

Are you hardwired to be focused or off task? My gut tells me it's both. Our tendencies lean more towards one side or the other, but our habits are what push us over. Into organized and focused or unfocused and off task.

As you know, I wholeheartedly believe that our habits are what make us who we are, and when you're accountable to somebody, a boss, a project deadline, school, your teacher. We tend to get stuff done. We all need a little bit of accountability, and sometimes when we work on our own, we need to set up habits that are going to force us to be accountable.

So when functioning on our own, such as when we are our own boss, we might not be as efficient as we once thought we were. If you have recently gone from working in an office to working from home or working for somebody to working a hundred percent for yourself, You might notice that you're not as efficient as you seem to be before.

Don't feel bad about this. We tend to mess it up a little bit and not stay as accountable for ourselves as we tend to do for others. And entrepreneurship can be very tricky this way. Having a team and clients doesn't always cut it. Sometimes those are the things we get squirrely on because nobody is watching over our shoulder and telling us when and where to be, and we think, oh, I'll work on that tomorrow.

Now, I don't necessarily like to have somebody telling me what to do, and that is exactly why I became my own boss was because I wanted the freedom of doing things when I wanted to do them, but that didn't mean that I didn't need a schedule. Or habits to help me stay accountable and having somebody look over your shoulder is likely the huge reason you became your own boss.

I'm not suggesting that you need somebody to look over your shoulder. I am suggesting there are some things that we can do to help us become better and more focused as an entrepreneur to get my stuff done, I have to put a few things in place to keep me on task. I am a driver and I'm a self-starter more naturally, so I tend to be more focused and get things done, but that doesn't always mean that I'm as efficient as I can be about doing it.

I still tend to push things off that I don't necessarily feel like doing, or if it feels. It's overwhelming or something new or a little bit out of my zone. I tend to push it off a little bit longer than I probably should. There are many ways though, to keep on track. There are different strategies and tactics out there, and as I always say, what works for you doesn't work for everyone, so we have to find the things that work in our lives.

With our personalities, with our schedules and our priorities. So how do you stay focused, get things done, and not get sidetracked? These are the things I do to find ways to hold myself accountable and make space to get those things done. These things will guide you in finding your special formula. First of all, I make this space to do the things that I need to do.

I don't intertwine it with other things in my life like family, self care and work do not mix. I keep them separate. I compartmentalize them, and I make time for the work that I need to do. I said, hours in the day that I know won't interfere with my family and my personal time. That way, I know I'm at my best.

Mentally, I'm most focused. I'm not worried. I'm not feeling guilty that I'm wasting or spending my time doing things on my business when I committed to something with my family. Now, turn off your ringer. Turn on some music, light a candle if that all works for you and work off of. I just had an episode about brain dumping and scheduling, so that episode is episode number 10.

If you wanna go back and listen to it, we will add a link to the show notes so that you can check that episode out as well. But the key is to set yourself up for success and give yourself space for it to happen. What I found with making Space is that I don't feel so scatterbrained and overwhelmed, and then it helps me set a time and a place for everything in my life.

I end up creating routines and habits that help me achieve success, achieve all the things that I need to get done in both my personal and business life. You know, this whole myth about business and life balance is in play. This is what true business and life balance looks like. Scheduling the time for the things that you want in your.

Remember, emergencies come up, but if I can stay on track during those times, I need to get it all done. I have fewer fires to put out later on. I feel lighter. I'm less bogged down, and it means my mind is more clear and I am more creative. I was getting to the point where I was not giving my attention to the things in front of me because I had too much going on in my mind, and my mind was filled with clutter.

I felt sad when my daughter told me I was probably sidetracked when she told me something that I didn't remember, and that is when I knew I had to make space next. You have to be realistic. Once I realized I needed to make space, I told myself to go easy on me because I tend to be hard on myself, and I'm sure that you all do.

Going easy on myself means not overscheduling. Not giving up just because things went off the rail. Starting small and working my way to an ideal schedule, it means not trying to be perfect right now, but easing into something that's going to help me be something that's gonna help me thrive. I tell myself this in everything I do, and it's a lesson I try to pass along to my kids.

Don't try to do it all at once. I especially need this because I'm so impatient with myself and I tend to be very impatient with myself, along with expecting too much of myself. And that means I often try to put too much on my plate and then I end up floundering and my perfect day is once again off.

But I'm learning to set realistic goals to really try to overestimate how much time things will take me so that I create a cushion in my schedule. And so that if things do go longer than I expect, which they usually do, that I don't feel defeated by it. It's all a work in progress. One example I have is I wanted to get really good at creating weekly content, posting regularly on social media, sending out an email weekly, doing my regular social activities.

