


**DO IT ON PURPOSE: Secrets and  
Strategies to Trade Stress for  
Success and Chaos for Confidence  
in Every Area of Your Life!**



By Robin Stephens, Your Energy Coach

[YourLifeinOrder.com](http://YourLifeinOrder.com)

Life by Design – With YOU as the Focal Point

**Stay current with FREE tips to help you turn chaos into confidence  
in every area of your life!**

**[www.yourlifeinorder.com](http://www.yourlifeinorder.com)**

**Version 1.0, Printed November 2007**

**Copyright ©2007 Robin Stephens. All Rights Reserved**

**[www.yourlifeinorder.com](http://www.yourlifeinorder.com)**

***All rights reserved for entire book. Reproduction or translation of any part of this work by any means without permission of the publisher is unlawful. You do not have resell rights to this book nor can you give it away.***

Disclaimer: All links in this report are valid and operational at the time of publication. If you find links that do not work, first try copying and pasting the link into your browser. If it still doesn't work, then feel free to send me an [email](mailto:) and I'll be sure to remove it from the next version and/or find an updated link. This report is for informational purposes only. The author makes no guarantees of results.

## **Do It On Purpose! Stop Going Around The Same Mountain and Get What You Really Want. Connect to Your Passion and Purpose and Create Prosperity in Every Area of Your Life!**

### ***Are you doing what you're doing on purpose?***

What a stupid question, you're probably saying. Of course I'm doing what I'm doing on purpose! But stop and think about it for a minute. With our personal and professional responsibilities constantly shifting; and the amount of work we have to do frequently exceeding our ability to produce; knowing **what to do** and **when to do it** to make the most of our precious time becomes an overwhelming task. You are unique. You were created with unique talents, gifts, and abilities. Your passion and purpose in life is directly related to those unique abilities. But how many of us are really connected to purposeful living - not checking off an endless To Do list of tasks and commitments.

We take for granted that somehow we'll create the life we really want by osmosis. That somehow it will just happen. We couldn't be more wrong. I know because I've done it. The brash conviction that you'll be young forever and you have all the time in the world eventually gets replaced with the unsettling feeling that time is running out.

One of the top 10 reasons people report feeling unsatisfied and unfulfilled is a lack of purpose. The pressures of daily living make us slaves, not masters of our destiny. And before you know it you've got more and more things to do - but they aren't the right things.

The point is, you can't connect to your passion - the people, places, things, and ideas that really motivate you - and your purpose - your unique talents and gifts, the special something that only you bring to the world - if you don't know how to focus on what matters most. You have to separate the VITAL from the TRIVIAL or you'll end up frustrated, dissatisfied, and unfulfilled.

I want to challenge you to keep reading. This isn't another lecture on productivity or another time management lesson. A discussion is critical because I believe that NOT knowing what you want or knowing what you want but not knowing HOW you can get it is a MAJOR reason why people aren't enjoying their lives - physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Why don't time and priority management systems always work?

- For one thing, our priorities often change.
- Many people have difficulty scheduling routine tasks to fit in with big picture.
- Everything seems urgent and important so it's difficult to choose.
- We get carried in different directions and lose focus on what's really important.
- Managing crises, interruptions and other external realities take us away from our priorities.

As Anthony Robbins, world renowned motivational speaker and productivity expert observed, **knowledge isn't power, it's potential power.** It's only powerful when you USE it. To know what you want and how to get it – that's power! When you're in tune with your important priorities – the ones that "juice" you, the ones that enhance, advance, and enrich you – you're harnessing the personal power of purpose!



Here's an illustration of what I mean. Let me tell you the story of The Carpenter.

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer of his retirement plans. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he would build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He was disorganized, distracted and resorted to shoddy workmanship. He used inferior materials. He had difficulty completing the project.

When he finally finished the house, he told the builder who then gave the carpenter the front door key to the house. "This is your home," he said, "It is my gift to you."

The carpenter was shocked and dismayed. If he had only known he was building his own house! Now his only choice to move into a poorly constructed, potentially unsafe home – and he was totally responsible.

Are you living your life like the carpenter?

