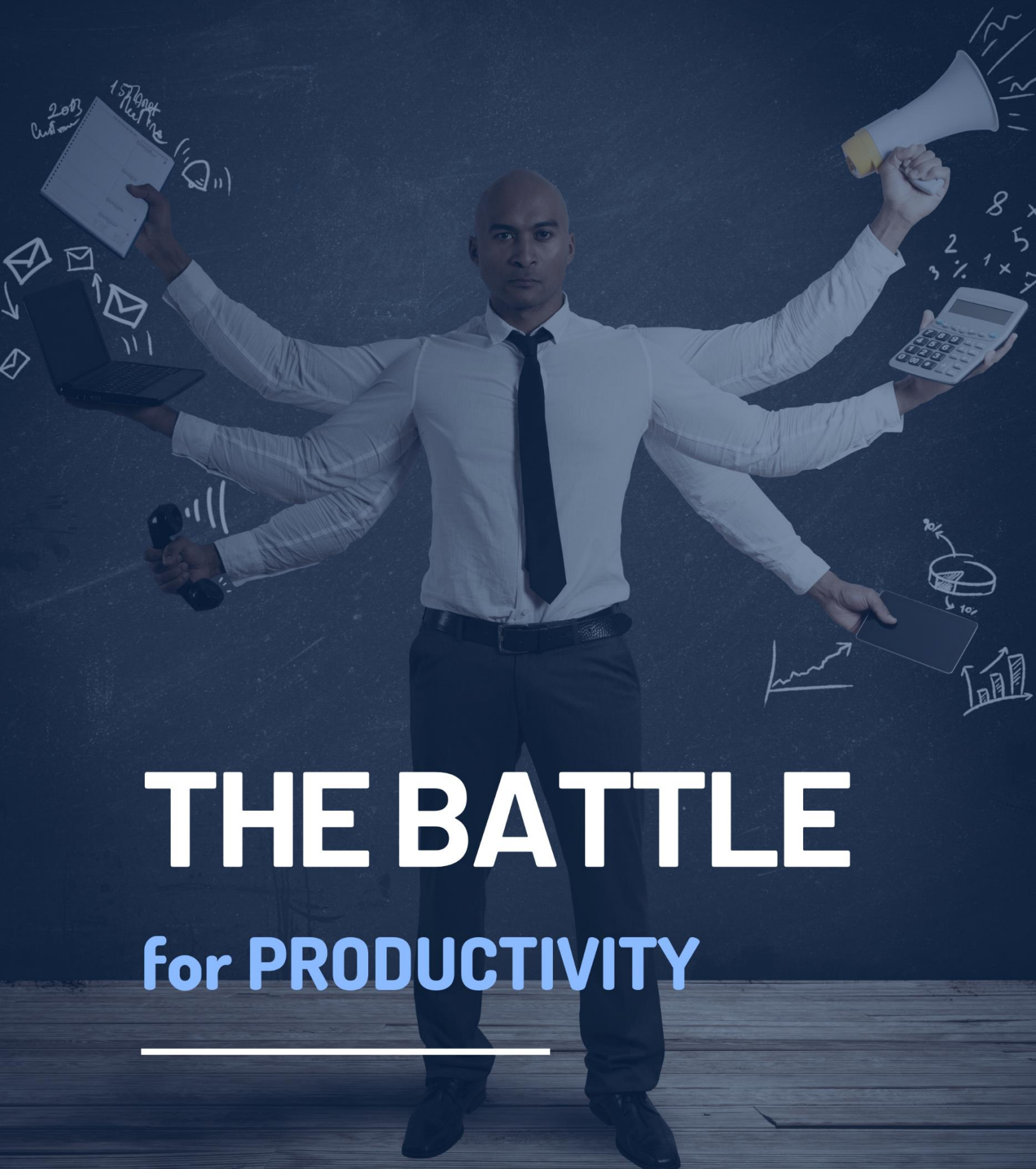
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this report may be modified or altered in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written, dated and signed permission from the author.

DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES: The information presented herein represents the view of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update his opinion based on the new conditions. The report is for informational purposes only. While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this report, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional. If advice concerning legal or related matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought. This report is not intended for use as a source of legal or accounting advice. You should be aware of any laws which govern business transactions or other business practices in your country and state. Any reference to any person or business whether living or dead is purely coincidental.

