

Beware of Falling Squirrels

7 Tips to Stay in Control

A squirrel once fell down my chimney! Bizarre, I know. It obviously wasn't something I had planned for, yet was not something I could ignore. The squirrel had to be dealt with immediately. It took two hours out of my schedule. When it was resolved, however, these tips helped me refocus and reprioritize.

We often end up going to the first thing that comes into our head, which creates a reactive situation rather than a proactive move. Here are 7 tips to help stay in control to be proactive.

1. Plan to Plan

Planning will save valuable time. Always add planning time into your schedule. Plan the night before for the next day, prioritize and estimate the time it might take to complete a task. When having a plan, we can be more persuasive with customers and clients because you have thought more about them.

2. Make a List

A plan isn't complete without a prioritized to-do list. It is easy to get thrown off course in reactive situations such as a different or unexpected situation develop. We forget what we were doing and what needed to be achieved. A list helps us get back on track.

3. Prepare for the Unexpected Problems & Chance Opportunities

A squirrel probably won't fall down your chimney, but what if a major sales lead falls into your lap? Are you organized in such a way that you could catch that lead before it scurries away, without jeopardizing your other commitments? Expect the unexpected.

4. Obey your Body Clock

Everyone has different energy levels at different times of the day. Are you a morning person or a night owl? By knowing when you have high energy, it can be used to your advantage. Do the things that take the most energy when you have the most energy to do them. It sounds like common sense, but many people ignore these natural rhythms. Listen to yours.

5. Ask for Help

Ask for help when appropriate. Know your strengths and weaknesses. Asking someone else to take over a task at which they are more proficient can save valuable time and allows you to focus on what you do best.

6. Master your Software

What computer software is used to keep track of your contacts, appointments, and other information? Do they actually save you time? Or, do you find yourself stumbling over functions you're not sure how to use? Computers and software can be great tools, but they are also great time eaters. Don't waste time trying to win over the machine. Take a class, or ask someone to help solve the tech problem. Learn to effectively use software.

7. Don't Procrastinate

He who waits temps fate, or "you snooze you lose." Make those calls, set new appointments or start that big project. Having said that, however, we all have things we don't like doing. One solution, schedule a regular time for getting the "baddies" out of the way.