We build our lives and our work in a disorganized way, living reactively rather than proactively. We often make poor choices and leave important things undone. We don't put forth our best effort. We don't use the best materials and resources available to us. And we end up creating a life like the carpenter's house.

It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live in it for only one more day, that day deserves to be lived with passion and purpose.

The plaque on the wall says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project."

Your life today is the result of your attitudes and choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today. How you spend your time is how you spend your life. So, are you doing what you're doing on purpose?



There is an old Chinese Proverb which says: **If you chase two rabbits, both will escape.**

Makes sense, doesn't it? How can you get what you want if you're running in two (or more!) different directions? **YOU HAVE TO BE CLEAR ON WHAT YOU WANT AND COMMIT TO FOCUSING ON YOUR GOAL IN ORDER TO GET WHAT YOU WANT.**

The first step to living on purpose is to **clarify and focus.** You must:

- Identify your top priorities.
- Only set goals that align with your most important objectives.
- Create a plan for your goal and outline it step by step.
- Take baby steps **CONSISTENTLY** (that means daily!) to move forward to your goal.

What's holding you back?

- How you've spent time in the past has determined your present work & life situation.
- Your future 5 years from now will be a direct result of how you prioritize your time and activities right now.
- Being conscious of priority management directly affects the quality of your life.

So why do we have trouble identifying our important priorities? Three reasons:

### 1. **Sometimes it's because we just don't know how to go about it.**

Maybe all you need is to learn a skill or technique to adjust your approach. For example, if your task is complex, you may need to break it down into smaller, manageable chunks. Sometimes the problem lies in not knowing how to reliably manage information or tasks.

### 2. **Sometimes our external environment or circumstances interfere.**

Many times factors beyond our control interfere with setting our priorities. Examples of this include unplanned meetings or last minute projects, illness or something of a physical nature, an unrealistic workload – either accepting or being given too much work - a transition (Birth, death, divorce, new job, downsizing, promotion, new boss) or a highly distracting environment – lots of crisis management or interruptions.

### 3. **Our internal fears and beliefs prevent us from making good choices.**

Old attitudes, learned behavior from childhood, internal fears and beliefs can often cause us to remain stuck in negative patterns which affect our ability to focus and follow through. They inhibit us from establishing and/or sticking to goals that are important to us. Do any of these sound familiar?

1. The Chaos Creator: This person gets a (negative) rush from stress. They mistakenly believe they function better under pressure, so they frequently put themselves in crisis mode.
2. The Fear of Failure: The constant fear of making a mistake or failing makes completion almost an impossibility. Goals are begun, then abandoned and the cycle
3. Fear of Completion: Not finishing tasks or projects. Love of the creative process but not the grind.
4. Perfectionism/Procrastination: Nuff said.
5. Fear of Losing Creativity: The fear that organization or structure will stifle creativity.



**UNPACKING YOUR "BS" BRIEFCASE:** Are your "Belief Systems" a help or hindrance?

What negative beliefs or attitudes are you still lugging around from the past that are preventing you from living your best life now? What thoughts about yourself are holding you back from your personal success?

Once you've identified what is holding you back you can unpack that briefcase and make a decision not to let old habits and attitudes prevent you from making priorities that will advance and enhance your life. Then it's time to get into **A.C.T.**ion!

## **A.C.T. ON WHAT MATTERS MOST**

**I discovered there are just 3 steps to creating your best life now.**

1. **A** – Acknowledge where you are right now without beating yourself up about it. Then decide - **WHAT** exactly do you want?
2. **C** – Create a plan or personal blueprint. **HOW** are you going to achieve it?
3. **T** – Take consistent, daily action. This is the **WHEN**. Without action, planning is useless.

## **WHAT'S YOUR STORY?**

This is what clients tell me:

- "I have way too much to do. I don't know where or how to start. I feel as though my wheels are spinning at 100 mph and I'm getting nowhere fast." (47 year old real estate broker)
- "I want to be in control. I don't like a rigid routine, but I would like the satisfaction of knowing that I'm using time effectively and that I'm making progress. Sometimes it gets so bad that I don't even want to think about what needs doing for fear of feeling overwhelmed!" (35 year old IT trainer, divorced, 3 children)

- “I write little notes to myself about things to do, projects to work on, ideas, priorities. All of these notes just accumulate into little piles.” (49 year old consultant/writer)

So what is your story? I'd like to hear it. Email me at [robin@yourlifeinorder.com](mailto:robin@yourlifeinorder.com) and I'll respond personally!



