



### Staying Ahead of the Game

I was recently talking with my son Ryan, who works here at Get A Grip as Senior Vice President, about how busy we are. But despite how much we have going on in the business, and in our personal lives, we're taking it all in stride. We've both developed routines over the course of the past years to help us deal with unexpected events. Most importantly, these routines help us stay ahead of the game by providing balance between home and work. Staying organized helps us get through each busy day and leave work at work when the day is done.

Here are some ways that help keep me organized and ahead of the game.

**Keep a notebook:** I keep a spiral notebook with me at all times, so when I make new plans or come up with new ideas for projects, I can jot them down immediately. This way I can stay focused on the now, and don't have to worry about whether or not I've forgotten about important long-term projects I might have on my plate.

**Plan ahead.** A few minutes of planning and preparation can save hours of time and loads of frustration. Think ahead to what you'll need, what issues may come up, and what can you do ahead of time to delegate. For example, instead of waiting until dinnertime to figure out what to eat, plan it the night before or in the morning before you head out. Check your freezer, find a recipe that fits what you have, and you're all set! A few minutes of planning allows you to stop worrying about it for the rest of the day. That's all kinds of headspace freed up for other tasks!

**Start the day with structure:** Go through email and social media updates that have piled up overnight and prioritize what needs to be done. First, delegate what you can so your team can start working as soon as possible. Then, knock out your quick tasks, and schedule bigger items into your calendar. Finally, delete all the unimportant and unavoidable junk that clutters our inboxes daily.

**Batch up your tasks.** Sometimes it's easier to do one type of thing multiple times, like an assembly line. Group like tasks into batches - phone calls, filing, correspondence, paying bills, etc. You'll be more focused, instead of paying attention to several things at once. Plus, completing a task feels very satisfying! This strategy will also help you keep clutter to a minimum by filing or getting rid of papers right away.

**Use checklists.** Checklists are great for routine tasks. They reduce errors and help minimize your stress, especially when you are overworked or are in a rush. Plus, if you're not around, someone else can pick up your checklist and run with it!

**Use technology wisely.** Keep phone numbers and other often-used data on your computer and/or mobile phone. Online organizers – which you can access via your computer or your phone – can combine your calendar, address book, to-do lists, and so much more. They also send you pop-up reminders about meetings and deadlines, which can provide a huge relief knowing you'll never have to worry about missing an important meeting or appointment. The effort it takes to master these tools will save you tons of time (and lots of sticky notes) in the long run.

**Stick with what works.** Choose make up, clothes, shoes, a phone, etc. that work for you and stay with it. Don't waste time (and money) on the latest and greatest fads when what you have already suits you perfectly!

**Give it your full attention.** Efficient people put most effort towards their most important projects, and minor towards the rest. So it's okay to eat ready-to-eat healthy meals, or bring store-bought cookies to school for the bake sale, because you're focused on getting that work project done, or helping your kids with homework.

These ideas have helped me stay focused at work and at home. I can leave work at work, be fully present at home, and vice versa. So give yourself a break and stop beating yourself up about the little things. Tomorrow is another day to start again. Just sayin'.

*About the Author*

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