

# *journaling exercise*

*for better timing*

*nice work*



# about

***No one can control time - but we can control how we react, respond to, and plan for it.***

That's what we call **timing**. Timing is what makes us reliable humans, especially at work! If you want more color on the difference is between time and timing, [check out this edition of the Nice Work newsletter](#).

Below you will find a work-week-long journaling exercise. You will complete one exercise each day, and at the end you will have a much richer picture of your timing. This is the first and most important piece to get right. Once you do, you will have the information you need to design a timing **system** that works for **you**.

***let's get started!***

## ***a note for humans-in-charge***

Reliability at work is extra important when we manage other humans because we have extra responsibilities. We do not have control over our timing if we are regularly late to meetings, running over our calls due to our lateness/disorganization, or pinging into the evenings and weekends on time-sensitive things because we were late.

When we don't have control of our timing, we are not just asking other people to pick up the slack for our disorganization. We are implicitly (but really, explicitly) commanding it. **That's how hierarchy works.**

When we do this, we are relying on our team to have well-structured calendars, an organized to-do list, and plenty of flexibility to accommodate us. And if we can't get our timing under control, that means we expect them to do this **without setting the example of building those things for ourselves.**

That isn't being a leader, and we damage our team, our reputation, and the business we work for by making it harder to work for and with us. Let's fix it!

# journaling time.

## journal prompt one

Have you worked for someone supremely disorganized with their time? Write a recap about at least one time when their lack of timing really messed with your life. What could they have done differently? If you have multiple examples, include as many as you like!

## journal prompt two

Write an account of your time - the noun. To help you get started, answer these questions:

- Where does your time go - work and personal?
- How many calls are you on a day?
- Are they batched together, or scattered through the day, leaving you with 30 minutes or an hour in between to get focused again?
- Are you losing time because calls are running over?
- How much time is left in your schedule for changes, call rescheduling, etc.?
- What other appointments do you need to keep, like being home at a certain time?
- Do you have at least one day a week without calls to focus on your deep work?
- How much time do you have to do your “work” work - are you regularly working overtime and weekends to catch up? Are you getting more or less done than you need to?
- How often, at the end of a week, do you feel like you got the most important work done?
- What are you doing that can be done by someone else? Do you have the support in your personal life to commit a working day's hours to your business, and if not, what amount of time can you commit?

Add anything else that relates to your time and how you spend it.

## journal prompt three

Write an account of your timing - the verb. To help you get started, answer these questions:

- How on time are you to meetings and appointments?
- How well do you set boundaries about how long something will take?
- Do you keep notifications on while you work - how often do you get sidetracked?
- How are you estimating the time it will take you to do your work?
- Do you know how much time something takes you, generally?
- How do you prioritize what needs to get done and when? How many times have you, in the last month, flaked or rescheduled something with less than 24 hours' notice?
- What are you avoiding doing?

Add anything else here that you know is affecting your timing.

# journaling time.

## journal prompt four

Reread your previous three entries and answer three questions:

1. Does it resemble the human with bad timing you wrote about in exercise 1?
2. If given a chance, would you work for them again?
3. What about if their timing was more like what you describe in exercises 2 and 3? Is it better, or worse, or the same?

## journal prompt five

Today's exercise is a checklist! Write four lists for your upcoming week:

### List 1:

What do you have to do daily? In other words, a schedule. When do you have calls, eat lunch, have focused work time, and close your laptop for the day? You can write this on paper, block times in your Google calendar, or whatever works for you. Just create a structure for your week that is realistic. Include personal times like, "I need to sleep for 8 hours, which means going to bed around 10 pm and waking up around 6 am."

### List 2:

Write a list of what needs to get done by priority next week. Keeping it all in one place will help you decide what should be done and when and also help you identify what someone else could help you with. Don't forget to add things you must review or help your team with. Then, estimate how long it will take you. Does it add up to more than 40 hours with your call schedule?

### List 3:

List three boundaries you'll try to set this week with other people. Will you stop a call at 10 minutes to ask your team to summarize and wrap? Will you be more honest with your team about what you have time for (now that you have the evidence from Lists 1 and 2?) Write these down and put them somewhere visible. Make them a desktop background!

### List 4:

List three boundaries you will set with yourself on your timing this week. Will you update your schedule and list of tasks every day before the next day? (We recommend yes). Will you stop saying yes to everything (ironically, we recommend yes)? And will you commit to not being late to any meetings (We recommend yes, even if it sucks. It will make you more responsible about agreeing to it in the first place.)

## ok, great. now what?

Time to use what we've learned! Read on.

# ***action time.***

## ***next week***

Next week - use your lists and execute! As you get a feel for your own personal timing, you will naturally gravitate to tools and systems that work for you.

### ***Trust us - Mindset first. Tools later.***

You will only maintain a system that really works for you, so it's better to discover that first and find tools that support it than to find tools for other systems and try to push yourself into using them.

## ***what if this didn't work for me?***

After your week of journaling, if you can't find anything you can change or control in your timing, wait two weeks and try it again. Some distance from this topic (which is definitely an emotional and personal one) can do wonders.

## ***ok, i did it again.***

If, after the second time you do this journaling exercise, you're still not seeing a difference, then time for one more session!

### ***Questions to answer:***

1. Have you done what is in your control?
2. Is your environment one where you can set boundaries on your time?
3. Are you good at it, but the people around you just - aren't?

### ***If the answer is something like, "Yes, Yes, Yes":***

We invite you to bring someone else into your journey - a trusted colleague or friend - and ask them about your timing. They may see something you don't!

### ***If the answer is something like "Yes, No, Yes":***

Then keep on, keep control of what you can control, keep setting boundaries, and....keep in mind it might not get better unless there's a systemic change made above you. If you can, flag it with that person. If you can't (or think you'll be punished for doing so, which is the same thing), then trust that the problem isn't you. Make it work if you can, and explore working elsewhere if you can't.

## ***do you manage humans? keep reading.***

# ***action time.***

## ***for humans-in-charge***

If after a second try at the journaling week, you still can't find ways to work on your timing,

***and***

you aren't getting the opportunities or stability you want

***or***

if you're working 60+ hours a week

***or***

if you're losing team left right and center

## ***then consider this kind warning:***

Your peers or employees may be finding it hard to work with or for you. You may struggle to accomplish what you want to because your anything-but-impeccable timing is getting in your way. If you want to make your life easier, take a good hard look on how you can be a more reliable human.

***Only you know what  
that looks like and  
what will make it  
possible.***

If you're willing to share what you learn, drop us an email. We'd love to hear from you on what makes timing work for you!

***hello@niceworknicepeople.xyz***

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