

Your Habits Will Determine Your Success
By Steve Clark

Next to the questions I get asked about prospecting, and how to keep the pipeline full, and how to get a consistent flow of leads coming into to be able to sell to, the second biggest question I get is how can I become more productive?

**The key to becoming more productive is to become focused
like a laser on those habits that produce success**

Success is not necessarily about time management, although time management is part of any increase in personal productivity. But the whole topic of time management is such an overused, tired topic that I really want to refrain from the term because I think the word “time management” itself is a misnomer. There is not a human being alive that can manage time.

Trying to manage time is like trying to manage the tide. It cannot be done. The tide is going to come in, and it’s going to go out, and time is going to pass whether you do anything or not. There’s absolutely nothing you or me or any other human being on the face of the planet can do to change it.

**The only thing we can manage is our own behavior, and
what we do during the 24 hours of each day**

All of us have the same 24 hours; some of us use it more effectively, are more disciplined, and we manage ourselves better. As a result, we are more productive, get more things done, and make more money.

Your habits determine your destiny

I think any discussion of improving our performance has to start with a very honest assessment of our personal habits because the truth of the matter is your habits make you the person you are. Good, bad or indifferent, whatever your circumstances in life are; they are the result of habits that you have formulated throughout your life.

If you want to get a true read on an individual simply watch their behavior and observe their habits because a person’s outward behavior equals the truth in their life; it is a true indication of who they are and what they are, what they think, what they believe.

**Behavior is the true measure of what a person
believes to be true and who they really are**

Wakeup Call: If you continue to engage in your current habits and behaviors you should not expect much of anything to change.

The misleading thing about habits is that bad habits or negative habits, or counterproductive habits don't show up early in life. Often decades pass before we reap the dividends of our bad habits, sinful acts, and slothful behavior.

The primary reason most don't change their bad habits until it's too late is they lack self discipline and fail to hold themselves accountable for their actions. It's only after 30 years of not exercising, smoking cigarettes, and eating bad food does that bad habit show up in the form of some coronary heart disease, diabetes, or cancer.

It is only after not deliberately and consistently saving for the future, and not putting enough money away for retirement does the reality of not being able to retire and live the good life smack us in the mouth.

When we are young we lack perspective. Almost everybody that's lived any great length of life will tell you they wished they had paid more attention and changed the bad habits that got them where they are today.

How do we form habits in the first place?

Habits are the result of programming. Once we have created a habit, and once that program has been neurologically implanted in our cortex, we begin to repeat that behavior unconsciously. We literally go on autopilot and we continue to do it without even questioning whether or not it makes any sense or not.

All of us have good habits and counterproductive habits. The habit of brushing our teeth after we eat a meal is a good habit. The habit of driving without a seatbelt, while we might get away with it, is a bad habit because if we ever do have the occasion to need one and we don't have it on, the result could be devastating. By some estimates 95% of all of our behavior is unconscious. Some of it good, much of it harmful or counterproductive.

The habit of not putting enough money away early in life to provide for one's financial future means that in later years we will have a lower quality of life because we did not deny ourselves our desires, impulses and pleasures early in life.

In selling and in business, there are many negative or counterproductive habits and behaviors. Mismanaging one's self is a classic example of a poor habit. Most people in business are terrible at managing themselves throughout the course of a day. They confuse being busy with being productive, and they have trouble staying focused, on point and doing the productive behaviors that produce successful outcomes.

Get into the habit of changing your habits

To change a habit you must become consciously aware of your existing negative behaviors and the results they are producing; you must make yourself consciously aware of the importance of your habits on a daily basis. Most folks are even unwilling to make this conscious effort. They choose instead to live in the "land of denial".

Changing one's habit requires doing two things:

One is to conduct a self inventory and clearly identify what negative or counterproductive habits that you currently engage in.

Things like: showing up late for meetings and appointments, not completing paperwork appropriately or on time, interrupting people when they're talking, not listening very well and on and on and on, lots and lots of bad habits.

The key to changing a bad habit is to recognize that it's a negative habit and become aware of it. Failure to become consciously aware dictates that the habit will unconsciously continue without knowledge that it is even happening.

And the negative consequences will automatically repeat themselves over and over again.

The biggest secret to success is adopting the behaviors that success requires

You don't have to like the behaviors. You don't have to understand the behaviors, but you damn well have to execute the behaviors that success requires. There is no negotiation of this point.

Two. Once you are aware of a negative habit, you must consciously replace that negative habit with a new positive success habit.

When you study successful people, you will discover that the more successful someone is, the more punctual they are because they value every single minute. They value their time and they value everybody else's time. If you're one of those people that think its okay to be fashionably late, you are an idiot because being late erodes trust and credibility and communicates that you cannot be trusted to keep your word.

This is a pet peeve of mine and is a black and white issue. I am so convicted that punctuality is a sign of trust that I will not do business with a salesperson that is late for a phone call or an appointment.

I won't do it because what salespeople say when they are late is, "I can't be counted on to do what I say I am going to do".

Those who have a habit of being late should understand the negative consequences, and would do well to break that pattern and replace it with the success habit of being on time and being where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there.

True confession. The reason that this is such an issue with me is because I used to have this habit in spades. I used to be very guilty of this late thing; I was very cavalier about time, but I've completely changed over the years. This is such an obsession with me that it absolutely drives me nuts to be even a minute late socially.

People Can Change

I have a coaching client who owns an insurance agency. One of the things he realized during one of our coaching sessions was that he was doing a lot of meaningless low payoff business activities he had no business doing. Things that he should have been delegating or hiring others to do. These activities were impacting his production and costing him a lot of dough.

Once he realized this, we did a time study analysis of his daily habits. It was an eye opening revelation to him. He was absolutely stunned by the amount of unproductive habits and behaviors he was engaged in.

As a result of that epiphany, he made massive changes and began to delegate a lot of things that he had previously been doing. The results were monumental.

You too can change, but only if you are self honest enough to admit you need to change, and are willing to reinvent yourself by becoming a more fully functioning and more productive you. This requires a painful self assessment and a ruthless, conscious analysis of how you spend your time and what habits you are engaged.

You are who you are and where you are in life because of your habits, and the daily behaviors you engage in.

You can change who you are and where you are in life by changing how you spend your time, and replacing negative, counterproductive habits with the habits of success.

If you are unwilling to engage in deep self analysis and choose instead to live in the “land of oblivion” that is your choice. But don’t complain or bitch about the spoils of success that those who do engage in such activity achieve.

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