Copyright © 2020

# Table of Contents

<b>THE BATTLE FOR PRODUCTIVITY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SYSTEMS OVER GOALS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE PROBLEM WITH GOALS.....	9
THE POWER OF SYSTEMS .....	10
<i>What are Systems?</i> .....	10
SO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH GOALS? .....	11
<i>Goals Limit Your Threshold for Happiness</i> .....	12
<i>What Happens When You Reach Your Goal?</i> .....	12
HOW DO SYSTEMS HELP ENTREPRENEURS? .....	14
<b>SUCCESS IS FOR FIRST-COMERS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY? .....	19
<i>Night Owls are More Prone to Negative Thought Patterns</i> .....	20
<i>Early Risers Increase Their Chance of Success</i> .....	20
7 WAYS TO BE AN EARLY RISER .....	21
<i>Tip #1: Go to Bed Earlier</i> .....	21
<i>Tip #2: Turn off the Screens</i> .....	21
<i>Tip #3: Create a Sleep Routine</i> .....	22
<i>Tip #4: Get Some Exercise</i> .....	23
<i>Tip #5: Keep Your Alarm Clock at a Distance</i> .....	23
<i>Tip #6: A Splash of Cold Water</i> .....	23
<i>Tip #7: Give Yourself a Reason to Get Up</i> .....	23
<b>MINIMIZE YOUR DISTRACTIONS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
TIP #1: MAKE PLANS THE NIGHT BEFORE .....	28
TIP #2: CUT OUT SOCIAL MEDIA.....	28
TIP #3: CREATE BOUNDARIES.....	29
TIP #4: CREATE A PRODUCTIVE SPACE.....	30
TIP #5: IT CAN'T ALL BE WORK.....	30
<b>SLAY YOUR DRAGONS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY? .....	35
PUT THAT PLAN INTO ACTION .....	36
<b>PRODUCTIVITY IS IN YOUR GRASP.....</b>	<b>39</b>



# THE BATTLE

for PRODUCTIVITY

---

Every entrepreneur wants to be productive. It feels good to look at something tangible and say, “I created this. I made this. I did this.”

To get things done. To check things off a list. To make a serious dent in your checklist.

Productivity looks different to different people, but the feeling is universal. For one person, creating an incredible presentation or meeting the needs of a specific client can make them feel amazing. For another, it may mean developing a new product or coming up with a new design.

For you, it may be completely different, but you know the good feeling you get by putting in a productive day.

# The Battle for Productivity

Productivity encourages a true sense of purpose. It offers a deep feeling of accomplishment that’s important to a happy and fulfilled life.

Being productive also gives you the freedom to spend more time with the ones you love and less time worrying about the things that are left unfinished.

If you’re looking for that sense of purpose and happiness that can come from being productive, this eBook can help you focus on the things that will get you there.

Productivity isn’t always easy. There are so many things that can cause your productivity to falter and even come to a complete stop.

As an entrepreneur, you’re constantly battling a thousand distractions that can block creativity and derail a productive morning, afternoon, or evening. These distractions may stem from your personal life, or they may be work-related.

All day long, you’re receiving:

- Notifications
- Texts
- Slack messages
- Emails
- Social media pings
- Calls
- And a whole lot more!

Just as you start getting to important matters, your phone dings. It's a new message that you feel like you should probably check. You look at your phone and, the next thing you know, 45 minutes have passed. You've been sucked into the black hole of social media.

And even if you're able to set aside distractions, you may still feel like you're not really accomplishing anything.

You're busy... but you're not productive.

You're getting things done...

...but you're not getting the right things done.

You answer a lot of emails, reply to a lot of texts, and message a lot of people on Slack...

...but still come away each day feeling like you didn't accomplish what you wanted to.

Have you ever felt like you were working *really* hard, but getting nowhere? You go to bed exhausted, wake up exhausted, but you don't feel like you have anything to show for it. You know there has to be a better way, but you just don't know where to start.

In this book, you'll discover the 4 pillars of productivity.

These four pillars will help you achieve the sense of accomplishment that you're really striving for. Instead of going to bed feeling defeated, with piles of work still sitting on the table, you can go to bed knowing that you've done enough for the day.

You've put in the work, and you can be fulfilled in what you've completed.

# TASK – BATTLE FOR PRODUCTIVITY

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current levels of productivity?

What are the biggest productivity challenges you face right now?

What specific distractions or activities keep you from being productive?

# TASK - BATTLE FOR PRODUCTIVITY

Who do you know that is very productive? What makes them productive?