## **YOUR VISION IS VITAL!**

The first step in defining priorities and getting real value from your time is defining your vision and eliminating the energy drains that are keeping you from pursuing it.

Your vision is simply a mental picture of how you want your life to be. It is the BIG PICTURE. It is NOT a goal.

- The vision is the WHAT (The Picture)
- The goal is the HOW (The plan)

Your goals may change as your priorities change.  
Your vision stays the same.

It's critical and it's vital to any discussion of setting priorities. Without it you will spin your wheels and eventually come to a grinding halt. You will either:

- Accomplish nothing
- Get mired down in busywork – which is essentially accomplishing nothing.
- Feel guilty, overwhelmed, overloaded, overworked and underutilized.

Your Vision:

- Keeps you going when things get tough.
- Gives you direction – is critical to setting meaningful priorities and goals.
- Gives you control over your time.
- Keeps you on track in using your particular gifts and talents.
- Gives your life purpose!

For example, if my vision is to own a business, I will need to set goals and priorities that are in line with that vision. This will take a lot of work and effort on my part, so it is critical that I am FOCUSED on activities linked to my vision of owning a business.

You can see that being crystal clear on what you want is the first step to making it happen.

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF FOCUS

First you have to stop trying to get more done.

In the past, time and priority management taught us to be **EFFICIENT** (get more things done).

What we know now is that efficiency models (like multitasking) actually lower productivity and can hamper our ability to concentrate and focus on our goals. The secret is not to keep doing more things – **it's doing the right things.**

It's about becoming more **EFFECTIVE.**

We're already cramming more into our days than ever before.

Why is it that you can get more and more done but feel less and less satisfied or fulfilled?

Because instead of clearing your plate, you're piling it higher and higher. You're focusing on the endless To Do list and not the things that matter most.

The equation is **SUBTRACTION** – not **ADDITION.**

**Your new mantra is: Do less to achieve more.**



### 80/20 Vision – How to See Clearly

The first lesson in making focus work for you is developing 80/20 vision.

**FACT: 80% of results is always achieved from 20% of effort.**

If you look closely at your life - in most cases, you'll realize you are spending very little time on what you do really, really well. (Or what you really want to do).

So what the heck is 80/20 vision? It's based on Pareto's Principle – or the Rule of The Vital Few and Trivial Many. Here's some background. . .

In 1906, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto created a mathematical formula to describe the unequal distribution of wealth in his country, observing that twenty percent of the people owned eighty percent of the wealth.

After Pare created his formula, many others observed similar phenomena in their own areas of expertise.

Quality Management pioneer, Dr. Joseph Juran, working in the US in the 1930s and 40s recognized a universal principle he called the "**vital few and trivial many**" and reduced it to writing.

***This principle states that 20 percent of something is always responsible for 80 percent of the results. It's also known as the 80/20 Rule.***

**OFTEN 80% OF OUR TIME IS SPENT ON THINGS THAT ARE TRIVIAL OR UNIMPORTANT TO OUR GOALS – like**

- Reading email
- Sending memos
- Scanning junk mail or catalogs
- Weekly staff meetings
- Interruptions during the day (either personal or professional)
- Training classes that last most of the day
- Surfing the web
- More meetings
- Gossip or chitchat with co workers
- Returning phone calls unnecessarily

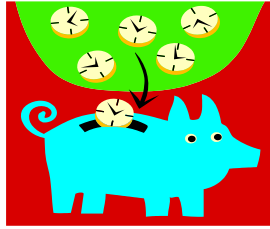
**YOUR PRIORITIES ARE CHOICES.**

- Your success depends upon preparation.
- Success occurs when preparation meets opportunity.
- How you spend your time is how you spend your life.
- How you spend your time is your choice.
- The most important element to determining your priorities is **FOCUS**.
- The stress from not prioritizing is always greater than the stress of prioritizing.

