

Keep a To-Do List

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 26 August 2019 02:28

I have written about creating a to-do list before. It is an important way to stay focused on what is important. I write tomorrow's list at the end of the day after I mark off what was accomplished on the current day's list. This helps me stay motivated because I realize that I have accomplished several things.

A system of priorities is helpful. When I place a "1" by an item, the task is something I absolutely must do. My "2's" are also high priority. However, if for some reason I move them to the next day; my roof won't fall in. Then, I label the other items with 3's and 4'.

As I look at my list, I schedule the tasks as much as possible. I place specific items into my daily calendar. By doing this I can decide if my tasks for the day are realistic. If I have ten hours available to work but have 14 hours of scheduled items, my task list is not particularly helpful. I need to pare down my tasks so that I can realistically complete my plan for the next day. Otherwise, it leaves me discouraged and may cause me to lose sight of the most important items.

Each day items will come up which I did not anticipate. However, because I have a task list, I'm able to quickly review and ask, "Is the new item more important than the tasks I have already scheduled for the day?" Some days they are. Last week a friend developed a severe illness and was hospitalized. My wife and I altered our schedules to help support their situation because our friend didn't have family in the area.

Sometimes business issues are the culprits. For example, in the damage restoration business I have responsibilities for, when a customer calls with a major flood in their home; I may need to alter my work to participate in an immediate response. I can't tell a customer that I can't address their flood problem because I scheduled writing three blogs later today.

King Solomon wrote, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." (Proverbs 19:11, ESV) I advise my clients of the importance of a business plan. Even a poor plan can be adjusted. I give the same advice to creating a to-do list.

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You will have a stronger basis for focusing your day. It will help you process how to deal with unexpected items, what you need to treat as priority and what you need to ignore or defer.