

FACULTY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Enhancing Practice & Developing the Self: The BU Certificate in Programme Leadership

How to Reinvigorate your Routine

Extract from: Webb, Caroline (2017), *How to have a Good Day: Think Bigger, Feel Better and Transform your Working Life*, Pan Macmillan, pp.319-321.

'Very few of us look at our schedules and say, "Wow - that looks like a recipe for joy. Please bring it on". But it doesn't take much effort to more proactively include activities that will make the day more delightful. Here is a different way of seeing your daily routine, one that draws on all the science of this book. Use this checklist to design a day that will leave you feeling good.'

Use the suggestions overleaf to see how you can make some small differences to your day!

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BEFORE WORK	Set your intentions	Think about the day ahead – maybe in the shower, maybe on the way to work. Ask yourself: <i>“What matters most today? What does that mean for my attitude, attention and actions? What specific goals should I set for the day?”</i>
AS YOU GET STARTED	Visualise the ideal	Take a moment to imagine the most important thing you are doing today. Picture yourself doing it and being at your best. Notice what you’re doing and saying.
	Plan a peak	Decide what you’re most looking forward to today, however small. Small becomes bigger when you think about it.
	Batch your tasks	Plan a block of uninterrupted thinking time to work on your most complex task.
	Prime yourself	Create another slot (or two) for reading and responding to all your messages. Batch other similar tasks together – you’ll get them done more quickly.
DURING THE DAY	Set the tone	Decide what mental attributes you most need in your thinking today and create whatever cues may help prompt that – an image, a song, a change in your workspace setup.
	Express random appreciation	Decide what behaviour you want from the other people and how you can project that time yourself. They will mirror it back to you, whether either of you realises it or not.
	Protect your thinking time	Do a random act of kindness. Compliment someone for something, ideally unprompted. Be unexpectedly helpful or generous in some way. Notice the effect on both of you.
	Assume good person, bad circumstances	In a block of focused thinking time, divert/switch off your devices and notifications. If needed, set expectations for colleagues e.g. through an automatic email response promising a reply later in the day.
	Borrow a good mood	If you encounter bad behaviour, try assuming you’re dealing with a decent person whose sense of self-worth or social standing has been threatened. To quickly reduce tension, say something appreciative.
	Label any frustrations	Give yourself a boost using facial feedback: smile. Even a fake smile will start the ball rolling.
LUNCH	Keep your eyes on the prize	When you feel irritated or upset, write down what the facts are (free from interpretation) and how they make you feel. If you have time – and it can be later – read what you’ve written and decide what your ‘best self’ (or wisest friend) would say or do.
	Refresh and reboot	At less wonderful moments of the day, ask yourself, <i>“What really matters today?”</i> Write it on a sticky note or whiteboard – whatever helps you keep it front and centre in your mind.
	Connect with someone	Take a break every 90 minutes, even if it’s just getting up and stretching your legs. It’s especially important if you’re involved in some tough, complex work where allowing some subconscious processing might help you reach insight.
FOR EACH TASK	Do some exercise	Make space to have at least one short interaction with someone you like. It doesn’t have to be much. If you can’t make it happen in person, take a moment to get in touch with a friend of have a warmer-than-usual exchange with a stranger.
	Maximise you vision	Exercise doesn’t have to be flashy to boost our mood and focus. Take a brisk walk. Do some jumping jacks. It all helps
AT THE END OF THE DAY	Start on a strong footing	Ask yourself: <i>“What the most interesting thing about this task?”</i> <i>“What’s the bigger reason for getting this done?”</i> <i>“If I could apply my personal strengths in the way I do this work, how would I go about it?”</i> <i>“When has this been done well before (by me or others) and what can I learn from that?”</i>
	Get unstuck	Start with a positive question (e.g. <i>“What’s going well so far?”</i> or <i>“What’s the ideal outcome?”</i>). Do this before you get into the challenging stuff.
	End on a high note	If something has been on your to-do list for a while, be honest about what’s getting in the way – ask a few “whys” until you get to the real blockage. To resolve it, what would you have to do? And what would be the very smallest first step? Replace your to-do list with that.
	Sleep the good sleep	Think about the 3 best things that happened today. Write them in a small bedside notebook, tell your partner as you’re unwinding from the day or use them as a meditative reflection when you’re lying in bed. They might be tiny things – that’s ok. Avoid looking at any lit screens right before bedtime; it will make it harder to sleep. That means not bringing your phone into the bedroom. If you don’t have an alarm clock and have to use the phone to wake up, put the phone by the door facedown. (And tomorrow, buy a real alarm clock).