



Karen Meager and John McLachlan on how to make the best of your time

Some days, time seems to slip away like sand in an egg-timer, and on others, it drags on mercilessly. Whether it appears to be going fast or slow, we don't always put our time to the best use. Here are some time-wasting habits – and ways you can beat them.

Fantasising about the future (positively or negatively)

We all give thought to what may take place in the future, but there is a difference between visualising and fantasising. If you are working towards goals, and visualising the end result is one of your ways of staying motivated, then that's

great. However, if you are daydreaming about a life of luxury without doing anything to achieve it, then you are wasting time and energy. Learn basic meditation and mindfulness techniques to rein in these wandering thoughts.

Thinking about conversations or situations that have already happened

Our minds are in the habit of bringing negative situations from the past back to the forefront. This unhelpful default setting can cause us to waste a lot of time and energy. Take time to consider why your brain is doing this. Is there any pattern to the thoughts,

and does this correlate with any anxieties or issues you are experiencing in your personal life? By consciously working through these problems, you can ease your mind and slowly chip away at those background issues.

Too many open loops at one time

We all know the feeling of an open loop, but we don't often realise just how much of our energy they take up.

These mental processes that you haven't seen through to completion can range from a household item you keep forgetting to buy, to a regret from childhood. Too many open loops have the same effect on us as too many open browsers on a computer: it slows down



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your processing time and risks burnout. Close loops by identifying them and then take action. It's fine to prioritise, but try not to forget any of them.

Believing 'perfect' exists

Regardless of how much logic tells us that perfection is unattainable, there are plenty of people who strive for it. Nothing is perfect, but plenty of things are of a high standard, and this *is* attainable. A lot of emotional turmoil is achieved by chasing perfection and the fear of failure is very real. Start by tackling small, manageable tasks that you don't need to worry about too much and then move on to bigger jobs. It will take time, but take it steady and the reward of recovered time will be a big bonus.

Many factors contribute to time-wasting and, very often, it is not down to poor work ethic or laziness. In most instances, the problem can be overcome quite easily, without hurting feelings, or wasting any more time! **TJ**

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