



# FIVE PRODUCTIVITY TIPS TO NURTURE YOUR SIDE HUSTLE

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BY @ASHLEYGERRITYPHOTOGRAPHY

Have you been rocking your creative business during the wee hours of the night and scheduling client appointments around “other engagements?”

For the past five years, I’ve been growing a bustling photography studio, while working a ridiculously unpredictable full-time job. When I first began my business, I was shooting twelve weddings and a handful or portraits a year. Even then, I never felt like I had enough time to breath but I continued to charge forward towards major growth year after year.

Fast forward to our current season. Our studio has over fifty weddings scheduled between myself and two other photographers and almost as many portrait sessions sandwiched in between. Quadrupling business volume in as many years will create a set of pain points for any business, but add in a CEO with another full-time job on the side presents another world of unique challenges.

If you’re rocking a side hustle, whether you love just having a part-time moneymaker or are on the rocky road to full-time, I hope these tips will guide you on the path to freedom and success!

## **You, Before Your Business**

One of my biggest struggles, to this day, is prioritizing my physical health, but I genuinely believe that this is paramount to being able to manage a successful side hustle while spending 40 hours or more working for someone else. Keeping your body and mind in peak physical shape will help prepare you for the craziness of creating and building a thriving business. Mix social time with fitness by going hiking or walking with friends or join a fitness class with a buddy. Consider using a service like emeals which will help take the guesswork out of meal planning and grocery shopping. Try to build out a schedule for your week ahead of you and plan out physical exercise and meal times into your plans. Nowadays, I use the FREE Emergent Task Planner PDF to draft out my day and priorities.



### **Where Does All The Time Go**

One of the most impactful books that I ever read was *168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think* by Laura Vanderkam. After considering the research behind time-tracking and the habits of highly successful people, I began to track my days from morning until night. The prognosis? I lost several hours every day driving, working ineffectively (thanks to Netflix), and communicating without a plan. The good news was that by identifying my time wasters, I was able to plan for efficiency. I aim to never eat alone—mixing social or networking time with the necessity of meals. I began to commute via train rather than driving, so that I could use my commute for accomplishing work rather than just listening to the radio. I committed to completing two hours of solid, focused evening work without television or spotify.

### **Being in Business for Yourself Doesn't Have to be Lonely**

Outsource, Delegate, and Connect! The first thing that I let go of was my accounting—it was an easy decision, because it's socially acceptable to hire an accountant. The next thing was to outsource my color correction, because I found it to be time-consuming and not my biggest strength (*Photographers Edit* is my jam). Shortly thereafter, I had a college student take over my blog for a season. Lastly, I brought on a studio manager, who has taken over blogging, manages our social media, and is able to manage the client experience alongside me. These changes came on gradually over time, but when I accepted that I didn't have to do everything in my business for myself, my life started getting better and better!

Once you begin to let go of aspects of the business that

don't bring you joy or make you money, you'll be able to devote more time to connecting. Spend time with your friends and family. Spend time connecting with others in the industry. Never miss another Tuesdays Together because you're too busy! Build a support group for yourself, just like you've built for your business.

### **The Elusive Inbox Zero**

The Abominable Snowman. The Lochness Monster. Inbox Zero. All of these mysterious creatures have been sighted by some, but do you believe they really exist? One of the most amazing, life-reinvigorating changes that I've made has been approaching email differently this year. I've built office hours into my signature, so that clients know not to expect responses from me at night or on weekends. Because of Boomerang, aka God's gift to

inboxes everywhere, my clients only receive emails from me during regular business hours. I began to schedule email time into my day to limit the amount of time wasted on trivial messages. I stopped viewing email as an instant message service and killed this impulse with my clients, too. When a complicated email is required, I've started picking up the telephone. Phone calls are more personal and can get through a conversation more clearly than an extended email thread. If necessary, I recap our call in a follow-up email, just to keep everything on the record.

### **Set Big Goals and Hard Limits**

When I started to increase my studio's volume and working more aggressively towards a full-time career, I sat down and made two lists. The first list was a list of goals and targets that I felt we needed to achieve before I





@ashevillefolk

would feel comfortable walking away from my regular salary. This list was easy, because it was built on data and budgets. The second list was scarier and, in my opinion, more important. It was a list of things that I was not willing to sacrifice for either my day job or my own company. It was my no man's land. Some things on this list may seem silly—for example, I personally refuse to work on my birthday—but others have more gravity to them. I've shared this exercise with several of my mentoring clients and this list can vary from one person to the next—one photographer said she wouldn't sacrifice sleep or the ability to attend church on Sunday mornings, another was committed to finishing her degree and wouldn't sacrifice her education to grow her business.

