

Episode 5: This Time Management Technique Increased My Productivity by 75%

Hello, this is Nikki Purvy from the Better Than Success Podcast and this is episode #5 and I am so excited to bring this episode to you because it is a really good episode. This episode is titled, "This time management technique increased my productivity by 75%." That's right; I am going to give you my time management technique that increased my productivity by 75%. Now I am going to give you a little back story about this technique. This technique has been in development over the past six years just through me gathering information and trial and error and everything. Every year it has gotten better and better, I have added new things, taken things away that have increased my productivity, I have shared with people and have gotten their feedback. But this last thing that I put on this time management technique, the last couple of icings on the cake that I put on it, really sky-rocketed my productivity by 75%, at least 75%; I get so much more done. Once I discovered it and really started putting into habit, I shared it on Facebook, on my personal page on Facebook, like oh my goodness, I cannot wait to share this information with you. I thought that I was going to put it on our Lidyr blog, because we share a lot of really good content on our Lidyr blog, but I felt like this needed a special place. When I discovered it it was before we launched Better Than Success and I just wasn't quite sure how I was going to share it, I knew I wanted to share it with you guys. And I am very thankful for Better Than Success because it is so perfect for me to share it with you. If you guys have listened to episode 4, where we talked about the three phases on work-life balance for new entrepreneurs, that was a set up episode for this episode. So if you have not listened to that episode I encourage you to go back and listen to episode 4, where we talk about the three phases of work-life balance, that will provide some context for you for this episode, it is only about twenty minutes long. Go ahead and listen to that episode and then come back and listen to this episode. So, for those of you who did listen to that episode, let's take a quick refresher. We talked about the tantrum phase, where new entrepreneurs, when you are leaving corporate life, or you are leaving your regular 9 to 5, and you are starting your new business, you kind of throw a tantrum where you rebel against everything that was part of your previous life and your structured schedule and you just work at your leisure because you are the boss and you do the work that you want to do, not necessarily the work that you don't want to do, and you just throw a tantrum. And then after that doesn't work, you realize you want to go to the opposite end of the spectrum, so you go through the superman phase. That is where you decide that you are going to do everything, work a million hours a day, and you are going to just completely work your tail off, which is the coolest thing in the world, it sounds really great on social media, but it is not sustainable. So then you realize there has to be some sort of relief and you have to work smarter, not harder. And that takes us to the work smarter, not harder phase.

Then once you are at the phase, then you realize that part of working smarter not harder is proper time management. So that is where you will come to realize that you need a great time management technique and, like I said, it took me six years to develop this and hopefully as soon as you come to the work smarter not harder phase, you listen to this episode and you save yourself six years of time and you take a page out of the Nikki Purvy Better Than Success book and you put some or all of these practices into habit. Whatever suits you, whatever makes you work smarter, not harder, whatever makes you the most efficient. I feel like if you put all of these habits in practice, then you are going to be so much better off, your life is going to be so blessed.

So, let's get right into this technique. I have broken them down into nine steps and your nine steps are going to take you to having a really good habit in terms of managing your own technique. Steps 1 to 3 are foundation are very important, do not skip these steps. Do not skip these steps, I repeat, do not skip these steps. There is going to be a lot of content here, so I do also want to tell you, there is a worksheet download that kind of helps you to visualize everything that I talk about here. It will be at [betterthansuccess/5](#) and that is the number 5.

So, step 1, this is the most important step in the whole process, remember this is foundation. The most important step is you have to develop a time control mindset. I am going to read some facts slash quotes to you and it will you wrap your head around what I mean by time control mindset. 1. You have the same amount of hours in a day as Beyonce. Don't you forget that, Beyonce does so much and I think she is really smart. There is a debate amongst my friends of whether is she is smart or dumb. There are some people who think she is dumb, I don't know, I think she is a genius but either way, whether she is smart or genius or not, she is not smarter than you, but she has figured out a way to get all of these things done, and so can you. So, if she has figured a way to get all of these things done, so can you. The next bit of information is, or the next quote, is, "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion," and that is Parkinson's Law. I first learned about Parkinson's Law from the four hour work week. So I am going to repeat that, "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." So that means if you decide that you are going to wash the dishes and you are going to give yourself two hours to wash the dishes, you will take two hours to wash the dishes, but those same amount of dishes, if you give yourself fifteen minutes, you will find a way to get them done in fifteen minutes. Think about when you were in college and had a paper due, you had all semester long to write that paper, but when it came down to that last week or even the last day, you finished that paper in the last day. You took however long you needed to take it expanded and filled the time but when you actually started to work on it you finished it in that last day. So the next bit of information is for me, you are always the boss of your time; you are always the boss of your time. Now, I really want to go into this a little bit and I want you to always remember that you control your time and your time is valuable. It is so valuable, we