What does an ideal day look like for you in terms of productivity?





# SYSTEMS

over GOALS

---

You've probably been told that in order to be productive, you should set goals. Big goals. S.M.A.R.T. goals. Stretch goals.

The thinking goes that in order to achieve anything meaningful, you need to turn it into a goal.

Well... maybe.

While goals can be really helpful, they aren't always ideal.

## The Problem with Goals

Goals have one big problem: they have a termination point.

In other words, you're not successful until you've actually reached your goal, and until you've reached the goal you might feel like:

- You're spinning your wheels, not going anywhere.
- You're a failure.
- You haven't achieved anything since the goal seems so distant.

Measuring success this way can make you feel defeated, especially if you have big, ambitious goals.

For example, if you want to own a Fortune 500 hundred company, nothing you do until you reach that goal will make you feel like you're succeeding. You may be making incredible strides in your business, but they will fall flat compared to your hard-to-achieve goal.

Since goals have an "end", you never feel like a success until you've actually achieved your goal. And even when you achieve your goal, you simply have to start all over again with the next goal.

And the reality is, you might not even know what the "next" goal should be. So, you feel aimless. You know you should be seeking to accomplish something, but you're not sure what that something should be.

Even worse, you might feel like since you already accomplished your goal you can go back to your old habits instead of pushing and growing. You lose all the forward progress that you made.

It's a setup to make you feel like a consistent failure.

## The Power of Systems

There is another, better way.

They're called systems.

Systems allow you to:

- Make progress on your goals *every single day*
- Guarantee your success
- Help you reach your milestones
- Avoid the feeling that you're just spinning your wheels

## What are Systems?

Scott Adams, who you may know as the author of the famous *Dilbert* cartoons, wrote about systems in his book, *How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big: Kind of the Story of My Life*.

He explained the difference between systems and goals like this: "Losing ten pounds may be a goal, while the system is learning to eat right."

Here's another example. Suppose your goal is to clean the house from top to bottom. You've spent the whole day cleaning, and you momentarily feel satisfied with what you've done.

However, if you have no system in place, your home will quickly go into disarray shortly thereafter.

After a few days...

...the dishes will overwhelm the sink, the laundry will pile up, and the floors will be a mess.

A system, on the other hand, would be a cleaning routine. Instead of cleaning the entire house in one day, you train yourself to do small tasks each day. The result is a house that's tidy for more than a few hours.

Here's a business example:

- Goal: Generate \$50,000 in revenue over the next two months.
- System: Every morning you make three cold calls (or however many is necessary) to potential new customers.

The system ensures that you reach the end result.

Using a system doesn't mean that you have no goals. It just means that you start to focus more on the process than the final destination.

## So, What's Wrong with Goals?

You've probably been told your whole life to set lofty goals and work really hard to achieve them.

On its face, there's nothing wrong with having goals. Goals can inspire, motivate, and challenge us. They give us something to look forward to and a reason to continue striving.

But goals can also be rigid and unmoving.

Let's imagine you've set a firm goal for your company. You would like to make X amount of sales by a certain date.

You really hustle to make those sales. You push your employees to do the same. You may make a lot of sales.

But what happens when you don't reach your goal amount?

Chances are...

...you'll feel like a failure.

All the sales that you *did* make won't bring you joy because you *didn't sell enough*. You'll feel unproductive and you may even want to quit.

What's really unfortunate about this scenario is that you may have missed many opportunities along the way.

Bottom line?

Being overly focused on a distant goal can easily give you tunnel vision.

Your determination to complete a singular goal may have kept you from taking the time to develop a new product that could be sold for twice as much.

Scott Adams writes:

*"...if you focus on one particular goal, your odds of achieving it are better than if you have no goal. But you also miss out on opportunities that might have been far better than your goal...With a system you are less likely to miss one opportunity because you were too focused on another. With a system, you are always scanning for any opportunity."*

## Goals Limit Your Threshold for Happiness

The big issue with goals is that you're so narrowed in on a future time that you aren't happy until you hit that mark.

Once you reach a goal:

- The feeling of happiness will likely fade quickly.
- You'll then feel the need to achieve the next goal and the next.
- You're continually chasing something that is, at its best, fleeting.

Productivity expert James Clear has also written extensively about systems versus goals.

