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How to Stay Focused On What's Most Important: 10 Days at a Time



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Recently, I asked my readers to tell me about the business, career & workplace issues that they wished were easier for them right now.

Here's the issue that soared to the top:

How to stay focused on what's most important.

Oh, you, too? Good. Means I'm not alone in the struggle.

Our to-do lists keep getting longer and the distractions are immense. We're never short of "good" ideas (or "should" ideas), and yet there's no time in our schedule to handle them all.

Plus, that annoying parasite FOMO –fear of missing out–keeps biting into our brains, keeping the pressure on to do more, be more.

WHEW!

Take a breath (in, out). And another.

Now, let's look at the truth.

You will always have more to do than you can do.

You will miss out.

And it'll all be okay.

Your job –in work, and in life– is not to do everything.

Your job is to do the most important thing for you.

And no matter how often you think you've tried and failed, there's hope.

Welcome to my 10-Day Get Focused Plan.

It's simple. It's short. It's easy to succeed.

What more could you want?

So read through this plan (takes about 4 minutes.)

Then, take 5 minutes to answer these 5 questions, and give yourself the gift of focus for the next ten days.

Let's get started.

Q1. What's the one area of my life that's most important to focus on right now?

If you've been trying to focus on something that's just not important to you, it's no wonder it never gets attention.

Kinda like my closets.

I "should" clean my closets. Especially the one with moving boxes from two moves ago.

But cleaning my closets doesn't add up to any of the things that are most important to me now.

And I know that because I'm clear what is most important to me: caring for my family, friends, clients and community.

If the thing you think you should focus on doesn't add up to something important to YOU, then fuhgettaboutit.

At least for the next 10 days. You can do that, right?

Let's dive into this question.

To answer this question, follow these four easy steps.

1. Set your phone timer for 30 seconds. Hit start.
2. Read the question out loud: "What's the one area of my life that's most important to focus on right now?"
3. Close your eyes (provided you're somewhere safe to do so—even the bathroom works.)
4. When the 30 second timer goes off, write down the first answers that come up for you.

When I've done this exercise with clients, they say things like:

- Taking care of my family
- Getting healthier
- Succeeding in my new job
- Feeling less stressed
- Doing a better job with my money

Whatever comes up, trust it. It's likely an area that's currently out of sync with your values or your longer-term vision—an area that's whispering to you for more attention.

It now becomes the category to start from as we pick your 10-day get focused action.

(Not clear on your values or your long-term vision? My on-demand program Create Career Clarity helps you sort through all the mental clutter and emerge with a picture of who you are and what you want next. Email us at info@RedCapeRevolution.com to find out more.)

Write what's most important to you here:

Q2. Based on what's most important to me, what's the specific action I'm going to focus on for 10 days?

Now that you know the big category of what's important to you, let's laser beam in on one specific action you can take for the next 10 days.

Note it's a laser, not a Hollywood spotlight. That means it's small & bite-sized—it's not Godzilla.

For example:

- "Eating healthy" is a spotlight goal—too big to see clearly. But "eating veggies each day" might be a great 10-day focus goal.
- "Finding a new job" is a spotlight goal, but "reaching out each day to a new person in my network to schedule a conversation" is bite-sized.
- "Spending more time with my family" may be a spotlight goal, but "leaving the office every night at 6" could be a great objective for your 10 day focus.

Write your specific action here:

Q3. What will be better or easier after I focus on that action for 10 days?

Our brains naturally gravitate toward what's comfortable or safe.

But chances are that the thing you want to focus on isn't getting done because it's uncomfortable or unsure.

So before you begin, get clear about the RESULT of your focus.

For example:

- Getting up 30 minutes earlier will result in letting me plan my day more clearly.
- Not eating lunch at my desk will result in me stretching and getting up from my computer.
- Stepping back and mapping out the details of the XYZ project plan will result in me feeling less stressed about what we need to do next.

Write what will be better or easier here:

Q4. What's the one thing I will STOP doing—just for the next 10 days?

Stop asking yourself to do MORE. Or to do it ALL.

Focus means a point of convergence, a center of energy.

So you may need to intentionally stop doing something to make room to focus on something else. For example:

- I'll stop worrying about whether my boss is happy.
- I'll stop watching TV until midnight.
- I'll stop volunteering on the XYZ committee.
- I'll stop checking email after 6.

Worried about what will happen if you stop doing something? First, remember—it's only 10 days.

You're not saying no to it forever—you're just saying no to it for now.

Write down the thing you'll stop doing here:

Q5. What's the structure I need to put into place to stay focused on my action for the next 10 days?

Have you ever grown a tomato? If you have, you'll probably know that you can't just plant a tomato and let it grow on its own.

Because the eventual fruit is heavier than its branches can hold, you need a stake or tomato cage to give the plant more structure.

It's the same with us, my little tomato.

We all need structure so we can grow.

What does structure mean for human beings? It means setting up the environment for success in a way that works for you.

This might be by creating an environment of others who'll hold you to your goal, for example:

- I'll post my workout on Facebook each evening—if you don't see me on there by 7, message me.
- I'll book and pay for a series of professional coaching sessions so that I know my coach will ask me about my progress each time.
- I asked Bob to text me every day and remind me the XYZ project is going fine.

It also may be environmental structure—for example, if you want to eat a green veggie a day for the next 10 days, then the structure you'll need is to have veggies in the house. If you want to watch TV less, hide the remote.

Write down the structure you need to put in place here:

Q6. What's the support or encouragement I need to stay focused for the next 10 days?

Don't fool yourself that you can stay focused all on your own, even just for 10 days. We're all more likely to do something when there's someone else in our life cheering us on.

For example, based on your action, you might ask for encouragement or support like this:

- I need to ask my husband to turn off the TV at 9 and go to bed.
- I'll ask my daughter to hold my phone overnight so I don't sneak email peeks at midnight (password on, of course.)
- I'll ask my friend to text me every morning to remind me I can do this and cheer on my progress!

One of my favorites support strategies is to write yourself a snail mail card or letter right now, congratulating yourself for doing what you said you'd do.

Pop it in the mail (or ask a friend to mail it in a few days). Even when you know it's coming, that snail mail surprise is always a continued push in a positive direction.

Write down the support or encouragement you need here:

What Happens After 10 Days?

That's for you to decide.

Did you enjoy the results of your 10-day experiment? Do you feel more connected to the bigger, more important area of life you clarified in Question #1?

If yes, congrats. A baby step is better than no steps.

And remember, when a baby falls down, we don't say, "Look at that loser, bouncing around on the floor. Give it up, kid—you'll never walk."

So why would you say it to yourself? Pick the next 10-day cycle, and do it again. That's how to stay focused on what matters to you most.

Meet Leadership & Career Coach Darcy Eikenberg, PCC

Is it time for you to make a big business or career decision? Or maybe there's something at work that's not working for you, your team, or your company? I'm a coach, mentor, speaker and teacher, and I excel at helping smart, successful professionals make better, faster decisions to change their lives at work, for the better, for good.

How can I help YOU? You're one call away from creating more peace of mind in your career. Request your invitation now for your confidential consultation, absolutely free.

Email my team at Info@RedCapeRevolution.com.

And check out all the other free career, business, and leadership tools we have at RedCapeRevolution.com/free-tools



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