have a very limited amount of time on this Earth and when you allow people to control your time and pull you into directions and have you focus on things that are not important, you are doing yourself a great disservice. I would even go as far to say that you are committing a sin; you are doing yourself a great disservice. You are the boss of your time, you are the boss, you control your time. So when someone tries to pull you away or when you allow BS to take you away from doing something that is very productive or doing something that you know you should be doing, you are not the boss, you are not being the boss. Be the boss, stand up to whatever is taking away from your time. You are going to sometimes seem like an a-hole. You are going to seem like an a-hole sometimes, but guess what, who cares. I am trying to keep this show clean, but I always like to say, if you are mad because I have a lot of stuff going on or whatever the case may be, I don't give a S-H-I-fill in the blank. I don't care, I really don't care. And it's to the point where I am very thankful that I finally developed this boss mindset that people always come to me when they come to me with an idea or whatever. If it's not someone I talk to regularly, they always start with; I know you're busy but blah blah blah blah. Yes I am, you're right. I like you, you're cool, I am going to give you some time but I am the boss of my time. And I expect the same thing, I wouldn't be mad if I went to that same person and asked them for favor or asked them a question, whatever the case may be, and if they treated me the exact same way if they are too busy because guess what, they are the boss of their time. So if I am coming to them it should be well worth it. You should definitely adopt this mindset that you are the boss of your time. Be the boss of your time, I can't stress that enough. So, unless you have that mindset, none of these techniques will work for you. You mine as well stop there and take the time to develop this be-the-boss-of-your-own-time mindset.

Step #2, learn to focus. Learn to focus, I know it sounds very simple, but it is really, really, really, important and you will see why as we go through these steps. Most people can't focus. Now this is not based on empirical evidence but I would guess that maybe about 80% of people do not know how to focus on a single task for an hour. They don't even know how to focus on one single task for an hour. The reason I say that is because I talk to so many entrepreneurs and I see this commonality where people really can't just get in and focus. So you need to learn how to focus on something that takes just an hour with uninterrupted just be able to control your mind. Now I am going to talk about how I even came to the realization about this and I talked about this book in episode #3. The concept came from "The Power of Concentration" by Theron Q. Dumont or William Walker Atkinson. There is conflicting information on the internet about who the author of this book is. It is so conflicting that I have the book on audio and on the cover art it says it is by Theron Q. Dumont but in the directory in audiobooks.com it says it is by William Walker Atkinson. When I tried to the research on it it literally had two different authors and I really just didn't have time to try and figure out and sit and do a whole research on it. But either way, the book, The Power of Concentration, talks about how you can't concentrate on anything until you really learn how to focus and down to very small tasks. He gives us these