In his book, *Atomic Habits*, he explains:

*"When you fall in love with the process rather than the product, you don't have to wait to give yourself permission to be happy. You can be satisfied anytime your system is running. And a system can be successful in many different forms, not just the one you first envision."*

## What Happens When You Reach Your Goal?

You may also realize that once you've achieved a certain goal, you have nothing else to work towards.

For example, let's suppose you set a personal goal to run a marathon.

In order to achieve your goal:

- You forced yourself to go to the gym four times a week.
- You went running even though you didn't feel like it.
- You cut things out of your diet even though you didn't want to.

You worked *really* hard, but you didn't enjoy the process that got you there.

Once you met your goal, you couldn't stand the thought of going back to that regimented schedule.

Pretty soon, you've abandoned your running routine and you've gone back to your former lifestyle. Your muscles soften, you put the weight back on, and you can't stand to look at your running shoes.

What went wrong?

You were focused on the goal, but the system was unbearable.

You probably started training for a marathon because you wanted to be healthier and stronger.

Scott Adams explains that while you can set a goal to exercise three to four times a week on a rigid schedule, if you're not enjoying the exercise, there's a much higher risk that you're going to give it up.

You may do it for a time, but in the long run, you'll probably lack the willpower to continue because it feels like a punishment.

Instead, he suggests choosing to be active each day to a level that feels good.  
In this scenario...

- You're training yourself that being active is positive.
- You're going to get a psychological lift from the exercise.
- You're slowly training your body and mind to enjoy being active as opposed to hating it.

You'll naturally want to challenge yourself as you continue to enjoy being active more. Your original activity level may start with short, slow walks, but you may eventually find that you like running as well.

You'll do so because you want to, and not because you're forcing yourself to.

## How Do Systems Help Entrepreneurs?

First and foremost, systems are much more flexible than goals.

If you have a type A personality, this shift may make you feel a little uncomfortable at first. It may feel like you're giving up control by not focusing so much energy on a future outcome.

The big question you have to ask yourself is: What happens when you shift your focus from a concrete goal to the process that gets you there?

If you're focused on the system, does that mean you're abandoning your goals and wandering aimlessly?

The short answer is: no. Here's why.

Suppose a sports coach chooses to focus on picking great players, developing incredible plays, and creating effective practice routines instead of winning.

What would be the result? They'll probably have a winning team.

James Clear writes:

*"Every Olympian wants to win a gold medal. Every candidate wants to get the job. And if successful and unsuccessful people share the same goals, then the goal cannot be what differentiates the winners from the losers...The goal had always been there. It was only when they implemented a system of continuous small improvements that they achieved a different outcome."*

In order for your business to be successful, it's vital to understand what is working and what isn't working in your *process*.

Think about the things in your system that are working and the things that are not.

What does your hiring process look like?

- Do you have strong employees that fit your vision?
- If not, what practices can you change to hire better employees?

Think about your marketing campaign and the system that drives it.

- Is it working?
- What changes can you implement in your system to reach more customers and drive more business?

Now think about your products or services and the systems you have in place to support them.

- What can you do to improve your product?
- How can you streamline the process and make things more efficient?
- Are your products or services testing well?
- If not, what can you do to improve them?

These small, day-to-day improvements will make you feel successful, fulfilled, and productive. Learning how to push through daily struggles will bring you confidence and happiness in a way that hard to reach goals never will.

A system teaches you how to become better at what you do, and it greatly develops your skill level. If something isn't working well, you have the flexibility to change it and move on.

You still have the skills that you developed, but you can now use them in a new direction.

That's the gift of a system.



# TASK – SYSTEM OVER GOALS

What has been your experience in setting goals?

What are your current goals?

Why are systems more effective in helping you achieve your goals?

# TASK – SYSTEM OVER GOALS

What systems will you set up to help you achieve your goals?

If you stick with your systems, what will the end results be? Will you achieve the goals you want?



**SUCCESS**

**is for FIRST COMERS**

---

There's nothing quite like the peaceful calm of the early morning hours. And the fact is, rising early is one of the key things that most successful entrepreneurs do.

The early morning hours are one of the best times to tackle the most important tasks. Rising early allows you to accomplish great things before most of the world has even woken up.

This “mind over mattress” thinking has been around for a long time.

