
HOW TO MANAGE A MELTDOWN

In today's modern day info-tech rich world we are constantly over-stimulating and filling our brains with huge volumes of information – telling ourselves that there is more stuff than ever before for our brains to determine what to remember or not. And this makes it harder and harder to stay on top of all the things you need to do and handle.

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A recent article in the UK's *Daily Mail* captured this so well with an article titled, "How Google is rotting our memories: Young people today have worse memories than their parents". It said our reliance on Google for fact-checking and finding basic information has made us forgetful. It was also found that many individuals view internet search engines as an extension of their own intelligence rather than a separate tool. "Using Google gives people the sense that the internet has become part of their own cognitive tool set," Harvard University researchers concluded. My thoughts about this are that it seems a natural evolution for us to start to rely on technology like this as we could not possibly remember all the things that we currently have to process on a day to day basis.

Another article spoke of this, entitled "Is social media damaging our memories?", where a psychological experiment was carried out in Columbia University in New York said, "[to] put it simply, our memory isn't getting worse, instead the information that it receives on a daily basis greatly exceeds what it could possibly hope to retain, leaving it to overflow and getting rid of any excess information."

Last month's article was on focusing and concentrating your mind and brain on the things that will make everything else you have to do accomplish easier or unnecessary, and included a review of the book, *The One Thing*. Following on from this theme of focus and productivity, I am going to get more into how you manage everything there is to do and handle in life, and maintain your ability to live a wellness lifestyle, including being able to defuse the overwhelm we all get into regularly from the large number of activities and commitments we find ourselves stretched by.

So how *do* you manage everything there is to do and handle in life, and maintain living a wellness lifestyle? While there are many books about how to achieve this, I am going to start with saying how you achieve this is by dealing with the way everything there is to do and handle in life exists for you.

Exist: To be in a specified place; to be found, especially in a particular place or situation.

Existence: The state of actually existing objectively; having objective reality; a mode or manner of existing; the fact or state of existing.

For the most part, human beings have very poor existence systems and structures for managing their very full lives. We generally rely on our memory for far too many things, thereby clogging up our precious conscious brain space and robbing us of a lot of freedom and productivity. The memory is a very poor existence system for the volume of things we have to try and deal with remembering these days, especially if you are someone who has a lot of things to do and handle in life.

A CURRENT PARADIGM FOR GETTING IT ALL DONE

Something I discovered many years ago in a productivity workshop was that there is a common and still very current paradigm or narrative that human beings have in managing everything there is to do and handle in life. The paradigm or narrative that is almost invisible to most of us is, "I have to and am gonna get it all done. And when I'm gonna get it all done is... Monday. Maybe, later." We are 'I'm gonna get it all done' machines living in a world where it is

not possible to get it all done. The day you will get it all done is when you die as there will be nothing more for you to do.

We also live our lives as if we *have to* get it all done or we *have to* get certain things done, in a world where the only thing we *have to* do in this lifetime is die. This paradigm is what we are indoctrinated into as a child. Our lives are not even ours – we inherited it.

However, today it is much worse as there are so many more things pressing us to do and handle than ever before. Once upon a time if you weren't home when the phone rang, no one could get hold of you. Now we are mostly expected to be available and on the grid 24/7 – apart from maybe when we are asleep (and some of you sleep with your phones on – just in case someone needs to reach you in an emergency).

So if you can actually be willing to get yourself in this paradigm and see the common narratives that we all traffic in when it comes to trying to get everything done in life, not like it's personal to you or a personal phenomenon at all, but as a general condition of being human, you will be able to create room for a new paradigm or new narratives about getting all there is to do and handle in life done.

Check it out to see if this paradigm fits for your experience of being human:

- Do you often end the day and your experience is that you didn't accomplish what you intended to accomplish?
- Do you end the day with just as much on your list of things to do as you started?
- Do you experience being overwhelmed with all that you have to get done in a day?
- Do you feel like you are rushing from one thing to the next, but never get done what you would really like to get done in a day?
- Do you forget to do things?
- Do you say "I don't have time for XYZ"?
- Do you feel there aren't enough hours in the day?
- Do you find it hard to find time for movement/physical activity, preparing food, studying/reading or whatever other things you want to and intend to get done – but don't?
- Do you see no need to use a daily calendar to manage all the things you need to do each day and week?
- Do you forego planning your week?
- Do you rely on your memory for managing what you need to get done or remember to do?

