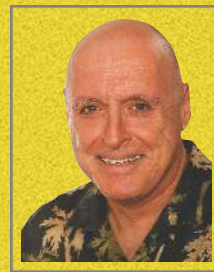


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



788 Revisiting Time Optimization

Today, a few ways to bend time to our advantage, ideas to be more productive. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's up next, on The Extra Point.

Time optimization. We all want to use time wisely, to squeeze value out of each day. We've touched on some of what follows in past Extra Points, but there are some modifications so let's get to it.

1. The Pomodoro Technique. This is timer-based work and there are Pomodoro apps for both Apple and Android phones. Developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s, the Pomodoro — Italian for tomato — was initially set for 25 minutes, with the idea that we eliminated all distractions for that amount of time; and when the dust cleared, we could see just how much work we had successfully blasted out.

I've done it, and it works. Some Pomodoro apps will have timers that exceed 25 minutes, and we can set for 30, 55, or whatever we want. When the buzzer sounds and the interval is over, we take a short break of no more than five minutes, then come back and hammer out another interval.

Countless millions of people are hard-core Pomodoro fans, and wouldn't approach time optimization any other way. I've read comments from some of them that they tried everything over the years to do a better job with time, and this is the best method of all. Maybe it'll work for you, too.

2. Organize our work by day. This system may work best for those who are self-employed or self-directed, though others have also used it. This is where we split up our normal tasks and do one thing exclusively on Monday, another on Tuesday, and so on. The idea is that doing all of one thing will naturally create some momentum.

Behavioral scientists know that when we switch our attention from one task to another, taking on whatever comes at us when it comes at us — all day long — we're engaging two different parts of the brain and splitting our attention.

Those continual changes invite distractions, perhaps set-up time for a new task, and time can be lost. Speaking of distractions, author Tim Ferriss, whose books include *The Four-hour Workweek*, believes we should always put our phone on airplane mode when heading into prime working periods.

Continual notifications are a huge drain on productivity, and lead to those stories of people picking up their phone 100 times a day or more.

3. Chunking your projects. We when break a big project down into smaller segments, it's easier to stay focused. It also gives us a sense of accomplishment that we made progress as we move from step to step.

If we have a big report due, instead of stressing over it and trying to cram all the effort into the day or two before it has to be delivered, take it a piece at a time over the week. Maybe use the Pomodoro method on it. We might find the experience more enjoyable, and the work of a higher quality.

4. Coming to a complete stop. This is the stage we arrive at when we use time optimization techniques to get more and better work done, then come to the end of the day and just release our brain from all things work related. When we've given the day our best and most productive effort, we can move on to other things with a clear mind.

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5. See the next day clearly. Before we leave work, sketch out what the next day will bring. That way, we walk in with a plan and can get to it. Some people start their day by spending a half-hour or more before settling on what to start with.

Go to bed at a reasonable time, sleep well, have a morning routine, then use one or more of these strategies to get the most out of our day.

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

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