You may even be familiar with Benjamin Franklin's quote, “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

There are numerous successful entrepreneurs who are early risers:

- Apple CEO Tim Cook gets up as early as 3:45 am.
- AOL CEO Tim Armstrong starts his day at 5:00 a.m. but tries not to send too many early morning emails
- FLOTUS Michelle Obama is working out by 4:30 a.m.
- Twitter co-founder, Jack Dorsey, wakes up at 5:30 am to meditate and go for a six-mile jog.
- Starbucks CEO, Howard Schultz, is up at 4:00 am and in the office by 6:00 am.
- Richard Branson, a business entrepreneur behind the Virgin group of companies, rises at 5:45 am for an early morning workout and breakfast.

And there many more examples of these early bird business machines.

What makes early risers successful, and how do you become an early riser?

## What Does the Science Say?

You may be wondering if this old adage is actually true. Do early risers *really* live happier more productive lives?

Here's what the researchers have to say about it.

## Night Owls are More Prone to Negative Thought Patterns

In 2014, the Department of Psychology at Binghamton University completed a study that included 100 undergraduate students. Their study found that both people who get less sleep, and those who delay sleep, are prone to Repetitive Negative Thinking (RNT).

RNT is a transdiagnostic disorder that can be observed in other disorders such as depression and anxiety. It's correlated with high levels of worry and negative thought patterns.

## Early Risers Increase Their Chance of Success

In 2010, Harvard Business Review released a study by biologist Christoph Randler about early risers.

367 university students participated in his survey, and they were asked what times of the day they were most energetic. They were also asked how willing and able they were to take action or change a situation to their advantage.

Randler reported, "A higher percentage of the morning people agreed with statements that indicate proactivity, such as 'I spend time identifying long-range goals for myself' and 'I feel in charge of making things happen.'"

He went on to say:

*"My earlier research showed that they tend to get better grades in school, which get them into better colleges, which then lead to better job opportunities. Morning people also anticipate problems and try to minimize them, my survey showed. They're proactive. A number of studies have linked this trait, proactivity, with better job performance, greater career success, and higher wages."*

A similar study was conducted in 2008 by Kendry Clay at the University of North Texas. The study focused on 824 undergraduate students who were enrolled in psychology classes at the university. They were asked questions about their sleep habits and daytime functioning.

The study found that students who preferred the morning had higher GPAs, and those who preferred the evening had lower GPAs.

Both of these studies had the same conclusion: Early risers have a higher chance of success.

## 7 Ways to be an Early Riser

Rising early might sound like a really good plan, but it's not always as easy as it sounds. Thankfully, there are many things you can do to jump-start the day and ditch the bed.

### Tip #1: Go to Bed Earlier

One of the easiest ways to get out of bed in the morning is to go to bed earlier at night.

The late evening hours might feel like a good time to be productive, but the truth is:

- You have a limited threshold for productivity.
- Your progress is going to stall.
- Your work is probably going to get sloppy.

Instead, do your most productive work during the daytime hours and leave the evening for rest and time with family and friends.

Some people are more prone to staying up late and sleeping in late, but this sleep pattern can be modified.

Try going to bed one hour earlier and getting up one hour earlier to start.

### Tip #2: Turn off the Screens

We live in a world full of screens - smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. We're surrounded by screens.

While these tools can be extremely helpful for business, they can also affect your sleep.

The National Sleep Foundation says that technology/screens can affect our sleep in three very big ways:

1. They suppress melatonin, the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle.
2. They keep your brain active. By keeping your mind engaged with television or work, you're telling your brain that it's time to stay awake.
3. Your alerts can wake you up at night. If you keep your mobile phone next to your bed, the sounds of emails, texts, and notifications can disturb your sleep.

To prevent technology from disturbing your precious sleep, turn it off or put it away a few hours before you go to bed. This will help your mind unwind and get you ready for sleep.

While many people use their phone for an alarm clock, this creates a huge temptation to check social media or try to fit in a few more minutes of work late at night. Do yourself a favor and go buy an alarm clock. Charge your cell phone in another room and get rid of the nighttime distractions.

## Tip #3: Create a Sleep Routine

Creating a sleep routine is what pediatricians recommend to parents that desperately want their babies and toddlers to go to bed at night.

However, this idea is not limited to children. A sleep routine is an outstanding way for anyone to get the sleep they need.

If possible, pick the same time to go to bed and to rise every day. Your body will adjust to this schedule and you may find that, eventually, you won't even need an alarm clock to wake up.

The National Sleep Foundation suggests:

- Finding a relaxing routine activity away from bright lights
- Trying to avoid activities that can cause excitement or stress

If you need something to occupy your thoughts before bed, try reading a book instead of watching a movie. Reading is known for reducing stress and helping you get a good night's sleep. According to a study conducted by Cognitive Neuropsychologist Dr. David Lewis, reading can reduce stress by 68%.