Unless you are someone who is up to nothing in your life and all you have to do is get up, sit on the couch, eat and sleep, then you will have some kind of experience of never being able to get it all done, not having enough time, being busy, procrastinating, forgetting to do things, and being overwhelmed. All of these experiences of life are a product of this paradigm.

Being busy, having 'no time', being a procrastinator or rationalising that you 'just forgot' are examples of the great human lie, and are attempts to get out of being accountable.

Show me what being 'busy' or 'procrastinating' looks like. Realistically speaking, such excuses only exist in the domain of language when you say them and not in physical/objective reality. They are interpretations or narratives to try and articulate or describe your experience of a situation, and are not objective or the facts about the situation. You are only ever doing whatever you are doing right now, and you may call that being busy or

procrastinating, but actually it is just whatever you were or are doing now – the objective facts of what you are doing. But when you say 'I'm just too busy', you stop dealing with reality and get into a complete subjective narrative that gives you no empowerment or access to effectively manage your lifestyle.

All these subjective narratives and stories we give to our lifestyle keep us stuck in this world and get us off the hook from being accountable and responsible and telling the truth about what we are and are not going to get done and the truth about life.

It leaves us in a grey world where we say yes to things with no plan or intention to actually get it done when we said it. We get annoyed when people ask us if we have done something that we haven't, and we are not straight with people.

We back them off and avoid being responsible for our word by saying we're busy, we're procrastinating, we forgot, we just don't have time, we're overwhelmed – but it robs us of certain levels of power and productivity in life.

This paradigm and using this language ultimately leaves us with the experience of not accomplishing anything really, as it is difficult to be present to our accomplishments while the mountain of stuff to do and handle is on our backs that is pressing us to have to get more and more done, while never experiencing like we are really going to get it all done.

If you are up to something in life, then this has to be your experience at times unless you have a very simple and powerful way to manage everything there is to do and handle.

A NEW PARADIGM FOR GETTING IT ALL DONE

A new paradigm or narrative for managing everything there is to do and handle in life to empower you to live a wellness lifestyle, and the real truth about life for how you could view everything there is to do and handle is:

"I'm never going to get it all done - NOW WHAT?"

The truth is you are never going to get it all done, and that is the reality of life.

Just like when you are sitting on a chair, if it was suddenly taken away you would fall on the floor as gravity is another truth or reality. And the truth about life is we run around like headless chickens pretending that we have to, plan to, and intend to, and will get it all done someday, in a world where it is not possible to get it all done. Plus mostly you keep your "plans" in your head when you say I "plan to do XYZ" anyway.

So we are living life inconsistent with the way life really is.

YOU ARE NEVER GOING TO GET IT ALL DONE, NOT TODAY, NOT TOMORROW, NOT ANY DAY.

If you can take this on like the truth then the question becomes: "NOW WHAT?"

If you can stand in that view of life then you will start to allow yourself into a world where it is possible to begin to manage all that there is to do and handle in your life and experience having freedom. This is not about finding the answer to actually getting it all done; it is about how to manage and deal with all there is to do and handle in an

empowering and effective way, so you don't burn your brain out as life continues to speed up, and there are more and more things to have to deal with and process.

In life there really is only what you are saying you are going to get done and what you do get done, and what you are saying you are not going to get done and don't get done – THAT'S IT.

You are only going to do today what you do today and you are not going to do what you don't do – You have a say about this always, and there is nothing you *have* to do!

THE BURDEN OF EVERYTHING THERE IS TO DO AND HANDLE

Consider you have a mountain on your back of all the things for you to do and handle, and that it is robbing you of self expression, freedom, peace of mind, joy, creativity, spontaneity, aliveness, vitality, love and being present in life. This mountain has been there a long time and you add to it daily.

Consider your energy and vitality in life are correlated to the number of incomplete items or things not done or handled that you bump into or come across on a day to day basis – that have no real plan to be done or are not in existence somewhere in a way that you know will ensure it gets done at some point in the future.

All of these things not done, that are not in existence somewhere that you know will ensure they get done are a concern, thought, worry or thing that occupies your consciousness whenever you think about them or you are stimulated to think about them.

Any time you feel a little overwhelmed or out of control you can use the following exercise, as what has likely happened is you have slipped back into the old paradigm of how most humans manage what there is to do and handle in life. This simple exercise of getting all your commitments, activities you have said yes to doing, and anything you need to or have said you will get done articulated can help with defusing the experience of overwhelm. You just have to be willing to STOP in the middle of your busy craze and DO IT. I know whenever this happens to me and I just stop to take the time to get it all down, and out of my head immediately begins to free up my mind to deal much more powerfully with what I have to do, and get it managed and organised in a much more pragmatic and effective way.