Imagine you had a bank account that credited your account every morning with **\$86,400**

- It carried over no balance from day to day.
- You could not keep any cash in the account.
- Every evening any money not used during that day was removed.
- 

How would you manage this account? Probably withdraw every cent every day, right?



**Well you have a bank account like that – it’s called THE TIME BANK.**

- Every day you get a credit of 86,400 seconds.
- Every evening whatever time you haven’t invested in your purpose and priorities is gone.
- You don’t get to carry over any unused or misused time.
- Each day your account starts fresh with a new deposit.

The key is to align your priorities with what is most important to you!

### **SO HOW ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR TIME NOW?**

- ✓ Is it hard to remember how you’re spending your time?
- ✓ How many things did you accomplish that you had planned to do?
- ✓ How many important activities did you put off?
- ✓ How many times has the same activity resurfaced on your To Do list over and over?
- ✓ What is it that you want to spend more time doing?
- ✓ What would you like to spend less time doing?
- ✓ Did you take any time this past week just for you?



### **THE POWER OF THREE**

I like the number 3. Three has a magic quality to it. Three wishes. The Trinity. Three coins in the fountain. Anyone at any time can put focus and energy behind 3 things:

- ➔ 3 projects
- ➔ 3 big ideas
- ➔ 3 life priorities

The Power of 3 lies in its simplicity. It is easy and effective. This one technique, when properly used will deliver absolutely amazing results. The Power of 3 method forces you to focus on 3 – and only 3 important priorities at one time. It puts the power of clarity right in your hand. And clarity gives you confidence.

Concentrating on your 3 will build momentum that will allow you to achieve results faster than any other productivity management tool. I know because I've tried it.

The fact is, trying to juggle a huge amount of priorities only results in confusion, distraction, frustration, and failure. Distilling the huge pile of "maybes" into 3 "must bes" will eliminate that confusion and give you the confidence to succeed!

*Once again – it's ELIMINATION – not ADDITION that gets you going on purpose!*

### **Remember - YOU SLIDE WHEN YOU DON'T DECIDE!**

- When you say something is important to you, but you don't act on it.
- When you are committed to a project, but you don't move forward on it.
- When you constantly miss deadlines, rush at the last minute because work isn't done.

*"There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision." – William James*

*"Each indecision brings its own delays and days are lost lamenting over lost days ... What you can do or think you can do, begin it. For boldness has magic, power, and genius in it." – Goethe*

### **HOW IT WORKS. . .**

Start by getting everything out of your head. It's called a Brain Dump and it is a powerful exercise. Once the tangled vines of your thoughts are thrown out where you can see them they lose the power to intimidate you.

Don't resist this exercise – it takes time but it is important to clear your mind of this debris. Let's face it – you're probably going to look at a lot of that stuff right away and realize it isn't that important to you, or your attitude towards it has changed.

When you are focused on 3 core deliverables you make your To Do list a lot shorter.

- ⇔ You feel freedom.
- ⇔ You mind becomes uncluttered.
- ⇔ Your stress level diminishes.

After you create your dump list, you choose THREE areas or activities that you absolutely must do (or want to do) to get the absolute maximum results that matter most – whether it is your job, your personal health, your relationships, your finances – or maybe you identify 3 goals you'd like to accomplish in each of those areas.

This is **80/20 vision** at its finest – the top 20% of your goals are going to give you 80% of your results. Amazing.

For example, a real estate client was always frazzled and disorganized. Her To Do list was endless – everything seemed important and urgent. She tried the Power of 3 exercise and distilled her long list into 3 top goals:

1. Serve current clients
2. Find new sellers
3. Find new buyers

Everything that wasn't consistent with those goals got voted off the island.

So now you're asking: Ok, great. I've chosen 3 important priority areas. But there's about 100 things in each one of those areas I have to attend to! Now what?

Good point.

Use the Power of 3 again. Use it to choose 3 more things (and only 3) that are of paramount importance to helping you achieve results in the first 3.

This is a little more difficult – it is easy to get overwhelmed by this step. You may have to think about this for awhile.

Then use this method to focus the maximum amount of time on these activities.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?**

This kind of focus keeps you from overextending yourself. You'll stop getting stretched so thin. You free up time and space to develop strong attachment to the work at hand.

You reduce the chance that you will forget or misplace information relevant to your work. It simplifies your workload and **clears your mind** so you can concentrate and be **effective**.

Another example is a marketing consultant client who couldn't turn down anything – and I mean anything! She was trying to build relationships, which obviously was important to success in her business. She crammed her schedule full of networking groups, committee meetings, public speaking, and chamber meetings, on and on. She volunteered for projects that she thought would give her a high profile.

The result was that she cultivated lots of contacts but her income was not growing. The thing she wanted most – more business – continually eluded her.

She was spread too thin to be effective. Ultimately she used the Power of 3 over a 6 month period to reduce her commitments and focus herself more effectively. Her business increased 40% over time and she had more time for recreational activities and personal life pursuits that were important to her.

## **FOCUS MEANS: Follow – One – Course – Until – Successful**

Are you still having trouble choosing your Power of 3 goals? Try this:

Direct your attention to your inner passions. What really “juices” you? What unique talents and abilities do you possess that you’re dying to let loose on the world? What dreams would you bring to reality if there were absolutely no way you could fail? What are you really passionate about? What would you like to have more of in your life? What would you like to have less of?

For instance, my purpose as a coach is to motivate women to design their lives with themselves as Priority #1 so they can accomplish what is really important to them. So I organize my activities and priorities around that mission.

What projects or activities will enhance what it is you do best?

What skills or activities do you want to learn that will enhance your professional or personal life in a way that is meaningful to you?

What things do you need to accomplish to keep your life on track?

## **THE MATRIX**

*"I'm trying to free your mind, Neo. But I can only show you the door. You're the one that has to walk through it." – Morpheus (The Matrix)*

**Selecting the right priority is always more important than just doing something.**

The Time & Priority Management Matrix was first introduced by Stephen Covey in his book, First Things First. He identified 4 principles of how people can and do prioritize and organized his findings into a 4 quadrants.

They are:

1. Something is urgent and also important.
2. Something is urgent but not important.
3. Something is important to accomplish, but not urgent.
4. Something is not urgent and not important.

The secret of successful people who always seem to have more time, energy, and resources than the rest of us is that they tend to put their priorities in order like this:

**1. Urgent and important:**

1. Deadlines & Emergencies
2. Short term goals

**2. Important but Not Urgent: Your Top Goals**

1. This should be where you try to spend the most time.
2. You are working in a proactive mode and utilizing good planning.
3. You anticipate crises and other urgent matters and plan for them as far as humanly possible.

**3. Urgent but Not Important:**

1. A huge pitfall for most people! Effective people avoid these traps:
  - a. Non-urgent phone calls
  - b. Drop in visitors or interruptions
  - c. Mail, email, correspondence
  - d. Big ideas that cross your mind that you want to flesh out now.

**4. Not Urgent – Not Important:**

1. Busywork, time wasters
2. Unimportant details
3. Net surfing
4. Reading junk mail
5. Unnecessary perfectionism

Organize your activities around your priorities. Work on the highest priorities first.

**Don't confuse activity with accomplishment!**

## **EFFECTIVE VS. EFFICIENT**

We talked earlier about the difference between effectiveness and efficiency. The goal of good self management is becoming effective. That means getting the right things done, not ticking off a To Do List. If you're getting a lot done, but it's all the wrong things – you won't reach your goals.

*"There's no point in doing well what you should not be doing at all."  
- Tom Connellan*

So what do you do with the stuff that doesn't fit into your highest pay off activities?



## FIRST ADE FOR YOUR LIFE

Try this easy 3 step solution to stop the pain of overwhelm and help you create some breathing room.

### **A – Automate**

Use an electronic contact manager, use your computer, cell phone – take advantage of technology!

I worked with an entrepreneur who was using 4 different kinds of calendars – paper based, wall calendar, Outlook, her PDA, appointment books. She was often late for appointments and frequently forgot things were due because her lists were not coordinated with each other. She also spent far too much time managing her many lists, reminders, and calendars!

### **D – Delegate**

- Delegate everything except what you are brilliant at!
- Try to delegate at least 20% of the activities you currently have going right now that aren't in line with your Power of 3.
- Don't force yourself to learn or be good at things that aren't in line with your priorities.

