

Think Outside The Cubicle

a Manifesto



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Manifesto

The 8-hour workday is broken. It evolved to the constraints of factory and office life. But, the rules that created it don't apply to many of us anymore. If you're a student, freelancer or self-employed and working from home, why create a cubicle for yourself?

I've written this document, and the associated guide, because I'm tired of seeing the same mistakes. Reading articles about minor tech tricks, while the bigger obstacles to getting things done are ignored. Seeing the 9-5 approach being mutated into grueling 12-hour workdays. Watching many people turn the personal freedom of working at home into a personal

slavery.

If you work or study at home, either full-time or just on side projects, there is a better way. You've escaped the cubicle, so don't work like you're inside one.

Don't Pay Yourself By the Hour

Stop recording how many hours you work. Instead focus on two things: the quality of tasks accomplished and the amount of leisure time you have. Everything else is irrelevant.

Nobody cares how many hours you work, when you aren't clocking in and out. Paying by the hour is a convenience of the capitalist system,

not the ideal. Even if you bill clients by the hour, rewarding yourself for hours invested is sloppy.

Instead, start setting weekly and daily to-do lists. Your day ends when your daily list is finished. So stop being a masochist and start being productive.

Stop Using Time Management

Time is abundant, energy is limited. Instead of worrying about perfectly scheduling your time, worry about managing your energy.

A trap many business owners fall into (including myself, occasionally) is trying to maximize their time input. So they end up slaving away for 10 or 12

hours to reach a goal, draining their energy and increasing their stress. A better strategy is to work less, with greater focus so you can get even more done.

Quit Using Guilt as a Motivation Tactic

I know students that don't study to learn—they study to not feel guilty. They want to lighten the guilt they feel that their grades aren't good enough, that they don't have enough discipline, that they don't know what they want to do with their lives.

I know struggling entrepreneurs who spend hours behind a computer every day to avoid feeling lazy. Somehow working four hours and relaxing for the

afternoon and evening is sinful.

How about, instead of relying on guilt, rely on a strategy. Use a system that not only tells you all the things you need to do, but when you need to stop working. GTD can only make you a more organized workaholic. We don't just need productivity, we need freedom from the guilt and stress that follows most workers like a shadow.

My Promise to You

I can't tell you how to start a multimillion dollar company. I can't tell you how to start a six-figure consulting business. I won't promise you that I'll immediately triple your productivity, or allow you to work only four hours each

week.

What I can offer is the strategies I've learned being a student, freelancer and online business owner. I don't claim to be the most productive person. I feel it's probably my inherent laziness and lack of discipline that has driven me to do so much research and experimentation to figure out how to change it.

I'm not offering the complete solution, but I'd like to offer the first few steps.

The First Few Steps...

Even if you never buy the guide, or anything else from me, I still want to help you. One more productive and

unstressed worker means the world is slightly better than before, and the effort to create this guide will be worth it.

The full guide goes into considerably more detail, but here are some points to get started:

Set Daily Goals. Every day make a list of tasks to accomplish the next day. When that list is complete, your workday is over, whether that is at 2pm or 8pm. Daily goals force you to simplify, focus and prevent you from creating an infinite to-do list.

Record Free Time, Not Working Hours. Don't record the number of hours you work. Instead, focus on the number

of hours you can spend stress-free in the knowledge your daily goals are completed. Then increase this number.

Split Creative Tasks. Separate the times of the week you do creative tasks from optimizing tasks. I've used this approach to write 8 articles per week in the past without running out of new ideas.

Start Thinking Outside the Cubicle

These are difficult times, and the world will only be more competitive in the future. Stressful work-environments will multiply and the workload will be ever-increasing. But with challenges comes the opportunity to do better. The opportunity to think outside

the working strategies we've been programmed with and find a way to get more done without being chained to the cubicle.

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