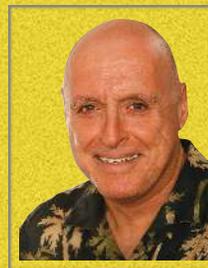


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 223 Want to Go a Few Rounds With Timeboxing?

There are thousands of books and articles on how to manage and optimize time, and still we struggle with the concept. Enter the fray a new contender: timeboxing. I'm Jerry Roberts and maybe we can land a some good punches in the next couple of minutes, here on The Extra Point.

Timeboxing. What is it? Well, first, it has nothing to do with jabs and hooks, but everything to do with looking at your time in a way that may be different for most of us. Especially if we're used to those to-do lists.

The standard to-do list features all the things we want to get done in our day, and we check them off as we go. We might put stars around the real important things, or underline them. When we're done with the list that day, we toss it away if everything was accomplished. If not, we end up transferring unfinished tasks to the next day. Timeboxing is different.

In timeboxing we assign a fixed period of time to a task and we put it on our online calendar, the one we can access from anywhere. It's on the desktop computer, the laptop, and the phone.

Let's say you schedule a job for two hours. At the end of that time you stop, evaluate your progress and decide what's left to do, if anything. If there is, you can schedule it for the next available time slot. Then, you move into the next scheduled task.

Virgin Group founder Richard Branson and many other high level executives use the approach, believing that scheduling their priorities and commitments — and sticking to the schedule — is a far better option than just going up and down a to-do list until everything is scratched off. I agree and here's why.

1. You get the most important things done. Scheduling priorities on a calendar is making

an appointment with yourself. We keep our important appointments.

2. By scheduling we are focused on what's coming up and will prepare for it. To get to an important task on a to-do list and then realize you have a bunch of preparation to do before you can start is high unproductive.

3. Everything gets tracked. To-do lists end up tossed out. Timeboxing is a permanent record of what you've accomplished and when. You can go back and see how long it takes you to do a certain job. The next time it comes up you'll know how much time to schedule for it. In addition, you avoid the phenomenon where work tends to expand to fit the time available to complete it. This is where a one-hour job takes three hours, just because you've got three hours. Does this happen in your workplace? Probably so.

4. Finally, some calendars allow for the addition of notes. If yours does that, this allows you to add a certain amount of anecdotal data to your scheduled work. It's not the same as a journal but you can add these notes during the task or immediately after, when everything is fresh in your mind.

Timeboxing can add to engagement and keep you intentional, protecting you from the storm of distractions we face every day. That should give us all a welcome productivity boost, and make our jobs and careers more enjoyable.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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