exercises and I even talk about them in another episode of being able to sit there and stack cards one on top of the other. The ability to be able to focus on something like that, so minutia as that, helps you to be able to focus in your life and when it comes to accomplishing goals and accomplishing large tasks, small tasks, strategies, whatever. Being able to control your mind and focus on one task helps in the larger scheme of things. So I am going to give you some things that will help you to learn how to focus if you have an issue with ADD or if your mind is always constantly changing the channel. Here are some tasks that will help you focus; working out without stopping to talk to your friends. So I know for me, I am serious; I am always on a mission when I am at the gym, and I go to the gym five days a week and I see the same people and sometimes I speak and sometimes I don't because I am focused and I don't care. It's not that I am trying to be mean; but sometimes I am really focused and I don't even, like, I don't even see people because I am really, really focused on completing the task and I got to get in and I got to get out. So work out, focus on that task, whatever it is that you have to do. Whether it is running or you have to do a certain number of sit-ups or you have to do whatever, whatever, whatever. Focus on that task at hand and don't do it interrupted, don't let anybody interrupt you, somebody wants to come over and talk to you, don't take your headphones out. "Hey, how ya doin'?" and just keep on going, that will help to learn how to focus. Another task that will help you learn how to focus is reading. Another one is playing an instrument, or anything that requires you to use your hands, playing an instrument or anything that requires you to use your hands. Here are some focus-killers. Television, too much television will de-learn you how to focus, it will ruin your ability to focus. Social media, social media will also ruin your ability to focus. And too much work time banter, and by that I mean when you are at work doing a task and someone is always coming over, you're joking a lot, and all that good stuff. Now trust me, in the Lidyr offices, we have a lot of work time banter, we laugh a whole lot; but guess what, we also sit and we focus. There are large chunks of time, we are all in one room, and we are completely silent because everybody focusing on their task. So everything is okay in moderation but when you have too much work time banter and you are constantly being interrupted by something that someone else is doing, they want to come over and joke with you or they want to show you this YouTube video, whatever the case may be, that will ruin your ability to be able to focus. This is where being the master of your time comes in because if someone knows like, hey I can't talk to you now, they will start to be able to know that person, Nikki or Joe or whatever your name is, Joe doesn't play, he is the master of his time, I cannot control his time, he controls his time. Now when Joe is ready to play he will come over and talk to me, but right now I see that Joe is focused so I am not going to bother him because he is the master of his time. So I want you to focus on learning how to focus before you even get into these techniques.

Step 3, this is where the use of step one and step two come into play. Step 3, now you have to time yourself. Write out your tasks to be completed over the next day, hour, week, in

haphazard increments, it doesn't matter, I don't care. If you know you got five or six things to do in the next week, write them out, just make a list of them before you attack them. Once you decide to attack them, time yourself on each one. How long does it take you to complete each of those tasks, they can be all different tasks, they can be all the same tasks, whatever. This is very, very important because you need to know how long it takes you to do particular tasks before you can move onto these next steps. This concept came to me from the book, "Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time". It is a book by Jeff Sutherland and I didn't read all of it because it was really boring, and I'm down with completing boring books but I don't know, that one I just couldn't get into it and it's a best seller and people like it. Maybe I am going to come back to it at some point but I read the first couple chapters and one of the biggest takeaways I took from it was, in this technique, the first phase is really to just haphazardly do work so you can see how long it takes you team to complete individual tasks so you can have a proper gauge on how long it takes to complete individual tasks. So record these times, you can even make them into a note or whatever. This step may take you about a week or a month for you to get a proper account for how long it takes to complete various tasks. It depends on how many different types of tasks you complete on a regular basis within your work that will affect how long it really takes you to wrap your head around how long it takes. So if you know you are doing one task over and over and over again it might take you a day for this step, so like, okay, my job consists of putting widgets in boxes and I know that it takes me .3 seconds to put a widget in a box, you don't really have to take a lot of time on this step. But for me, my job is a lot of steps. I have to sit down with a team, prepare for meetings, I have to communicate with our clients, I have to proposals, I have to invoice, I have to do these podcasts, I have to write articles, I have to design websites, I have to work with a team on designing logos; I have to do all these different things, I am leaving out probably some major things that I do. But each of these things take different amounts of time, and it probably may have taken me about a month to really sit and record how much time. But you have to be able to focus and you have to be able to know how to tell people when not to interrupt you, step 1 and step 2, in order to properly account the amount of time it takes for each task. So, don't fret, I have a worksheet for you to download at Betterthansucces.com/5 that will help you wrap your mind around all of this. Okay, now these next steps are the meat and potatoes of the time management technique. These are your recurring tasks.