Other things you can include in your nighttime routine are:

- A warm, non-caffeinated drink
- Meditation or prayer
- A warm bath
- Breathing routines
- Using an app like "Calm", which helps you wind down each night

## Tip #4: Get Some Exercise

Getting a good night's rest can be as easy as putting in some good exercise during the day. Intense exercise is the most conducive for a good night's rest, but any level of activity is helpful.

Exercise has been found to increase time spent in deep sleep, improve the quality of sleep, and it can help you sleep longer.

In addition, physical activity is known to reduce stress and anxiety -- two things that can greatly affect someone's ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

## Tip #5: Keep Your Alarm Clock at a Distance

If your number one difficulty is simply waking up in the morning, set your alarm clock out of reach. If you can't keep your hands off the snooze button, this will force you to get out of bed.

Once you're up, ensure you don't crawl back into the covers.

## Tip #6: A Splash of Cold Water

If you're extra groggy in the AM, you can always try splashing cold water in your face. This cold water will help energize you and snap you into awake mode.

## Tip #7: Give Yourself a Reason to Get Up

Thinking of a compelling reason to get out of bed in the morning may be your strongest motivator for early rising.

Your reason for getting up in the morning may vary from someone else's but give yourself a good reason to wake up. Choose something that will be effective day after day.

Knowing that you can be more productive early in the morning may be enough to get out of your warm blankets. If not, maybe the thought of a tasty breakfast or a hot cup of coffee might be your reason for leaving your cozy covers.



What keeps you from rising early? If you are able to rise early, what makes it possible for you?

Does your bedtime reflect your desire to wake early?

What can you do to minimize the amount of technology you use at night?

What would an ideal sleep routine look like for you?

Do your exercise habits reinforce or hurt your sleep routines?



# **MINIMIZE** **DISTRACTIONS**

---

You know the feeling. You've prepped yourself to buckle down and start crossing things off your to-do list. It's a mile long, and it just keeps growing. You're finally in the right mindset and you're ready to fly.

You're completely geared up to knock out your list, and you're 100% ready for that feeling of relief and satisfaction you'll have at the end of a full productive day.

Then the phone buzzes -- it's a text message.

Your laptop dings with a new email.

Your phone lights up with a new notification.

An employee walks into your office with an important question.

Your phone rings – it's a non-work-related call.

You need a cup of coffee (... and I do not drink coffee that much... ).

You have to use the bathroom.

You're starting to get hungry.

Before you know it, the whole morning is blown, and you don't really have anything to show for it.

Unfortunately, **distractions are one of the main killers of productivity**. You have a lot of things coming at you, and many of them are keeping you from focusing on what truly matters.

While you're busy with these distractions, you're not actually accomplishing anything.

So how can you eliminate these distractions and get to the most important stuff?

Here are 5 tips to get rid of the distractions and get back on track.

## Tip #1: Make Plans the Night Before

Making plans the day before can be a really helpful trick to help you stay focused on the following day.

You don't have to plan out every decision but make choices about simple things that might be distractions during the day.

For example:

- What you'll wear for the day?
- What lunch you'll eat?
- What time is your first call or zoom meeting?

When you're tired in the morning, these decisions are probably going to be harder to make and can easily occupy your thought processes.

You can also set a rough schedule for yourself. For example, you may decide that you won't check your e-mail or answer text messages until you've completed two important tasks.

From 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. you'll focus solely on a specific project.

## Tip #2: Cut Out Social Media

It's now estimated that people are spending 2 hours and 22 minutes a day on social media. That's a great stat if you're trying to reach customers, but a terrible one for productivity.

Yes, social media can be a necessary resource for marketing and sales, but...

- Constantly checking your personal notifications
- Taking the time to respond to various rants
- Endlessly scrolling through pictures on Instagram
- Anxiously viewing Tik-Tok videos

**...Isn't going to help your business.**

Social media is a black hole and a major time sucker. Notifications, and social media in general, can be incredibly addictive.

Here are some strategies to help you manage your social media time:

- Set a schedule for when you'll go on social media – for example, between 10 - 11 a.m. and 4 - 5 p.m.
- Use built-in tools like “iOS Screen Time” and “Android Digital Wellbeing” to monitor or restrict social media use on your phone.
- Turn off all non-business-related notifications so you're not feeling the constant pull of “dings” distracting you.