Exercise: Getting the burden of getting it all done off your back.

Write down everything in your life to do and handle:

- Things you do on a daily and weekly basis
- Things you say you need to do
- Things you intend to do
- Things you want to do
- Things you "have" to do
- People you need to see/call/speak to
- Places you are meant to go or want to go
- Things you need to buy

Areas to look in:

- Family
- Friends
- Social things

- House
- Car
- Work/Office
- Finances
- Past things not done or completed
- Cleaning or items to throw out
- Things that need fixing
- Weekly, monthly or yearly things that need to be done
- Things to read
- Organisations or institutions you belong to

WRITE IT ALL DOWN – IT IS A FINITE LIST. If you find yourself feeling sleepy, or resisting doing it, just keep going and push through.

A SIMPLE WAY TO START MANAGING ALL THERE IS TO GET DONE

How do you manage all that you have to do and handle in a way that empowers you and gives you the freedom to create living a wellness lifestyle?

How you have things in existence is the key!

There are many different ways you can do this, and tonnes of books. Here is the simple way I do it, which I am always working on modifying to be more and more efficient.

THREE PLACES YOU KEEP THINGS IN EXISTENCE

1. In your calendar/diary of occasions and things to do – that have a specific date, time, duration and a location. These are things you know you need to, want to and must get done within the next month. You are free to schedule things beyond a month also. I also keep a page in a notebook where at the beginning of the week I write a list of individual numerous smaller items I need to get done this week that I won't schedule specific times for in my calendar, but have sufficient space in my calendar to work on them.
2. A list of things you are not likely to or will not get done in the next month, but may get them done in the next 6 months.
3. A list of things you are not going to get done in the next 6 months, you might get done in the next year or two, or you are never going to get done.

THIS IS WHERE IT TAKES TELLING THE TRUTH TO YOURSELF!

A practice that I recommend all my clients have is that each week you schedule and take an uninterrupted hour or two to quietly sit and plan your week. Look ahead to the next month beyond this week, and review your two other lists of things you are not doing yet or cannot schedule into your calendar/diary, in case there are any of those items that you are now going to schedule and move to your calendar/diary. Personally I never get past Monday without this meeting with myself to continue to have my life organised and managed for the current week and out into the future.

There are some other items you need to be able to manage all that there is to do and handle in your life in an empowering and effective way, especially to preserve brain power.

1. A notebook (paper or electronic) to write down and capture all the things that come at you on a day to day basis that will need to get into one of the three existence structures. You should always have this with you. Capture everything and then each week (or at the end of the day) – download everything from the notebook into one of the three structures. One of the simple practices I have to even shortcut putting it on this notebook, and then having to transfer that into my calendar or lists is I just put an item that comes at me as an entry in my electronic calendar, as I know that I will see it later or in my planning for the following week.


2. A calendar or diary that you can use that has reminders that come up and catch your attention.

You cannot rely on your memory any longer for everything. It will not have you live a wellness lifestyle and uses up your precious conscious brain capacity – not to mention is a major source of stressors!

When you start to view and manage your life from the stage where you're saying "I'm never going to get it all done - Now What?", you will find you need to have a powerful way to keep everything there is to do and handle in existence so you can actually deal with life the way life really is.

If you use these three places I have suggested to keep everything in existence or come up with your own reliable and consistent system, you will free yourself up to be in life as someone who is able to create how you want your life to look rather than constantly reacting to the myriad of things coming to respond to. You can say what you are going to do and what you are not going to do, and deal with whatever consequences there are of saying you are not going to do something by whatever time you need to do it. And by when you will do it, or you may say you are not doing it at all.

You become the one saying how life is going when you are dealing with life the way life really is, not the illusion that someday you are going to get it 'all' done. If you want to get the best use out of your brain and have a mind that is able to focus on the things that will help you reach your aims in life, you need to first get unnecessary things clogging up your brain out of your head. Then if you don't have a powerful structure for it, you need to start managing where things you need to get done are going to exist (objectively) like in the suggestion I have made above. Lastly, with so many different things we have come at us on a day to day basis to have to respond to or deal with, if you want to really give yourself the best chance for success, get clear on your commitments and the aims that are important to you, and get rigorous and straight about what you *really* are going to do, and what you are not going to do, and focus your time and energy on the things that will make the biggest difference to what you intend to accomplish.

With all the possible things that can distract us and dilute our focus, the challenge is to navigate through all the things there are to do and handle in any day or week. Remember this mantra - "you are never going to get it all done - now what?" 

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