

Time Traps: Take the Detour

Your Own Reality TV Show

There is a new reality TV show to hit prime time and this time the show stars YOU. Answer this question:

What do people watching your show notice about how you spend most of your time?

If your answer points to somewhat of a disconnect between how you *tend* to spend your time and how you *would like* to spend your time, then find out what throws you off track.

Time Traps: Know Yours

People will say to me, "I'm a procrastinator." "I have too much to do and not enough time to do it." "I'm constantly getting interrupted."

Whether it has to do with these or other frustrations, we all have our "favorite" time traps or tendencies. Some of these have to do with our environment, while others have to do with our own habits. Years ago, I recognized that I had a tendency to wrap myself in a blanket of overwhelm. I noticed the feeling was triggered too often. This changed, however, as I integrated some different approaches, and now, overwhelm is more of a passing state vs. a daily occurrence. In fact when I experience this feeling now, I view it as a helpful cue to shift my thinking and adapt my behavior.

Identifying the time trap that you fall into most can help you find alternate routes. (See the following page for a short self-assessment you can take).

Take the Detour

Now that you've identified your traps, how do you know which detour to take? First, recognize the area that your time trap is signaling you to improve. For example, does it have to do with your mindset or with the way you plan your day? Does it involve your communication style or how you handle decisions in the moment? Perhaps it is connected to your system for staying organized.

Using my example of overwhelm from above, my detour had to do with more than one of these categories. For instance: 1) I shifted my mindset from "tackling the whole list" to "selecting from the menu". 2) I adjusted my planning process to be more flexible. 3) I came up with a way that made decision making easier by learning how to ask myself empowering questions.

To request a private consultation to explore how coaching can support you in addressing your time traps, send an email to: consultation@inthecurrent.com Include a brief description of your particular challenge or area of interest. All information will be kept confidential.

Time Trap Assessment

1. TRUE or FALSE: Most days I am satisfied with how I use my time. _____
2. If I had an extra hour of personal time every day, to use exactly as I wished, here's what I would do with it:
3. If an hour of time became freed up without interruptions, during my workday, I would be able to:
4. Which Time Traps below apply to you (i.e., at home, at work, or both)? Place an "X" near all that apply and rank the top 3 (e.g., X-1, X-2, X-3).

- _____ Procrastination
- _____ Too many interruptions
- _____ Overwhelmed with all I have to do
- _____ Priorities keep changing
- _____ Priorities conflict with each other
- _____ There's just not enough time to get everything I want done
- _____ Indecision
- _____ Perfectionism
- _____ Too many meetings
- _____ Socializing
- _____ Clutter is in my way (e.g., physical space, paper pile up, e-mails, the thought of unfinished projects)
- _____ Communication issues
- _____ Redoing work because of mistakes (my own or mistakes of others)
- _____ Motivation is lacking
- _____ Process is unclear
- _____ I'm distracted by the thought of what I should be doing or would rather be doing
- _____ Inefficiency
- _____ Low morale in my work environment
- _____ I'm not delegating enough or getting enough help
- _____ Underestimating how long something will take to get done
- _____ Picking something to do that I know I can knock off easily vs. something that is more important
- _____ Wasting time looking for things I can't find
- _____ Too many ideas and don't know what to do first
- _____ Other (specify):

5. In reviewing your responses to question #4, check the areas you would like to strengthen:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My mindset or attitude toward time | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing my calendar, contacts, & commitments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal-setting and daily planning process | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing my ideas, projects, & actions to take |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing all the paper (files, mail, reading) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simplifying, automating, or delegating | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication style |

6. One step I will take today: