

Time Audit Example

Time Assessment									
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday		
Categories:								<i>Total</i>	<i>Daily</i>
								46.2	<i>Avg</i>
Sleep	7.5	3	7.5	6	7.5	7	7.75	5	6.6
At Work	9	8	0	0	7	7	7	38	7.6
With Kids	0	7	9	7	2.25	3.5	3	31.7	4.5
Time Alone	0	5.75	2	1	2.5	0	1.5	12.7	1.8
Entertain/TV	2	3	4	0.5	2.5	0	0	12	1.7
With Friends	1	4.5	1.5	0	2.75	0	1	10.7	1.5
With Spouse	2	1.5	1.5	1.75	0	0	3	5	1.4
Meals	0	1.25	1.5	0.75	1.5	1.5	3	9.75	1.4
Driving	1	2	0.5	1.75	1.5	1.5	1	9.5	1.4
Fun/Activities	0	2.5	2.5	1	0	0	3	9.25	1.3
Chores/Errands	0	2.5	3	0	2	0	0	9	1.3
								7.5	1.1

What did you observe in how you have spent your time? What surprised you? What disappointed you? What was in your control and what was not?

The single largest block of time by category was given to sleep, 6.6 hours a night, which is not a surprise that it is the largest block of my daily time allotment, but I would still like for this number to be closer to 7.5 hours. The second largest block of time was spent at work (7.6 hours daily based on five day work week). On average I spend 4.5 hours a day with my kids (this is not always concentrated one-on-one time). On average I spend just short of 2 hours a day alone, which makes sense because I'm an introvert. Some, not all of my alone time is spent watching TV (1.7 hours a day). I typically have the opportunity to spend 1.5 hours a day with a friend(s), my wife; often sitting down at a meal. I spend on average 1.3 hours a day driving. I spend 1.3 hours a day doing something I categorize as a fun activity. Lastly, I give just over 1 hour a day to doing household chores and common errands.

I was surprised by the nearly 2 hours a day that I seem to be able to carve out for alone time, but this seems appropriate as my career, family, and friends take up large amounts of my time. Introverts recover, rejuvenate, and refresh themselves by spending time alone, so this would tell me that I naturally create this type of space for my wellbeing. I was surprised that I only spend 1.4 intentional hours a day with my wife, the same amount of time I do daily with friends. I was also surprised by how much time I spend driving each day.

I was disappointed that on average I get almost an hour less sleep than what I believe I need. I also do not like that I routinely watch about an hour and 45 minutes of TV a day. I would like this to be closer to 1 hour a day. I do not know if I would describe it as disappointment, but I wish that I was spending more quality time with my wife, at least an additional 30 minutes a day, pushing that average up to 2 hours.

As it pertains to my time, the matters that are in my control are just about everything. I can be more intentional in budgeting an extra hour of sleep each night. I can kill two birds with one stone by substituting the 45 min of TV watching I would like to decrease, and I can direct that time toward my wife. Circumstances that are out of my control are: the amount of time I spend driving. I think this is just the nature of living in a large city and living a minimum of 15-20 minutes away from where I work.

How did you handle interruptions, changes in plans, or other outside factors?

Over the years I have noticed that I handle interruptions and changes in plans much better in my professional life than I do at home with my family. I have embraced this as a normal factor at work, but for some reason, I am more easily aggravated when these types of changes occur in my down time (off work hours). As an example, my son had a project that was due this week. My help was needed, and I was given little advance warning. With my busy schedule and the assignment nearing its due date, I spent an unplanned 1.5 hours with my son at Lowes trying to find the materials we needed for his project. This was followed up by a second trip to Lowes the following day to get additional materials (also unplanned). I do not like the tension of knowing I need to be present and helpful with and for my son, while at the same time feeling that my time is being wasted.

How does your time use support the roles you identified?

I listed seven primary roles that I self-identify with: disciple of Christ, husband, father, neighbor, friend, minister, and student. As a disciple of Christ, I always feel like this is the backbone of who I am and how I identify myself, but I don't know if how I spent my time this past week reflects that. My time wasn't spent being unchristian, but I cannot say that I prioritized my time to grow my faith as Christ's disciple. As a husband, I did spend quality time with my wife, but as I indicated above, I believe I need to carve out more space for being a more engaged husband. I do feel like I am doing well in my role as a father. I feel like I was a quality neighbor this past week. We played outside in the front yard with the neighbors, and when Tim needed help fixing his car and getting a ride from his mechanic, I was able to lend him a hand, and let him borrow our third car which we have not yet had the "time" to sell. I got lots of quality time with friends; reunited with old buddies at a conference out in California, had coffee and lunch with my best friend, and spent three hours with our closest friends at our couples group.

How does your time use support your values?

For me, this was the most shocking and sobering part of the exercise. I listed in the assessment a set of family values that my wife and I identified a few years ago after reading Pat Lencioni's book; *The Three Big Questions for a Frantic Family*. Our values are: faith, health, finances, marriage, and learning. I would still claim these values as primary in our lives today, but after participating in this exercise, I see a disconnect between my stated family values and how I spend the majority of my time. At least for this week, our faith value was only expressed through attending church. My interaction with scripture was minimal. The only place I gave considerable effort to my health was connected to trying to be somewhat more intentional about getting more sleep. 6.6 hours is probably better than what I normally average, but I need to be better. My wife is a foodie, so we tend to eat healthy, but I do not follow her example of regular exercise, so it is clear that I need to make room for that in my life. We recently received a significant family inheritance, so our financial landscape has improved for the better, and we no longer live under the constant strain of debt, but I have half a dozen financial matters that I have had on my weekly to do list for the last several months. I need to carve out some time to engage these matters, and move us forward in a positive financial manner, to insure that we avoid the mistakes we have made in the past.

Observations and Discoveries

The most significant observation I made as a result of this exercise is the disconnect between my stated values and how I actually spend my time in relationship to my values. I do not think there are any problems with my values; they do not need to be changed. What needs to change is how I organize my life to reflect what I express as my values. As already mentioned, my marriage is a top priority, thus my wife and I have already talked about how we are going to increase the amount of time we spend together. We have made it a goal to schedule lunch together twice a month, just like we would anyone else we would be intentional about spending time with. We laughed, because this will actually save us money, because we won't have the additional cost of a babysitter!

Conclusions

I confirmed some things that I assumed would be true, and I learned some things I did not anticipate. As a whole and in some form or fashion, I think it would be a good idea to do this exercise every couple of years, or when struggling with time management issues. This exercise allows you to see exactly how your time is being spent, and then provides a way of making major or minor course corrections to help insure you are spending your time where it is needed most, connected to your roles and expressed values.