**Cleaning out the Project Queue: 10 Small Tips for Big Impact**

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**Do your projects align with your values?**

There’s a saying that goes like this: Show someone your checkbook and they can tell you what you value. We can tell a lot about a person by how they spend their money. Today, I’m going to switch it up a bit and say, show someone your project list and they can tell you what you do with your time, focus and intention.

What items are on your project list and how long have they been there? How many items do you keep looking over with the thought that you will get to them one day? What’s your plan for the illusive “one day” naggers on that list?

Too many questions? I will take a different approach. Here are 10 mini tips that will help you clean out the project queue and proceed with greater alignment with what is truly important to you.  This well help you asses and distinguish those items you are truly want to tackle from those that perhaps it’s time to let go.

**The Project Inventory**

**Tips 1 to 5 map out your inner work toward exformation (or information explosion).**

**Tip One**: Do a project dump and write down every single project you can think of including the ones on your list and the ones you’ve been meaning to put on your list. Don’t hold back. Don’t put them in any order, just get everything out.

**Tip Two**: Group items into categories.  Work, home (inside & outside), church, commitments to friends or family, community projects, car projects and even projects like planning your vacation or taking a weekend to unplug. You might even give the categories different colors by using a highlighter or sticky notes.

**Tip Three**: Give each item a bit of scrutiny by asking this question, “what do I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?” (fill in the blank from the four d’s below):

* **Defer** – *Keep on the list so you can do it later. Set up a reminder system for the later date that you select*.
* **Delegate** – *Pass this item along to someone else to complete.*
* **Do** – *This is something you can do now or reasonably soon. When?*
* **Dump** – *Completely disregard this item. Dump it and forget about it! Perhaps it was not that important in the first place*.

**Tip Four:**Change the way you take on projects. Say no when you need to say no and yes when you intend to get the project done. Discipline yourself to pass on project offerings *right away,* so that the right person can take it on.

**Tip Five:** What’s the priority? Now that you have a good “do” list, what happens first? Next? And so on.

**5 More Tips**

**Nice work!  Now that we’ve done the internal work, tips 6 to 10 enhance this refined plan with support.**

**Tip Six:**Design an accountability system for yourself. Once you agree to “do” the project, who or what can help keep you on track? What do you need? What might get in your way of getting the things you want to get done, done?

**Tip Seven:**Be honest. There’s no prize for the one who has the longest project list that never gets done. What’s important to you? What aligns with your values? What aligns with your goals, your family, your faith?

**Tip Eight:** Be diligent about protecting your project funnel to avoid clogs and blockages. This often requires weekly, if not daily reviews and recalibrations during more intense phases of work.  The busier you are, the more reflection time is needed.

**Tip Nine:**Be flexible. If you put something on the list or put it in the funnel, you can go back and take it off. Without being aware, unmet expectations, especially the things you expect of yourself, can be exhausting. Sometimes the most freeing thing you can do is go back and re-work your list from a values and goals point of view e.g. Most Important Principles (MIPs) broken down into Most Important Tasks (MITs).

**Tip Ten:**Schedule a regular time to review your project list. Put it on your calendar with a reminder set. Use tools, apps or a system to keep you focused on completing your projects or taking them through the *Defer, Delegate, Do, Dump* review. You are a priority and this matters.  Worth repeating here:  The busier you are, the more reflection time is needed.

**Your project list tells a story.**

Moving from wishful thinking to intentional and honest planning accompanied with action will invigorate!  Overtime, a higher percentage of your time will reflect who you are and your values, resulting in a deep sense of fulfillment. Your project list will tell a story that you will enjoy reading!