I tried to implement it all at once. And I failed hard, and then I was really hard on myself and I felt like I just did not have what it took to be a business owner. If I can't get an email out in regular content every week and social media posted every week like everybody else, then I just didn't have what it takes.

And that is not true. It's that I tried to do it all at once and those other people that I saw, they probably didn't try to do it all at once. They probably eased. And did one step at a time and then added another thing once they finally nailed down one of those tasks. So, Start by choosing One thing to start with, don't try to do weekly content, email and social altogether.

Start with doing one piece of consistent content every week, and once you're consistent with that, add in email. And then once you're consistent with email too, then add in social media and build up to where you wanna be. Like people don't go from nothing to a huge corporation in one day. All has to build to that, and we have to give ourselves the room to do that and give yourself the.

So if you're looking to go from randomly posting social on social media to posting three times a week on three different platforms, maybe just choose one platform. Start getting consistent with that three times a week, then add in another platform, break it down into bite size steps, and then add in another.

Trust me. Trying to do it all seems like it's necessary, but in the long run, easing in will be much more product. Now my next tip is brain dumping. This is one of

my favorite things. I just did a whole episode on it, not a very long episode, but I usually start all my projects and my weeks with the brain dump, even though I have 90 days at a time planned out.

Things still come up. Things that I didn't anticipate will come up, new ideas pop up. Maybe something in particular that I didn't know in my, during my plan, it might come up and I might have to alter my plan. And so when I'm starting to feel a little bit overwhelmed or feeling like there's a lot on my mind that I don't have listed in Asana or in my plan.

I bust out a brain dump so that I can get everything that needs to be done out of my mind, and I include my family things, personal life. Business. Everything that is in my mind, I dump it out because I need to make room and create some clarity in my mind. So some of the things that you can brain dump are what needs to get done this week.

What steps are in this project? This is my favorite. I always brain dump when I have a new project and I dump every possible thing that I think needs to be done in a project, then I can take that and I can start organizing it and make a plan. So other things are, what are all the things that I wanna do in my business?

Or what vacations do I wanna go on this summer? Or with the holidays coming up, what traditions do I wanna celebrate? What does that look like? And what do I need to get done? So I brain dump it all, it gets organized, follow my brain dump, take a listen to the brain dump episode. It's less than 10 minutes long and it's really, really worth the.

But most of my processes, they begin with brain dumps when I'm brainstorming a process. But most of my processes begin with a brain dump when I'm brainstorming a project. I come up with a whole list of everything that needs to be done. I write it out and then I organize and sort it. This process is called distilling information, and I like to talk.

I like to call it turning chaos into flow. So distilling is the fact or process of extracting the essential meaning or most important aspects of something. So we're gonna distill the process that we brain dumped into something that will turn into our plan or a solid to-do list. And next I am going to schedule it out.

So once you have all of the things out of your head, you start organizing, you sort and you make the next steps. Now you wanna schedule it out. So if you follow Marie Forio, you know, if it's not scheduled, it's not real. And if you

follow Amy Porterfield, you may have heard, if it's not in Asana, it's not gonna happen.

And I love both of these women. They've taught me so much in my business and in my organizational processes. I've always been a process systems creator and following Marie and Amy has helped me reinforce the importance of that in my business and my life. By the way, Asana is a kick ass project management software that you can use for free.

You can try Trello. That's another one that I've used and I like, or monday.com or whatever project management system or software that you're using. So my advice here is to start scheduling everything out and making time for it. Everyone has a different level of productivity, so don't compare yourself to me.

Don't compare yourself to somebody else. Compare yourself to the things that you need to get done. And whether you are truly making time for the right things, use the things that are working for you. I wanna touch a little bit on maybe some of the troubleshooting that comes into play with staying focused.

So first, are you really making time or are you making excuses? So be honest with yourself. You're not hurting or helping anybody but yourself here. So be real honest. And ask yourself if you're really doing your best. Are you scheduling time every day? Are you scheduling time for the things that you want in your day?

And are you giving it all your full attention? And if you're not, why not? And what can you adjust? For success. What are some things that you heard from today's episode that might help you use for future success? Have you tried to set the right interval of time that you perform your best? Do you know what time of day your brain is working the best, most focused, most creative?

And are you optimizing that? And what is the number of things you are trying to achieve right now? Are you trying to add too much to your list or trying to make too many changes all at once? So make sure you are not being too hard on yourself. Now, if you wanna know what you thought about this episode, what's helped you, or you want more discussion on this topic, head over to the Facebook group, the Bi In Life Productivity Circle over on Facebook.

We will have a link in the show notes for you. Join me each week for a new episode of the Short of IT with Amanda Long Business and Productivity podcast. Please sign up to get our emails. Not only will you get an email when

new episodes drop, but you'll also get heaps of marketing business and productivity tips.

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