Step 4, first thing you are going to do is just go through your day like normal but you are going to record you tasks as they come to your head in various places. I don't want to tell you that you have to walk around with a notebook; I don't want to tell you that you have to keep your phone by your side 24/7, which is what we all do. Whatever you have to do to record a task that you know you have coming up. So let's say for instance that you are in the gym and you don't have your phone with you, you are listening on your iPod which may not be your phone, maybe you have a Shuffle or something like that, and you get a task in your head that you have

to complete. Oh, shoot, I forgot I have to go and shoot Mrs. Jones a proposal. Write it down on a little piece of paper and put the paper in your pocket. And then two hours later you remember when you are driving in your car, oh crap, I have to package up those orders, write that down and take the note in your phone. So, at the beginning of the week, you are going to have all these notes in all these various different places, but just make sure that you can always remember where the notes are, don't just leave notes all over the place, remember where the notes are.

Step 5, before you do anything, before you have your coffee, before you do anything in your work week, you have to do steps 5 and 6. Make a composite list of all the tasks that you recorded in your various places. So, all last week I wrote down all these things that I have to do for the upcoming week and I have a notebook, I have my phone, I have my laptop, I have notes in my laptop, I have notes everywhere. Now here we are at step 5, I am going to take all these notes and record them on my computer in Word document or in Text Editor. It is important that you do this on your computer; this is called the Master Task List. You are going to take all of your lists and have a list of just random things. It could be two pages long, it could be half of a page long, it could be three things; I have no idea but you are just going to have a list of a whole bunch of different things. And I say on your computer specifically because in "The Four Hour Work Week", when he tries to help you with a time management technique, Tim Furrer, he talks about how you should do this on a written piece of paper. I disagree with that and I will get to that in a minute but for this technique you have to do it on your computer, on something digital, and I will get to the reason why in a minute. I do it in a Word document, it is probably easier for you to do it in Text Editor because Text Editor takes up less space on your computer than a Word document but for me I don't know why I do it in a Word document, that's just how I started it. I can probably transfer over a Text Editor because it's more efficient, it saves space on my computer, but what I do is I created a folder on my computer that's titled "Tasks" and in that folder I name each document the week. So, for instance, next week coming up is February 29, so the title of that document will be called, "February 29". And in that document, up until this point, which I have explained to you, is you are going to have February 29, all you are going to have right now at this point is just a list of tasks that you have just pulled together from your whole week from all your notes and all these different places. And again, like I said, I have a worksheet for you to download at Betterthansuccess.com/5 that will help you be able to organize this.

Now, step 6, schedule out your day, just this day. Schedule out 15 to 30 minute, 1 to 2 hour blocks of time to complete the tasks on your master task list throughout your day and start inserting them in these blocks in order of priority. So, let's just give some tasks a name; task 1, task 2, task 3. Task 1 is not so important, task 2 is very important, and task 3 is just not important at all but it is something that needs to get done, it's not high priority, you just have

to get it done by the end of the week. So let's say you are going to take task 2, which is the very important task, you are going to do that first thing, so it is going to take an hour, which you know because remember you have timed how long it takes for you to complete all of these tasks. You got in the office at 9 o'clock; you do your mapping out your jeans from 9 o'clock to 9:15 so your day really starts at 9:15. So from 9:15 to 10:15 you are going to do task 2, and then, okay it only takes you ten minutes to do task 1 so then from 10:15 to 10:25 you are going to do task 1 and so on and so forth. So you are going to start mapping out your day accordingly, you are going to start picking things from that task list. Now remember that task list is really long so don't try to fit everything on that master task list and to your schedule. You won't be able to do it because your master task list is things that are probably going to take you a week or a week and a half to complete everything but there are only so many hours in a day and you know how long it takes you to complete x amount of tasks so what you are really going to do is optimize your day because you are setting up blocks of time. Now don't forget to put blocks of time in there for your break, your coffee break, if you want to take time to BS with your coworkers, go ahead and do that. Oh, Shannon over there, I know I want to talk to Shannon about Empire last week. So, I am going to go over there at about 11:15 because I know every task from 9:00 to 10:15 to 11:15 is going to be really, really hard and my brain is going to need, like, a mental break. So at 11:15 I am going to go over and talk to Shannon for about Empire for about 15 minutes. Put all that in your calendar. As you get better then you will start to know how you work best, but put all of that in your calendar. You can also clump things. So if you know that there are tasks that need to get done that literally take two seconds, you can say, "okay, I have to email my mom, or I have to email the plumber, I have to call the plumber, or whatever the case may be." Start to clump things, like okay, for an hour, from one to two; I am going to call the plumber, send an email to my coworker, I am going to do this proposal, that may take you fifteen minutes to just fill in the blanks on a pre-documented proposal that you already have, I am going to send this invoice, and I am going to do that, you may fit in like ten really small tasks into an hour clump or even a thirty minute clump, depending on how much time it takes you to do those things. So don't be afraid to clump things together.

