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Staying Organized

Time Stewardship – Staying Organized

Life today is busy and as life advances it seems like you have more and more to juggle. Staying organized with all aspects of life is important, if you're going to maximize and be efficient with your time try to always remain ahead. Below are a few methods that I've used over the course of my career:

Calendar – I'm from the days where everything was on paper, and you really had to work hard to stay on top of stuff. Today with everything being automated, it's easy to have a calendar system with automated follow-up reminders popping up on your phone or computer. I typically set at least two reminders for all key entries in my calendar.

Accordion folder – I also like back-up systems, a second alarm of sorts. I use an accordion folder that has thirty-one sections, one for each day of the month, and twelve different monthly sections. I print important things I know I will need to follow-up on at some future time and I file it in the slot for that day of the current month or in a future month. Each day my assistant opens the section for that day of the month to see what needs to be followed-up. On the first of the month, I pull out everything that was filed for the new month and file it accordingly by day in the thirty-one-day sections. This has been a great back-up system.

Assistant - I require my assistant to use similar follow-up systems that I do, for her own work as well as backing me up in all critical areas.

Computer - All computers today have great follow-up built in systems where reminders can pop up on your computer in addition to your phone.

Don't overdo it - Only set follow-up reminders for things that are important and you need to pay attention to. If you have too many reminders popping up you will find you'll start not paying attention to your reminders. You want to manage it to where what's important is what's listed and treated as important, and for the less important things try to use an alternative way to be reminded.

Lists - I like using lists and for me the most convenient way is an app on my phone titled "Reminders". I maintain many lists of things to do and topics I want to discuss with various individuals, in this app. I must have ten different names and twenty other lists. I have a list for every element of my life. I've got a Kathy list, lists for each of my kids, friends' lists, Bible Study lists, things I want to purchase, doctors, movies recommended, mentoring lists, travel and packing lists, project lists, and more. Every time I think of something I know I want to follow-up on later, I quickly add it to the appropriate list where I can pull it up at the appropriate time. I have more than thirty lists in my world that keep me more organized, on top of things and make me look smarter than I really am. Nothing's better than checking off items and removing them from your list.

Note it and forget it - One of the key benefits for me of having follow-up tools/lists is as soon as I note it down and put it in place with a proper follow-up, I can forget it and let it go from my mind not thinking about it or worrying about it. It is so freeing. It doesn't cause me a problem as I know the reminder will come up at the appropriate time. I know you can get a thought in the middle of the night and then find difficulty in sleeping because you hold onto the thought. Try keeping a notepad next to your bed, so when a thought comes into your mind that wakes you, you can write the thought down, which tends to free you and allows you to get back to sleep easier. Find the system that works for you to put it down and free your mind.

Automobile - For things I need to be reminded of when I get in my car, I often will stick a piece of paper on the steering wheel or somewhere in the dash where I'll be immediately reminded at the moment I'm starting to drive.

Make it obvious - Sadly with age things are easier to forget, therefore I will set things in an obvious place often where I will literally have to step over them. I use this at home, in the office, something set on the floor that is obvious that I'll step over before I leave the home, the room etc., this has been very helpful.

Car keys - If there's something I need to be sure and remember to bring when I'm leaving the office or the house I will set them next to my car keys.