

## Facial Expressions

The one thing that all of us can be certain of is this: that we have all been given a limited amount of time to live on earth.

I have attended a number of scheduled meetings of late, for the specific purpose of gathering and sharing information, and there is nothing more annoying, or in my view downright rude, when the other party allows a mobile phone call to take precedence over our conversation.

Out of courtesy for the other party I either turn my phone off or direct the call to my message bank immediately so that the conversation can continue unabated and the other person can have my fullest attention.

But the fact remains that there are many of us who have allowed time wasters to rob us of the precious moments that could have been far better used for both work and play.

Too many people are working longer hours because they are simply not taking charge of their day. The people who are suffering are generally their family, their clients and ultimately themselves.

Time wasters are the gremlins that will steal a second here and munch on a minute there. And before you know it, hours have been hanged, days have been drowned and months have been murdered. And before you know it, years have been yanked from your life, never to be returned.

But first, before we can take charge of our future, we must identify the time wasters that are stealing the very life out of our lives.

I made a decision this year to work less and make more money.

Does that mean that I'm all of a sudden going soft and lazy ?

No, it means that I have decided to work harder when I need to work harder, and in the midst of that work, to work much smarter.

I know of someone who has set in place a plan for their retirement, so that they can take 12 months off at that momentous time that will be financed through various sources of passive income that they have put in place.

And then, during that 12 month period, they will plan and prepare for the rest of their life. But none of this can be done unless one has control of their time.

### **TAME THE TELEPHONE**

Learn to control the telephone, or it will control you.

Regard your telephone as a business tool and not as a social one. Make it your practice to have quick and to-the-point conversations.

Write down your agenda, in your diary, before you call.

Terminate long-winded conversations by simply saying 'I'm sorry to interrupt, but I must go.'

Don't use the telephone unless you really have to - send an e-mail.

Allocate a specific time to take or make calls, particularly if you have work that requires your utmost concentration

## **VERIFY VISITORS**

Schedule your meetings at a coffee shop. This then allows you to dictate when you can leave the meeting.

If you don't have time, say so. 'No' is a wonderful lifesaver.

Re-educate those who work around you as to your new and improved time management schedule.

Set aside specific times where you can work uninterrupted and let others know of this arrangement.

At the end of business, stand up.

Tell the other person that you have another meeting in such and such minutes, even if it is with yourself.

Walk the visitor to the door whilst saying, 'I'll finish this last point of our conversation as I walk you to reception.'

## **PAPER PILES**

Try to make a decision about a piece of paper as soon as you handle it.

Deal with mail once and once only. What needs to go in the bin goes there directly and all other information is to be filed immediately.

Does all the mail you receive need to be received? Cancel some subscriptions.

Read selectively.

## **PLAN YOUR DAY**

Make the diary your friend.

I personally prefer a diary that provides me with one day per page. Others may prefer electronic diaries.

Plan one week in advance and then plan daily.

On each page I have the day's appointments and my daily 'to do' list.

I tick off those things that are done and then draw an arrow next to those things that still need to be done. They are then written again on the following day or whenever they have been reassigned to be completed.

I put a line through those things that no longer need doing.

Through planning you will also minimize the number of fires that you are going to have to put out throughout your lifetime.

### **ELIMINATE INDECISION**

One of the easiest and time effective way I have found to remove indecision, and to allow for clear decisions, has been to take a blank page and draw a line down the middle.

On the left hand side I write the positives that will result from the decision.

On the right hand side I write the negatives that will result from the decision.

If the positives outweigh the negatives I will act immediately.

If otherwise, I will not act or say 'no' to whomever has asked me regarding the decision.

### **AND THERE'S TIME FOR MORE**

Prioritize your activities, set goals, delegate and don't allow perfectionism to stop you from starting. If I had waited for my writing to be absolutely perfect I would have never sent out my first eZine or written my first book. **Start !**

Oh, and limit the amount of television you watch each week. Turn that time into study time and reading time. Your life will thank you for the rest of your days.

**Treat time like gold. Those who value it refuse to waste it.**

***You can do it !***