When I started my electronic newsletter I produced the entire thing myself, spending hours learning how to manipulate text and HTML codes. It took a lot of my time – time I should have been spending developing business programs and finding clients! Finally my business coach asked me point blank – “Are you in the business of producing an ezine or life management coaching?”

- Pay someone else to do what you're not good at or don't have time for. It is freedom to clear your mind of the details that aren't enhancing your vision.

Do you need to hire someone to help you? Try this exercise:

Figure out how much money you make per hour (or how much you would make if you were spending time doing what you do best).

Then estimate how much time you would save if you didn't have to take care of low level activities. Multiply that by your hourly wage and see where you come out!

Delegation is about ridding yourself of your weaknesses and concentrating on your strengths.

### **E – Eliminate**

- To paraphrase the Nike slogan - Just Don't do it!
- Probably at least 40-50% of the items on your TO DO list are unnecessary or
- can be delegated.
- Experiment with NOT doing something – see if anyone notices!



### **THE TIME BANDITS**

Time is the most valuable commodity you have. Any discussion of priorities has to include time management. Actually – it's more like self management. We all know there is no way to manage time. The seconds, minutes, and hours tick by relentlessly – we can never change that. You can't slow it down, speed it up or stop it.

All you can do is control how you show up in time.

This is relatively simple if you create a visual picture of your schedule.

This is a powerful tool that will put you in better control to handle the demands of your day.

Set up specific times for certain activities and record them as an appointment on your calendar – and keep your appointment no matter what!

Using me as an example again - What is it Mark Twain said? "No one is completely worthless. He can always serve as a bad example." 😊

I need to allocate time for creating new programs and services. I need to allot time to write and produce information products. But I also need to schedule client time. When clients would call for appointments, I would often schedule them into slots I had previously designated for creative work.

Over time, anxiety would build up and I would find myself spend weekends and evenings trying to catch up. A better way is for me to set aside specific times for client appointments and separate times for projects and creative work. Mondays are usually "in office" days for me, which leaves the other 4 for clients and meetings.

If I do have to reallocate this time for something else – it's my conscious decision – not a reaction.

Consider your own personal style and energy cycles when scheduling your time map. What time is naturally best for you to perform a certain activity? Whenever possible, honor your feelings.

## THE CREATIVE GENE GENIE. . .

If you are a “non-linear” thinker you may have trouble focusing on getting activities into meaningful order.

Typically, when a creative person or right brain thinker thinks about how to use time – ideas start popping up all at once like champagne bubbles in a glass.

This is a right brained characteristic known as **divergent thinking** and it is why right brainers are so good at brainstorming.

However this poses a unique challenge when faced with managing priorities. They may find themselves drawn in a number of directions – and the question “What do I do next” produces another explosion of ideas.

If you’ve fallen prey to “divergent thinking syndrome”, try asking yourself the following 3 questions (excerpted from Alan Lakein’s wonderful book, “How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life”) the next time you need a little help refocusing and getting on track.

### 1. What is the Best Use of My Time Now?

- Ask yourself this during planning sessions, during the day, before beginning a task.
- Decide if the activity is in line with your top priorities?
- Will it sidetrack you from your work?

### 2. Am I Wasting My Time?

- Honestly evaluate how you are spending time at that moment.

### 3. Is There a Way to Simplify This Task?

- Don’t be so consumed with the process that you neglect the outcome.
- Don’t keep preparing to do something – just do it.
- Use the 3D approach whenever you can: delegate, delay, or delete it!



## DO IT NOW VS. NOTE IT NOW

“The organized person is someone who has already done what you are thinking of doing.”

When deadlines, crises, unplanned meetings, and interruptions are hurled in your direction, it’s easy to get distracted and frustrated.

The Do It Now or Note It Now Tool provides a mental guideline to help you decide whether you should DO IT NOW or NOTE IT NOW and save it for later:

**DO IT NOW:**

- If it is an emergency or crisis.
- If it finishes your present task.
- It can be done quickly and will not interrupt or distract from your present schedule.

