



Managing Yourself

Much has been written about managing others, but little about managing yourself. You won't find 'manage myself' on anybody's to do list, but it is a vital skill in work and life. Managing yourself is vital, after all, if you don't, who else will?!

Thinking about what and how to manage yourself better requires both reflection time and self-awareness, as well as knowing the tools. We leave school and college ill equipped to manage ourselves. Our parents may have stopped us from staying in bed all day and our teachers from disrupting class without consideration for others, but where do we learn this key life skill except by sporadic trial and error?

Improving how you manage yourself can be difficult, because you are so close to yourself that it is hard to see what's going on. Often the habits and behaviours we have are so ingrained that we almost don't notice them. In addition, they may have been copied from our parents unconsciously and are not even suited to the grown up us, if they ever were!

It takes time to take a step back, hold up a mirror, see what's going on, identify what changes need to be made and work out the right strategy for you. Then the new improved self-management behaviours and habits need to be tried, adjusted and repeated until they become second nature. Many people think it's self indulgent to spend time on yourself, when actually this time is wise and can make such a difference to your life and its quality.

No wonder there's a need for coaching and the growth in coaching is exponential, as the coach is like a mirror helping you to see yourself clearly.

So, what areas do managing yourself or 'self-management' cover? It is a broad spectrum:

- Feelings and emotions
- Time and priorities
- Intentions, hopes and dreams
- Energy and focus
- Health, diet and exercise
- Thoughts and intentions
- Fears, insecurities and 'Gremlins'
- Being vs. doing
- Stress
- Systems and processes
- Environment

Not an insignificant list!



What are the consequences of poor self-management?

The consequences of not managing yourself effectively are horrendous:

- You overstretch yourself and over commit
- You get ill
- You get stressed
- You deprive yourself of what you need and what makes you happy
- You let other people's agendas dominate and neglect your own
- Your mental head chatter drives you nuts!
- You become a human doing, not a human being
- You project your negative stress and emotions unwittingly onto others
- You lead an unnecessarily sloppy existence instead of working and living smart
- You waste time and then get angry with yourself
- You lack purpose and meaning
- You drift
- You have high paper piles and low hopes
- Dreams are something that you have at night, only more often they are nightmares

10 tips to help you manage yourself better

1. Listen to your body; it expresses itself and gives you information about when it needs exercise, what foods disagree with it and when it needs water. It is a 'nature machine' so give it good fuel and keep it well serviced.
2. Notice negative emotions and what is fuelling them. It is easy to ignore and anaesthetise these with being busy, alcohol or drugs. Give negative feelings your attention, accept them, don't dismiss them because they are part of you and address what is causing them.
3. Know what you want – your dreams and goals, because this will help you to make self- management decisions and understand the consequences of your choices.
4. Know yourself well – invest in personal development, read a book, get a coach, go on a course, observe yourself. Your values, beliefs, motivations and needs drive everything, either consciously or unconsciously, so it is very important that you know your personal drivers to help you to know exactly what you are managing!
5. Develop good people support and organisational systems to provide an external structure that supports your internal management.
6. Follow your natural time clock and energy flows each week and during the year. When it's summer make personal hay, when it's Spring plant seeds, when Autumn harvest and when it's Winter, reflect and consolidate.
7. Know what makes you stressed and what to do about it. Catch your stressors early to minimise their impact.



8. Create awareness of your personal buttons and insecurities – these are sensitive spots where you will overreact and others won't understand why because their buttons may be different. Notice when you are being irrational or misdirecting negative emotions to others.
9. Give yourself regular time, personal time. Check in with yourself daily and put attention on what's occurring for you mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.
10. Write a self-management manual. Only kidding! But sharing insights about yourself with important people in your life will help them to understand you better.

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