

There Is No Perfect Time For Getting Things Done, So Stop Waiting For It

By Jeff Davidson

Brokers and agents: Due to current market conditions, you may find yourself with extra time on your hands. This may be the time to complete those tasks that you've put off for so long. Gain an appreciation for time-management skills and apply them to your daily work habits.

Many real estate professionals believe that if they could only initiate tasks they've been delaying at the "right time," then these tasks would be easier to begin and complete. For most tasks, there is no objective "perfect" time. I know of people who always wait until the top of the hour to start something, others who wait for a certain day of the week, and yet others who wait for a certain type of weather pattern! This is a self-deluding mind-game. Give it up!

TIME DOES NOT MATTER

While there are work-related tasks for which starting at one time is preferred over starting at another, many of the tasks you face in the work place could be tackled at this time or that with little repercussion. If you fill out your report log at 8:42 versus 9:00 a.m. when it's not due until the afternoon, does it make any difference to anybody?

Do you believe that the IRS cares whether you initiated your taxes and ultimately filed them on February 27th at 10:36 in the morning or at 11:08? If you remove the clothes from the dryer before the news, or after the news, so long as no one is waiting for a pair of dry, clean underwear, are any notable ramifications worth citing?

If you find yourself waiting for the perfect chance to begin a task, then you're wasting precious time. You are a work in progress, and you can change. Let go of perfectionism. The project you've been delaying may not turn out perfectly. Follow through on your plan anyway.

For most of the tasks you face right now, for which you have delayed getting started, the hard-core reality is that there is no perfect time to begin. In many cases, the "perfect" start time is simply another in a long line of tricks that your mind plays to make it seem as if there are legitimate reasons for not getting started.

Once you acknowledge that most tasks have no perfect start time, you may

recognize that the best time to begin could well be, uh, right now! If you find yourself caught in the bind of waiting for a perfect time, such as when the weather changes, or when you feel more like doing it, consider that for virtually all indoor tasks, the weather is arbitrary. As for waiting for when you feel like it—"feeling like it" is a state of mind that is under more of your control than you might suppose.

When people receive a check in the mail or a complementary letter from somebody, they often regard that as a good day. Suppose the check, or the letter came the day before, or doesn't come until the next day? Determining that one day is better than another because of some external event is part of human nature. Yet, whatever you did to earn the sum or merit the letter was put in motion before the day you received it.

So, too, it is erroneous to believe that there is "a perfect time" to start on tasks. The mental energy you need to put toward a task may already be working for you, long before the time you think is perfect for beginning. Often, the first moment you can start a task is as good a time as any.

ILLUSIONS AND EXCUSES

When you talk to people who finally finish a project that they have been putting off, all mental clap trap about the "perfect time" to start falls away. The act of getting started often makes



About the Author

Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC, author of "Breathing Space" and the "60 Second Self-Starter," is a leading work-life balance expert. Order his "RE Professional Special" — \$180 worth of his best CDs and audio books on work-life balance, surviving information overload, and relaxing at high speed — for \$88 at www.breathingspace.com/ccprocess