**NOTE IT NOW & SCHEDULE FOR LATER:**

- If it is not an emergency.
- It will interrupt an important task you need focus on.
- If it is a low level activity or busywork that can be delegated or delayed until another time.

You've identified your priorities, but you're having trouble motivating yourself to take action. The 7 simple steps outlined below have worked very well for me – and I guarantee they will help you move from chaos to confidence in no time!

## **7 WAYS TO TURN PRIORITIES INTO ACTION**

1. Choose the most productive time frames to do your work.
  - Don't work on an activity that requires intense concentration during a noisy or interruptive time period.
  - Sometimes you have to choose to do the tough jobs first while your energy level is high – even if it isn't your highest priority.
2. Choose the Best Task and Do It At The Best Time.
  - Choose your priorities at the time when you can accomplish the tasks most effectively.
  - Perform difficult tasks at peak energy times.
  - Do work you enjoy at low ebb times.
3. Practice Instant Success.
  - When you are actively involved in something you value, you feel self-confident and successful.
  - Focus on what is really important to you and BELIEVE that you will ACHIEVE!
  - Never set goals that are not aligned with your passion – what you truly value.
4. Learn How Long Tasks Take.
  - We tend to overestimate the time it takes to do unpleasant tasks and underestimate tasks we enjoy.
  - We often are unrealistic about how long it takes tasks to complete.
  - We believe we have more time than we do.
  - Plan for interruptions or unexpected delays.

5. Budget Time Effectively.

- Choose a time slot and fill that slot with one activity.
- If you have a large time slot (2-4 hours) – choose 2 to 4 1 hour tasks to fill that slot.
- Smaller tasks should be blocked into small time slots.
- Don't start a long involved project if you only have a 30 minute window!

6. Delegate.

- Hire a professional or turn over to a trusted colleague.
- Even if you love the idea but it's not in line with your priorities – delegate it!

7. Don't Give Up.

- Each tiny action builds upon itself to move you forward towards your goal.
- Consistency is more important than speed.
- Refer to your goals DAILY.

## **AND THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. . .**

Just when I've explained about how to set priorities and to eliminate anything that isn't consistent with your vision – up comes the one exception to that rule:

### **THE IRRITANT PHENOMENON**

Irritants are a fact of life, like taxes and dust bunnies. They just keep surfacing. What is an irritant? It's something you need to do or get off your mind because it's preventing you from doing something else. It is generally a low priority item that keeps resurfacing until it finally drives you crazy.

These tasks need to be done, but because they aren't high priority they keep getting relegated to the bottom of the list. They nag at you, annoy you, and well – irritate you.

They are reminders of things left undone. They continue to get dragged from To Do list to To Do list and become **THE IRRITANT PHENOMENON, OR THE THING THAT WOULDN'T LEAVE.**

For example:

You have a stack of notes from a meeting that need to be compiled into a report. The actual report isn't due until next month. You leave the papers on your desk because you need to remind yourself to do the report. Every time you look at them you think "I've got to do that report" – and bam! You get a mental stab. This happens over and over again until just the sight of those notes becomes extremely - **IRRITATING.**

Irritants multiply! Think of Post it notes all over your computer, reminders in your calendar that keep popping up, items that have to be taken elsewhere or returned, the doctor's appointment you need to make. Irritants build up, like soap scum on the shower wall and obscure your vision. . .



## IRRITANTS PRODUCE A DOMINO EFFECT

Irritants are depressing! They drain your energy and increase your stress.

Consider Murphy's Law:

"Regardless of what needs doing, something else must be done first."

This is known as the domino effect.

Often it's the little things that keep us from accomplishing larger priorities.

For example, I had a client who was setting up a home office. All her supplies and papers were packed up in boxes. She could not set up the space until she put in new carpet. She couldn't put in the new carpet until she painted the room. She couldn't paint the room until she fixed a particularly big hole in the wall. And she didn't know how to fix the hole, and didn't know the name of someone who did – so the entire project kept getting shelved because of that one irritating detail which created the domino effect.

How many people could have received promotions or raises on their jobs if they had just finished that last bit of accreditation they needed to advance to the next level?

How many of us would entertain more if our homes were more organized?

You get the point.

For want of a nail – the battle was lost.

