PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Choices That Shape Our Day



It is only 10 a.m., but your inbox is filling up. A colleague needs an answer, your to-do list keeps growing, and an unexpected request has landed on your desk. You have not started your most important task, yet you already feel mentally drained. Sound familiar?

Our workdays are filled with decisions, from choosing which email to answer first to managing competing priorities. Repeated decision-making can add to our mental demands.

This brings us to decision fatigue, a concept associated with changes in decision-making after sustained decision demands. [1] As demands accumulate, we may struggle to weigh options, prioritise tasks, or make decisions carefully.

RECOGNISE BEFORE YOU REACT

Decision fatigue can be difficult to recognise during a busy workday. You might postpone decisions, choose the easiest solution, or struggle to weigh options after a demanding stretch of work.



Rather than judging yourself for being unproductive, consider what might be contributing to the feeling. Heavy workloads, stress, and constant interruptions can also affect concentration. Recognising these patterns allows us to pause and respond intentionally.

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MAKE SPACE FOR WHAT MATTERS



Being effective does not mean giving every decision equal attention. It means knowing which decisions deserve your energy.

Start by identifying two or three priorities each morning. Establish routines for recurring tasks, use templates where appropriate, and set specific times to check emails. Whenever possible, schedule tasks requiring deeper thinking during the hours when you feel most alert.

When your mind feels overwhelmed, take a short break to regain perspective before returning to the task.

Pause



Reflect



Choose



TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT:



- Which everyday decisions consume unnecessary time and energy?
- Which decisions deserve my attention most today?
- What is one choice I can simplify this week?

We cannot eliminate every decision, but we can approach them intentionally. By simplifying routine choices and focusing on what matters, we can bring greater clarity, focus, and purpose to our work.

-Personal effectiveness is not about doing everything at once; it is about making thoughtful choices about what matters most.-

Reference

1. Pignatiello, G. A., Martin, R. J., & Hickman, R. L., Jr (2020). Decision fatigue: A conceptual analysis. *Journal of health psychology, 25*(1), 123–135. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105318763510



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