



What to Do When You Are Wearing Too Many Hats! – Michael Lewis

Years ago after I'd just spoken at a conference on how our lives had gotten so busy and in some cases, overwhelming, when some came up to me and told me of how she was wearing so many "hats". The hat of a career, the hat of being a parent, the hat of being spouse, the hat of being a caregiver to her mother, the hat of being a volunteer...etc. Many of us wear many hats in our lives so ultimately what we need to do more than ever is make better choices, prioritize and become wiser, smarter and more judicious with our precious time.

Here is a selection of some common sense time saving tips...

1. Start by making a "to do" list of tasks that you'd like to accomplish in the course of day. It might be a good idea to start that the night before so you begin the day with your list in hand. Then prioritize the "must dos" and do them first.
2. Tackle the more challenging tasks when your energy level is at high level and when you feel more focused. We often procrastinate difficult tasks to a time when we are least likely to focus well on them.
3. Get organized. Reduce the clutter in your life and you will start to feel better about your environment and you feel less overwhelmed. Physical clutter adds to mental clutter!
4. Talk to your family and make sure they know that you (and they) need to have regular quiet time and the time to rejuvenate and restore. All too often we think of others first and their needs which is admirable but we really do need to look after ourselves too.
5. Consider investing in a good filing cabinet or an expandable "accordion" file to keep all your personal papers, copies of utility bills, charitable receipts...etc. A place for everything and everything in its place!
6. Give yourself a little more time to accomplish tasks than you think you need by purposely adding time into task. Its better to be "over prepared" and finished early than ambushed and panicked.
7. First things...FIRST. Before anything, determine your priorities. What absolutely must be done and what can wait until later. Also take some time to think about the order of steps involved.
8. Know when it's time to ask for help. Sometimes we think we can handle things but in reality there are times when what we really need to do is reach out. Its not a weakness but a strength to recognize one's limitations.
9. Divide and conquer. Break up bigger and longer tasks into smaller and more manageable steps. When you have a big and rather daunting task or project ahead of you, begin by breaking it down into small and more manageable steps. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, followed by another...
10. Get it (whatever it is) right the first time and you won't have to find time to make it right. One of the biggest thieves of time are mistakes and poor planning. Take the time to plan your work and then work your plan.

Finally, as we find ourselves increasingly connected to the digital world through our phones, tablets, laptops and computers might I suggest the daring idea that we from time to time purposely disconnect from all that even for a few hours at a time....and reconnect with loved ones and friends and savor the world around us. Often referred as a digital "detox", it is that occasional process of "unplugging and disconnecting". By doing so I think we can regain our perspective on life and appreciate the old regular world around us and the people in it. Think about having old fashioned conversations again in which we have to talk to each other rather than texting or emailing.

As the world gets busier and we remain committed to our many obligations, I think we owe ourselves the occasional indulgence of turning off and being unavailable and turning on to life as it was meant to be lived. Benjamin Franklin once said "Do not squander time for that is the stuff life is made". Embrace a simple (and more prioritized, organized) life and those "hats" that you wear won't seem so many or as heavy.



Michael Lewis is a London, Ontario based speaker and trainer who for the past 28 years has delivered high energy presentations and workshops on emerging topics around professional development. He often speaks over 200 times a year to mostly non-profit groups, associations and organizations. He passionately subscribes the idea of doing what you love and loving what you do...which he is blessed to be doing. For more information, check out ...www.michaellewisstraining.com