Use your business social media accounts to engage with real customers, tweet about your newest products, and post beautiful pictures. After that, put your phone away and focus on your other tasks.

## Tip #3: Create Boundaries

In any given workday you'll have to field important calls. There may be some lines of communication that are necessary to your work day, but there are others that can be set aside.

Give yourself periods during your day when you don't check your phone, emails, or other messages.

Some entrepreneurs choose the early morning to return emails and engage with customers on social media. Others choose to focus on their list of tasks before creating new tasks introduced by outside messages.

Choose the rhythm that works best for you but ensure that you stick to it. It's critically important to set times of the day when you're not in constant contact with outside interruptions.

If possible, it's also a good plan to leave at least one day a week when you're not scheduled for a meeting. This can give you a free day to complete tasks and stay productive.

## Tip #4: Create a Productive Space

If you're working at home or in an office, it's important to create a space where you can feel productive.

Productivity produces productivity.

In other words, if you were productive in a particular space, your brain will want to be productive there again. You'll associate that place with the good feeling that you had the last time you were able to crush it at work.

Likewise, if you have a certain space that you associate with entertainment -- perhaps the living room where the TV is -- you'll want to do those fun things when you're there.

Keep your fun places and your workplaces separate and make your workspace conducive for work.

If you want your workplace to promote work, keep it tidy. A cluttered or messy space will distract you. Even if you don't feel like you have to clean it up, the disorganization will keep you from getting to your tasks.

Keep your workplace simple and easy to maintain and ensure that it has a door so you can shut out distractions when necessary.

## Tip #5: It Can't All Be Work

While there are a few successful individuals who are truly all work and no play, most human beings aren't geared that way. In fact, we're not really meant to be.

Psychiatrist Stuart Brown, the founder of the National Play Institute, understands the importance of taking time to play.

In his book *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, he writes, "The truth is that play seems to be one of the most advanced methods nature has invented to allow a complex brain to create itself."

Play opens up a person for creativity and relieves us of our heavy workloads. Some workplaces like Google have even built in areas at work for play. These spaces are meant to foster creativity and relieve stress in the workplace.

Dr. Brown also explains in his book:

*“...there is a kind of magic in play. What might seem like a frivolous or even childish pursuit is ultimately beneficial. It’s paradoxical that a little bit of “nonproductive” activity can make one enormously more productive and invigorated in other aspects of life.”*

Most human beings grow frustrated and unproductive when they force themselves to work constantly and enjoy very little. This is a *system* that is ultimately unsustainable.

There are several things that an entrepreneur can do to combat this:

1. Make work enjoyable. Find ways to make the things you do at work pleasurable and exciting as opposed to drudgery work.
2. Plan to have breaks during the day. Walk around the building, eat a good lunch, or take a mental break.
  - It may seem like these things are distractions on their own, but when coupled with more intense sessions of work, they are simply something to work forward to.
3. Choose a quitting time. Choose a part of the day to set aside work and be *finished*. It’s extremely important to have time set aside in the day to give attention to friends and family. *This is something I am currently struggling with because I have a “need” to get things done in spite of the time.* But, I do KNOW...
  - It’s also important to enjoy relaxation, play, and leisure. This gives you time to bounce back from the workday and start fresh the next day.
4. Take a vacation. Plan for certain times of the year to be non-work times. Enjoy your relationships with others and find ways to have fun. Set aside the phones, emails, and messages and focus on the other things in life that matter to you.

You may never be able to cut out all distractions but limiting them can greatly enhance your chances of success. Reduce social media, limit communication, and make time for play, and you’ll soon see that your productive periods are a lot more successful.



# TASK – MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

On a scale of 1-10, how distracted would you say you are during your workday?

What are the primary things that cause you to get distracted?

How can you create space and time for uninterrupted work?

# TASK – MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

How much more would you accomplish if you had an undistracted day?

What steps will you take to incorporate rest and play into your life?



**SLAY**

**YOUR DRAGONS**

---

The final pillar we will focus on is prioritizing your work day. While it's easy to start the day with low hanging fruit, like email, the most productive entrepreneurs focus on getting their most important task done first.

Experts always recommend that you slay your dragon (hardest task) first.

Mark Twain said, "If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And If it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first."

In other words, tackle the hardest things before you do anything else.

## What Does the Research Say?

How does this theory stack up in real life? Does it really make sense to do the hard things first?

