

7 Small Changes That Yield Huge Results

Sometimes the smallest changes reap the biggest results.

Over the years I've come to realize I've often done things the wrong way. I've tried to make huge changes in my life only to quickly fail. I didn't keep going. I stopped. Overwhelmed. I tried to change too much too soon. It didn't work.

What I have learned is that when small changes are repeated over time, not only are they easier to implement, but they tend to stick longer. I've made some good habits in my life simply by starting with small changes.

7 Small Changes That Produce Huge Results

Read one chapter of a book each day.

This is gold. Most people would like to read more, but they never seem to find time—or make time. Leaders are readers, right? Establishing a discipline of one chapter per day will get you averaging a couple dozen books a year. This would be an improvement for most of us. And, it usually only takes about 15 minutes per day.

Drink two glasses of water each morning.

This may sound small, and that's kind of the point of all of these, but this has proved to be huge for me. I started this several years ago. It's a great way to wake up in the morning. Apparently we wake up needing hydration. I squeeze a fourth to half of a lemon in mine. I've been told it works wonders on our body. I can't swear to that, but it does improve the flavor. (My doctor actually said it's the best way to limit kidney stones.) I wake up craving my water now. It wakes me up more than coffee—and I still love coffee.

Exercise as a part of your daily routine.

You don't have to run a marathon to maintain health. Just being active when you can will do wonders. Park further from the building. Park on the opposite end of the mall from where you're going. Take the stairs if possible. Walk while you talk on the phone. I take frequent "mind" breaks and walk around our office or my neighborhood. I've even asked people to walk with me as we meet about something. I find myself interacting more with our staff because I'm all over the building during the day.

Spend 5-10 minutes in prayer and reflection each morning.

You may wish you could pray for an hour or dissect the book of Romans like the spiritual giants you know. (I've learned they aren't always as mature as we think they are. Knowledge does not equal maturity—obedience does.) But, what can you do? When I began a daily discipline of investing in my spiritual growth, it was as though I put fertilizer on my soul. It's amazing what God can do with a seed of interest invested in knowing Him.

Take five minutes to plan the day.

At the beginning of each day, before you begin your first task, spend some time prioritizing how you will do the work. You'll be so much more effective in your day if you're working from a plan.

I also do this at the beginning of a week, month and year.

Routine your week.

Of course, there are no routine weeks. Life happens, and it doesn't happen routinely. I have found, however, when I have some idea of what my week should look like I am more likely to see some semblance of a routine.

For example, I know Mondays and Tuesdays are going to be

meeting days. I plan my schedule around it. If someone asks to meet with me I try to steer them towards Monday and Tuesday. This frees up Wednesday as my primary day to write and prepare for Sunday. I keep Thursday fairly open for meetings but more for last minute meetings—depending on how my Wednesday preparation goes. I can push to Monday or Tuesday if needed. Friday I use for a catch-up day. I'm continually re-evaluating my routine, but having one helps me to have a more productive week. I'm certainly more prepared for the things, which happen to interrupt my routine, because I attempt one.

Make a list.

Feeling overwhelmed? Make a list. I realize the pushback against living by lists. I get it. You can become so scheduled life is no fun. But, when you learn to manage your lists effectively, it can give you more freedom than you have now. You can even put “fun” on your list.

When you have a list, you can choose to tackle the hard ones or the easiest ones first. I typically go for the easiest, because it does something powerful to your mind and momentum when you get to check something off your list. You want more.

With several of these I now do far more than what's listed, but this is where it started. For example, everyone seems to know we need to drink more water, and my small change has made me crave water even more. It actually keeps me more alert during the day, which is been a huge benefit to my productivity.

Another example: I also exercise—a lot—but it started with a small mindset change of being active throughout the day. My body naturally desires activity because I've planted that into me through a small change.

Small changes repeated over time = huge results. {eo}

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