

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

PERSONAL COUNSELING CENTER

Aint Nobody Got Time for That

Hey Everyone,

As always, I hope you and yours are doing well and are healthy. As of yesterday the Governor has loosened some restrictions on the Stay at Home Order. Yay for us! We get to gather in groups of ten or less meaning its time for all of those Michigan summer bonfires! Some of you may have noticed that with classes being over, major aspects of your routine are no longer a thing. I encourage you to not let that time go unfilled. Find others ways to be productive and feel fulfilled throughout the summer months. Even if it's just doubling the amount of time you spend outside everyday! Remember we need plenty of water and sunlight, we are all just plants with more complicated emotions.

Today I wanted to address the other major theme that came up in the student survey I referenced last week. I hope the perspective shift from motivation to discipline made sense and you have been working on flexing your discipline muscles. Today we are going to use that strong, ripped, discipline muscle and address Time Management.

Time Management can be a tough thing to improve partly because we as humans suck at change. It makes us anxious and as a result we avoid it. Time management is a moving target and requires us to be flexible and adjust on the fly. For some of us this is pretty easy, for others that thrive in a ridged unchanging structure, its terrible.

Think back through the years. As children we didn't really need to worry about sticking to a schedule. Our parents did it for us. We went to school, went to sports practice, came home ate dinner, maybe did some homework, played countless hours on the Play Station, rinse and repeated the next day. Likely once we got to high school this really started to change. Not only did we have to manage getting to school and all of those responsibilities, but also making time for extra-circulars, potentially a job, and time spent with friends. Parents still may have been helpful with this period of our lives but more of the responsibility fell onto us.

Fast forward to fall of Freshmen year. It's time to sink or swim. For most of us, we were on our own and we got to decide when and if we go to class. When and if we did homework. When and if we spent time with our new friends. This is likely the first time in life where we had total freedom to dictate how our time is managed. And this (maybe painfully) is when we became aware of how good (or terrible) we are at time management as a skill.

The first step in improving time management is listing all the things you need to do to create a concrete weekly schedule. This can be challenging in college since week to week so much changes (current events not included). Some weeks we have six chapters to read and a test due, other weeks we have one single paper to write. The amount of time required for schoolwork changes as the semester goes on. This on top of clubs, sports, and other commitments mean a lot needs to be accounted for week over week. Think about what kind of schedule works best for you. Do you use that free planner you were given? Do you upgrade to the fancier planner broken down in hour segments? Do you use a hand written plan or an electronic one? I don't think one is any better than the other, finding what works for you is important.

Step two is allocating your time. Fill out your weekly schedule with all your commitments for the week and think "how much time do I need to set aside to do this?" During the school year a good rule to use is every hour spent in class you should schedule two hours for work outside of class. Full disclosure, this rule changed yearly for me. Undergrad I needed less time outside of class, graduate school I needed more time, but the 1:2 ratio is a good place to start. I recommend you use a schedule that is broken down by hour that way you can map out your whole day. Fill out the schedule for your entire week at the same time.

Step three is follow your schedule and make adjustments. Go through your week or day and see how your structure helps you get everything accomplished. If you find that you needed more than two hours to work on school work on Monday make adjustments later on in the week or for the following Monday. Good time management really comes down to your ability to be flexible and prioritize.

Some other helpful tips to consider. Poor time management skills are often correlated with having mixed up priorities. Like it or not, college classes can be tough and are going to require you to make sacrifice from time to time. This is just a reality. The meme online "Sleep, School, Friends.....pick two" is very accurate and I my professional recommendation; you should pick sleep first, and school second. Good time management involves carving out enough time so that you can complete the task and not have to cram.

Find creative ways to have your routine/schedule with you so you can check it. I often create a weekly, hour by hour schedule with clients in session. Once it's created, I encourage them to take a picture of it and set it as the Lock Screen on their phone. Every time you pull your phone out you will have to look at your schedule. It's an easy way to stay on task and know what you have going on day to day. Find ways that you can reference your schedule often to practice your time management skills.

When you create a schedule, INCLUDE EVERYTHING. I know I have talked a lot about work, school, and homework as blocks in your schedule but we all have so much more going on than that. Make sure you carve time out for self care and down time as well. If you aren't taking care of your mental health it doesn't matter how organized you are, you will have trouble focusing and staying on task. Schedule when you are going to eat, when you are going to spend time with friends, when you are going to practice self care, and when you plan on starting your bedtime routine.

Some fun resources for you all: [Here](#) is a website you can print free weekly planners in different sizes as well as a Pinterest site that has planners broken down by the hour [Here](#). This website offers [27 additional tips](#) on time management if you really want to practice. [Here](#) is an interesting YouTube video about how Elon Musk manages his time using a strategy called “Timeboxing”. Finally an interesting [TedTalk](#) that touches on time management as a way to infuse your life with meaning and purpose, rather than just homework.

As you practice time management, I encourage you to show yourself grace. The reality of life is that things won’t always go to plan. The assignment may take you an extra hour, your alarm may not go off so you slept in until 10, your friend called in crisis and needed your support and you decided that was more important than reading the chapter for class. This is a practice, something we do to get better at but will likely never perfect. Work on your time management this week. Summer classes are starting and you may need to create a new schedule (totally do it!). Maybe you have some summer goals or projects you want to work on, set aside the time you need to accomplish that task every week. Make sure you aren’t neglecting your self care time blocks either!

Take Care of Yourself and Wash Your Hands,

Andy