In 2017, Harvard Business School released a working paper called *Task Selection and Workload: A Focus on Completing Easy Tasks Hurts Long-Term Performance*.

The study discussed in the working paper was conducted in an emergency department in a metropolitan hospital. They... assembled [their] data from the emergency department for twenty-four months in fiscal years 2006-2007 involving over 90,000 distinct patient encounters."

The study was meant to discover how starting with easier tasks versus harder tasks might affect productivity.

*The study concluded that completing easier tasks does create a short-term sense of satisfaction, but it can negatively impact long-term productivity.*

The paper explains:

*"By selecting the easier task (exploitation) an individual gets work done quicker – and likely feels good doing it. However, by choosing the harder task (exploration) one creates an opportunity to learn. Although always selecting the harder task may be suboptimal, if one continually chooses the exploitation path then longer-term performance suffers."*

In other words, a short-term victory feels good at the moment. It makes a person feel productive when they accomplish something.

However, because they are not pushing themselves to learn and overcome the harder tasks, they're actually limiting their potential.

Not only that, but the study found that the physicians who habitually chose the easier tasks first were less profitable to the hospital in the long run.

## Put That Plan into Action

Only you know what your most difficult or complicated tasks are but do your best to take on those jobs first. Hit them first thing in the morning when you're at your strongest. Even if your difficult tasks don't take you the longest, they're going to take a lot more effort.

As the day goes on, your ability to focus diminishes. Your willpower may fall apart, and you'll want to avoid your work and put it off until the next day.

If you choose your hardest jobs first, you'll be able to finish the day up with your easiest work. That feeling of productivity from easy tasks will help propel you into the next day when you're ready to slay your dragons once again.

Do you gravitate toward doing the hard or easy things first at work?

Why is it so tempting to do the easiest things first at work?

Why is doing the easiest things first usually a bad strategy in terms of productivity?

# TASK – SLAY YOUR DRAGONS

What steps can you take to ensure that you do the more difficult tasks first?

If you do your most difficult tasks first, how will that improve the rest of your day?



**PRODUCTIVITY**

**is in your GRASP**

---



The fresh fruit of productivity is well within your grasp. You want that good feeling of productivity and it's entirely in your control.

The four pillars included in this guide are actionable ideas that you can *start today*:

- Pillar #1. Develop a system that works for you. Make it sustainable and continue tweaking it for the best results.
- Pillar #2. Wake up early in the morning, ready for the day while the rest of the world sleeps.
- Pillar #3. Cut out the countless distractions that prohibit your work instead of enhancing it.
- Pillar #4. Overcome your most difficult tasks first. Afterward, enjoy the fruits of your labor with an easier afternoon or evening.

Your new and productive work-style will help you live that happy and fulfilled life that so many people are seeking.

At the end of the day, you can put your work aside and invest in the relationships in your life that are most meaningful. You can rest easy knowing that you gave your best effort and put in a productive and fruitful work day.

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

Keith Lamont McMillian is a qualified manager of people and projects who accomplishes goals through building and nurturing productive business relationships. A talented businessman and leadership professional, McMillian has excelled in his craft through customer service, project management, and team building. As the Founding Director of the K D Mack Foundation, McMillian applies his managerial and project coordination skills coupled with his passion to ensure that the non-profit goals and missions are achieved.

A proven leader, McMillian provides ways to enhance operational systems. He employs every means within his capability to see that his aim is achieved. McMillian is well-respected for his organizational, problem solving, and outstanding managerial skill. An inspirational personality, Keith is passionate about finding better ways to improve the lives of young people through entrepreneurship and leadership development. McMillian has experience and industry training in management, project coordination, operations, and customer service spanning nearly 20 years.

Keith Lamont Mcmillian holds a Bachelor of Science in Professional Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master of Arts in Political Science from Jackson State University. He also holds a Master of Science in Leadership from Grand Canyon University.

## **ABOUT K D MACK FOUNDATION**

Connecting communities to resources is key to the K. D. Mack Foundation's mission of enhancing the quality of life through improving the awareness of the impact of dementia and schizophrenia in communities. Through its work, the foundation serves to bridge the gaps in dementia and schizophrenia health services while also furthering entrepreneurial development skills that will aide in creating income, opportunity, and economic growth.

Focused on the increased awareness of the impact of dementia and schizophrenia, the Foundation strives to break down the stigma that is often associated with these types of mental illnesses.

For more information, visit: [www.KDMackFoundation.org](http://www.KDMackFoundation.org)