Step 7, give yourself a definitive time to end work for the day, no matter what. This is what gives you work-life balance. This is why you need to listen to the previous episode. This is very, very, very important. Give yourself a definitive time to end work, if you don't give yourself a definitive time then this all means nothing. You have to give yourself a definitive time because you are going to allow yourself to draw a line in the sand where this is where work got done and this is where this time is all about me and my family or just all about me where I am going to chill and just lay here and literally do nothing, or I am going to watch TV, or I am going to read a book, or, remember I said practice your instrument, go and practice an instrument, or whatever the case may be. You are drawing the line in the sand and you are giving yourself a specific amount of time to finish work. Remember Parkinson's Law, work expands as to fill the

time available for its completion. So, if you give yourself a definitive time that means that you get a lot more done in a shorter amount of time. So the good thing about this technique is, remember you are only doing today, so not everything from the week's list will get done today, it's not supposed to. This also allows you to race against the clock, completing individual tasks and gives you a deadline for each. So it's like you are always working in the last minute but without the pressure, because you know how efficient you are when you are working in the last minute, or effective you are, or both, effective and efficient when you working in the last minute. But it does not have that pressure with it; it also assures that you working as efficiently as you can. As you go through the day, completing tasks, use the strikeout tool to cross them out both on the schedule and on the master task list, cross them out, don't delete them, use the strikeout to cross them out. Here is an important note, as new things come up throughout the day that don't require you immediate attention, add them to the master task list, go back and record them on the master task list. So you are plowing through your day and someone calls you, and they say, "Hey, Nikki, we need that report for whatever, such and such and such, can you generate that report?" Okay, that is awesome; you know it doesn't have to get done until two days from now, just add it to your master task list. Try not to shake up your day so much, sometimes, don't get it twisted, you will need to bump everything in your schedule and focus on a whole brand new task. If that happens, that is okay, no big deal. But just know that you can always put something back in that master task list.

Step 8, at the end of the day, account for things you completed and the things you did not. Like I said, some things may come up; sometimes tasks may take a little longer than you expected, new, more urgent things get thrown in your way so you may not complete everything, but like I said, that is okay, you did as much as you possibly could and if that is true, then it is a lot, you are human. So what that means is that you are powerful by nature, as long as you are at your best then that means you did a lot so just feel good about the fact that if you did your best, you did a lot. Again, I have a worksheet that helps wrap your mind around all of this; download it at betterthansuccess/5.

So, step #9, you are going to start your new day. Before you do anything, as you sit at your desk to start your work, take the things from the master task list that did not get crossed off and the things that did not get completed, and remember those new tasks that came up yesterday that did not require your immediate attention, they should be in your master task list. Copy and paste them into a new master task list for that new day and repeat steps 6 through 8. This is why you do this on the computer so you can copy and paste, you have to write things down and things got lost in the sauce when I wrote them down. Remember to copy and paste, that helps things not get lost in the sauce, incomplete tasks or whatever. Remember to copy and paste them because you are on your computer so this means that things have a less likely chance to get lost in the sauce. Remember, steps 3 through 9, I have a worksheet for you to download at

betterthansuccess/5. So this will help you to be able to wrap your mind around everything and visualize everything and it will help you on your new journey of being much, much, much more efficient. Once you put these things into action, I know it is just going to be so powerful and you are just going to be so thankful. Happy entrepreneuring and until next time, have a great week.