

CALLING BULLSH*T ON BUSY TIME MANAGEMENT QUIZ

Want to find out what your current relationship with time looks like? Be kind and loving as you answer the following questions AND tell the truth to yourself. You don't have to share the results with anyone else, so be honest. That way, you'll know exactly where YOU stand, even if it turns out to be on shakier ground than you had hoped!

Answer the questions as you actually are, rather than how you think you should be. As you begin, start a stopwatch so you can track how long it took you to complete this quiz.

These first questions should be rated on a scale of 1-5, with 1=Not at all and 5 = Very often.

1. I work on tasks strategically, from the highest priority to the lowest priority.
2. I typically complete tasks at the last minute and then ask for extensions.
3. I set time aside for planning and scheduling.
4. I use time commuting, being stuck in traffic or in a line, or on hold on the phone for something productive.
5. I batch similar tasks together into a single block so I can deal with them at the same time.
6. I get distracted then look up and have to get my bearings to start a task again.
7. I track my activities and progress during the day.
8. I sometimes skip lunch or eat it at my desk.
9. I know how long it takes to complete each of the various tasks I do.
10. A typical day includes more than one interruption.
11. I use my goals and values to decide which tasks and activities I will work on.
12. I can accurately recall what I accomplished at work when the day is over.
13. I will take on other people's work to keep a project on schedule.

14. I build buffers into my schedule so it's easier for me to deal with last-minute changes.
15. When I'm working, I block out everything that goes on around me.
16. I know exactly when during the day and how much time I spend checking, replying to, and filing emails.
17. When I get a new assignment, the first thing I do is review it and slot it into my existing priorities so it gets the attention it needs in the proper order.
18. I am stressed about deadlines and commitments.
19. I'm the person people turn to when they need to figure something out or get out of a jam.
20. I often have to handle multiple tasks at a time.
21. I have to take work home or stay late in order to get it done.
22. I prioritize my to-do lists.
23. I confirm my priorities with my boss.
24. Before I agree to do something, I review it to see if the benefits are greater than the time investment.
25. When reviewing my tasks and to-do list, I sometimes forget what was at the beginning of the list.
26. I break big projects down into smaller steps.
27. When my mind starts wandering from my work, I take a break and refocus.

These questions are multiple-choice and again, please answer the questions as you actually are, rather than how you think you should be.

1. You have lunch plans with a friend who lives across town. What's the most common scenario for you?
 - a. You're 10 minutes early, so you grab a table, ask the server to bring water to the table before your friend arrives, and do a bit of work while you wait.

- b. You're a couple of minutes late, but only because traffic was bad and you got caught behind a grandma driving 10 miles below the speed limit.
 - c. You're 20 minutes late and arrive completely frazzled. Of course, just as you were ready to walk out the door, the phone rang and then you couldn't find your keys and your kid couldn't find her homework and the dog would NOT come in from the backyard no matter how many times you called him or bribed him with a treat ...
2. When asked to complete a big, multi-stage project at work, are you usually:
- a. Finished early enough with your first pass to share your draft with your colleagues for feedback, consider their suggestions, and then revise it just until the deadline for submitting it.
 - b. Delivering at 7:00 p.m. on the due date because someone on your team was late in getting you their work or you would have totally gotten it in on time.
 - c. Asking your boss for an extension on the day it's due—because there's no way you'll finish by midnight if you could even stay awake that long to finish it.
3. Do you have an understanding of how long recurring tasks take to finish?
- a. Usually
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. I didn't really recognize that they were recurring
4. What do your mornings look like?
- a. Usually easy with some time for planning, prioritizing, and scheduling.
 - b. I don't always get to do what I thought I was going to do because something often comes up.
 - c. Racing around the house to pull everything together before another shit show starts and I'm holding on until it all stops around dinner time.
5. How often do interruptions and distractions completely derail your work?
- a. Not often. People are scared of me and tend to leave me alone.
 - b. Sometimes.
 - c. More often than I like—if people would leave me alone, I'd be crushing it.
 - d. I'm constantly being pulled in a million directions.
6. Are your inbox and digital files neat and orderly, so that you can easily find what you're looking for and prioritize requests?
- a. Almost always.
 - b. On my computer, yes—on the server, no.
 - c. I hate email and my digital files look like a bomb went off in them.
7. Before you say yes to a task or event, do you review your existing priorities and commitments before agreeing to do it?

- a. Usually.
 - b. I just say yes and then get out of it later—forgiveness rather than permission!
 - c. I don't like to disappoint people so I often agree to things and then feel resentful or angry with myself even as I force myself to finish the task or event.
8. Do you find the daily maintenance of your life overwhelming, like there are so many things to do that you don't know how to get them all done or even where to start?
- a. Not really.
 - b. Only when something breaks.
 - c. Only when someone else is involved and they don't hold up their end.
 - d. Doesn't everyone?!
9. How often do you find yourself procrastinating on tasks, even the ones you've chosen to do or know are important to do?
- a. I love eating the frog!
 - b. Not too often.
 - c. Only when other people think their priorities are more important than mine.
 - d. I try to go for low-hanging fruit so I can at least get something done—and hope that some things will just fall off the list so I don't have to do them.

Now set a timer for 15 minutes and review your answers. Where are you satisfied with your current level of productivity and where do you see opportunities for growth? Regardless of how far away your ideal is from where you are now, know that day by day you can make tremendous improvements ... if you're willing to do the work and pay attention.