

Week One Day Four *Write a Schedule*

Have you found time to clean the kitchen yet? If you have, fantastic! Doesn't it feel so good to have it finished? If you didn't have time yesterday, I completely understand. Finding time to do the things that we want and need to do is one of life's greatest mysteries. However, I think the challenge of time management can actually be a little bit fun with the right perspective. Hear me out...

I had six babies in less than eight years. The last two were twins. Some of their early years, the children were homeschooled, I didn't have a housekeeper or hired help of any kind, I had been working towards the writing career for years, in addition to nightly classes and activities that either the children or I were enrolled in. This is all while making sure I found time to get workouts in at least twice a week (four-five times a week after delivering babies when I had a lot of work to do on my body. My high energy lifestyle burns a lot of calories throughout the day, so working out just twice a week at this point for maintenance is all I need. More on this later!).

The point is... finding time to make it all happen is a slight obsession! But what's crazy is that, I never realized everything that I was capable of until having the twins added to the other four. Rarely did I get help but I was OK with that. If God gave me all those babies there must have also been a way for me to care for them all, I figured. So very quickly I learned what needed to happen every day and most importantly, I quickly realized what did not matter. I also learned that when we give up the things that do not matter, it's amazing what we can squeeze into a day. Time is a lot like money... we tend to waste more than we have, and then whine about wanting more. In reality if we had more, we would probably waste that too.

As a work at home mom, time management can be tricky. When there is no one to report to on a daily basis, and nowhere that I must show up to at a specific time, **finding the motivation to be disciplined is the biggest challenge**. Because in all honesty, at any point of the day if I want to take a nap, I can. How does a person acquire the discipline that it takes to achieve goals that are not being demanded by external influences?

Time management boils down not so much to having the time, but being disciplined with the time. Everyone in the world has been given the exact same amount of minutes and hours in each and every day... yet some people seem to be capable of achieving so much more! The truth is that each person is very capable of giving every day their own personal best, but some folks have more discipline to give it their all, while others would rather spend the time sleeping in or watching TV. There are different factors contributing to why this happens, but to boil it all down into one simple answer I would say the difference in the person who has discipline from the one who lacks it is that... they care. They may not care for the right intentions necessarily, but they simply care more about getting things done to the point that they are willing to get up and do something about it. In my seasons of life that I am on the ball with productivity, it has always

been that at the root of my thinking and doing, I care about the outcome. On the opposite end, in my seasons of life that I became passive about tackling goals was when I just didn't care. Typically that lack of caring was spurred by an event of some sort. The event left me feeling defeated. The defeat sucked me dry of any and all motivation to try, so I took on the "I don't care" mentality. When we don't care, it shows in our actions. Or lack thereof.

In our last week we will get into what it means to "die to self" and how that affects our health and fitness results. For now I briefly wish to say that quoting that term, "Die to self" when I had to do something that I didn't feel like doing, hundreds of times has propelled me to do what I said I would do. In so many different situations! Keep that in mind as you move forward. Because here's the thing with today's focus... writing the schedule is hardly what helps a person achieve their goals. **Following through** with the schedule is when we see great results! Today we talk about scheduling in order to find the time it takes to get fit... like any priority in life, it does require time! But taking the time to write out a schedule will in itself be a waste of time without the discipline required to follow through. Make sense? **I say this in love. Get your butt out of bed when you say you're going to.** It's the only way to get what you truly desire. Enough of the lecture! (I give myself this lecture often. This "die to self" stuff is HARD!) Let's focus on writing out a plan for the week.

How to Write a Schedule:

- **Write a list of everything that must be done in a week.** Work, appointments, places you go, people you see, grocery shopping, errands, paying bills, cleaning, cooking, school work for yourself, homework with your kids, time alone with God, time with your spouse or significant other, time with your friends and family, eating, exercise, kids' activities, showering, hair styling... you get the idea.
- **Next to each one, number them in order of priority.** This isn't as easy as you may think! The first time I did this, I really did not know which was more important... time for myself or cleaning the house. After careful consideration I realized that the oxygen mask is an important analogy... when I do not take care of myself, I am not able to care for others.
- **Eliminate what doesn't need to be done.** Why are you committed to what you have committed to? If something brings more dread than joy, why do you continue doing it? Sometimes the true answer is our pride keeps us in things that we would be better off getting out of. Get brutally honest with yourself and others by letting go of the unnecessary, in order to make room in your schedule for health.
- **Copy the Weekly Schedule located in the Resources section (there's an extra copy of this in your back pocket).** For the first item on my own schedule I have "Morning Routine" listed, and on a separate paper I have the morning routine written out. The last item on the day is "Evening Routine", with a separate paper for the Evening Routine. Especially when developing new habits, this is important. Basic, mundane, yet mandatory everyday things such as brushing teeth, choosing clothes for tomorrow, and clearing counters each night is easy when there is a consistent flow. Eventually you will not have to think about what to do next, therefore you will not have to decide what to do next, therefore you will not have to

battle with yourself about whether or not you feel like doing the things you need to accomplish. Daily routines that include simple yet necessary tasks, have been the single most significant difference in having a lifestyle of peace and order, as opposed to a lifestyle of stress and depression. The daily routines are life and sanity savers!

- **Add the places that you need to be each day, which cannot be moved or adjusted.**
- Next on the list is probably the hardest part, but also a little bit of fun putting together the puzzle... the part where you have to **pick and choose what to give up in order to squeeze in time for these 5 essential weekly habits** to be developed:
 1. Clean out the refrigerator.
 2. Plan this week's meals.
 3. Grocery shopping and food prep.
 4. Make breakfast, lunch, & dinner.
 5. Exercise (Starting out, the more days you exercise, the faster you will see results.)
- You will most likely have to **make some sacrifices** here. I have had to sacrifice a lot of my social life and "me time" in order to more wisely use the hours towards long term goals which had a far greater impact on making "me" feel better! I have also had to...
- **Wake up earlier.** If you are not finding the time on your schedule to accomplish your biggest life goals, you have to wake up earlier. If you would have told me years ago that I would be waking up at 5:30am to accomplish personal goals, I would not have believed you. For awhile there, I struggled to wake up before 10:00! People **can** change. You can change! Sometimes finding the time to become the people we really want to be, requires missing out on late night TV watching other people live their lives, in order to go to bed earlier, in order to wake up earlier, in order to live the BEST LIFE of our own! Forget those TV people!!! Reality or fictional... do not miss out on your own best life because you can't pull yourself away from watching theirs'.

The written schedule will take some tweaking. Our activities and priorities change with seasons, causing schedules to change as well. What's important this week may be over with next week. And you may also find that you start out gung-ho with a mission to exercise 6 days a week, only to realize that simply is not your reality. Instead of giving up... adjust the schedule! Keep working on it until you find your groove... what you really *can* achieve. Aim for exercising four days a week and if you see that you can add in more, do so the following week. If you see that you realistically can only exercise two days a week, that is OK! Do the two days a week, but do them consistently and do them well. Give those two days your very best and you will see results, even if it takes a little longer. Slow and steady gets to the finish line! Write it all down, pay attention to where you spend the 24 hours of each day, give up what you do not need, be mindful in limiting any and all screen time, and you will soon find that the time it takes to prepare healthy meals and squeeze in 30 minute workouts truly is a possibility, and the best blessing that you will ever give yourself.