**Ironically, the average irritant takes only a few minutes to handle.** Apply the 3D Principle to irritants: Do it – Delegate it – or Delete it.

Target at least 10-15 minutes per day to get rid of irritants and watch your mind begin to unclutter – you'll be able to relax and focus on your more important priorities.

## CREATE AND INNOVATE!

Your ability to stop going around the same mountains and get what you really want in life will largely be determined by your ability to be creative and innovative.

In order launch your vision you need to see the possibilities.

The keys to being a creative innovator are:

- **Believe in yourself.**
- **Have A Passion for What You Do.** (You can't come up with solutions if you aren't interested in what you do.)
- **Expose Yourself to Something New & Different Every Day.**
- **Be A Lifelong Learner.**
- **Create an Inspiring Living & Working Environment.**
- **Create positive, nurturing, peaceful space around you – physically, mentally, spiritually.**

I'd like to close with this wonderful story which I think powerfully illustrates the importance of doing what you are doing on purpose – right now.



### **THE 1,000 MARBLES**

A radio talk show host was counseling a younger man about the value of time. He began with these statistics:

The average person lives about 75 years.

75 years x 52 weeks in a year = approx. 3,900 weekends in a person's lifetime.

At the time he began his experiment, the talk show host was 55 years old. He figured he had already lived over 2,800 weekends and that if he lived to age 75 he had only about 1,000 weekends left.

He visited local toy stores and bought every marble they had until he had collected 1,000 marbles.

He took the marbles home and placed them in a clear glass container. Each weekend he removed one marble and threw it away.

Watching the marbles disappear one by one was life changing for him. He suddenly discovered that a lot of the "stuff" in his life was just that – stuff. It was sapping his energy and keeping him from enjoying the people and things that really mattered.

He ended by saying to the young man, "This morning I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure if I make it until next Saturday then God has blessed me with a little extra time to enjoy my life. To spend time with people I care about. And I realize now that's all that matters."

The young man was silent. The older man's story really hit home.

Focus on what's really important. Make sure you are doing what you're doing on purpose. Connect to your passion and purpose and the people and things that mean the most to you.

Don't wait until you lose all your marbles to start living your life with passion! Don't let ANYTHING prevent you from your best life right now. Live your vision, and to paraphrase Nike (again) – Just Undo it!

Wishing you all the joys of a life on purpose!

*Robin*

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

1. Getting The Right Things Done by David Allen
2. Ready For Anything by David Allen
3. Living Your Best Life by Laura Berman Fortgang
4. How To Get Control of Your Time & Life by Alan Lakein
5. Organizing for The Creative Person by Dorothy Lehmkuhl
6. Today Matters by John C. Maxwell
7. Time Management from The Inside Out by Julie Morgenstern
8. Your Best Life Now by Joel Osteen
9. Eat That Frog by Brian Tracy
10. Margin Overload by Richard Swenson, M.D.
11. Work Less, Make More by Jennifer White

Visit my website at [www.yourlifeinorder.com](http://www.yourlifeinorder.com) for more free resources, e-news magazine, free audio tips and coaching programs.

*"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak."  
- Hans Hofmann*

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR READERS OF THIS EBOOK!**

Are you ready to create the life you really want? Are you ready to turn the chaos and confusion of disorganization into confidence and clarity – in every area of your life?

Designing your life around YOU is the best and quickest way to create momentum, energy, motivation and confidence – but you need the tools to make it happen.

My Shift Happens: Your Life on Fire Home Study Course has simple and sustainable lifestyle solutions for today's soul-inspired woman – YOU!

In as little as 10 minutes a day you can baby step your way to better health, align your priorities around what really matters to you, eliminate energy drains, get control over your negative "BS" (belief systems) and start taking care of your body and your spirit!

And since you've already purchased one of my products, I'm offering this combination audio course with companion **workbook for just \$37** (regular price \$67!)

This offer is ONLY for purchasers of this ebook (and I can't guarantee it will be around forever – I tend to change and repurpose my ebooks at least once a year!)

I've got simple, creative strategies to help you design a blueprint for self-care success and the motivation to get you maximum results!

**[Click here for the details and to purchase](#)**