Growing a side hustle to its fullest potential requires a mix of resourcefulness, community, and deep commitment. By creating efficiencies in your life and business, you may find yourself more successful than ever while having even more leisure time. I wish you full nights of sleep, a wonderful day at your day job, and the most successful side hustle ever!

Ashley Gerrity is an award-winning, nationally published wedding and portrait photographer based in Philadelphia, PA who is on a mission to share her strategic, no-nonsense approach towards creative entrepreneurship with small business owners everywhere. In her free time, Ashley enjoys traveling between residences in Seattle and Philadelphia, hanging out with her two dogs, Rosalind & Bates, and sharing home-cooked meals with her closest friends and family.

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FOR MORE INFO, YOU CAN VISIT THE ASHLEY [ONLINE](#).

# PRODUCTIVITY

“Productivity is being able to do things that you were never able to do before.”

- Franz Kafka



# IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TIME MANAGEMENT

IT'S ABOUT SELF MANAGEMENT

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BY @HEARTLOVEALWAYS

Have you ever found yourself saying: "I need more hours in the day!"

How about: "If only I had more time!"

What about my personal favorite: "I could really use a clone right about now!"

If you have, don't feel bad. We've ALL been there. Rushing to meet a deadline. Burning the candle at both ends. Working all day and then wondering what you did all day (because the to-do list seems longer than it did this morning).

We think more time and better time management will solve all of our problems. But in reality, it will only solve a few.

*"Lack of direction, not lack of time, is the problem. We all have 24 hour days." - Zig Ziglar*

You have the same number of hours in the day as everybody else.

So why are some people more

productive than others it seems?

They have a good handle on their time, yes. But they have an even better handle on themselves.

It's not just about better time management, it's about better self management.

So how do we do that? How do we better manage ourselves as well as our time? How do we get things done when we actually need to get them done? How do we focus and stay productive in the hours we're given each day?

*"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." - Michael Altshuler*

YOU are in charge of your day. YOU are in charge of your time. It's up to YOU what YOU do with it. Believe me. Your productivity will skyrocket once you wrap your head around this.

But in case you need a few ideas for how best to go about it; here are five proven tips to better time management AND self management.

**Find out where your time is going.**

If you get to the end of the day and your to-do list is only half checked off, or seems twice as long as it did this morning, you need to rethink how you're spending your work days.

Throughout your day (or even the next week), write down everything you're doing including what tasks you're completing, how long they take, and how much time you're spending on social media. (That means every minute spent Snapping and scrolling through Instagram.)

Every minute of your work day counts, and you have to know how you're spending it. No matter how hard the results may be to accept.

**Own your work time to take back your life time.**

Treat your business like the business it is—with work hours, and off hours. That way both your life and business get the time (and your full attention) that they so deserve.

Use your work time wisely by utilizing techniques such as block scheduling and batching so your work hours don't cut into your office hours. (You need your rest just as much as you need to work. And since rest will ultimately help you be more productive it's a win-win!)

**Get good about saying no.**

Learn it, live it, love it, and get really good at saying it. When your work time and life time is precious, you have to say no to some things (so you can say yes to even better things).

Some things you should say no to? Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Tasty Videos on Facebook, funny cat videos on YouTube, phone notifications, email notifications, all the notifications. Choose to be productive by saying no to all distractions (because that's what those things are). Put your phone in the other room if it's too big a temptation.

Another thing to say no to? Too many things on your to-do list. If you overwhelm your list, you'll overwhelm yourself, and overly kick yourself when you didn't get them all done by the end of the day. Don't set yourself up to fail before you've even begun. You can always add more if you're on a roll!

**Find a routine and stick to it.**

I know, I know, routine sounds so stick in the mud and regimented. But a little structure actually helps you focus and be more productive.

Create a motivating morning routine that doesn't start with you jumping into work mode right away. Set aside specific days or times for meetings. Schedule





Alexandra Beauregard

yourself a lunch break. Create a template for your work day. And don't forget to create a routine for ending your work day and a relaxing evening routine, so you have something to look forward to!

Set goals, action items, and schedules.

If it's not written down, it's not getting done. It's as simple as that.

I'm a big fan of setting goals (complete with reasonable action items) for the day, week, month, and year. And an even bigger fan

of to-do lists. Electronic, paper, it doesn't matter. But start keeping track of those goals and to-do's. Studies show that checking things off as complete actually increases your positivity and productivity.

And while that's true, you have to manage what you do with yourself during the time

You CAN totally be more productive—right now, today! The key is combining better time management with better self management. It's yours for the taking, YOU just have to take it!

# PRODUCTIVITY

## FROM OUR TUESDAYSTOGETHER LEADERS

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Email is one of those tasks that can suck away hours of our day without a blink. Years ago, I would often start my day by checking email, and before I knew it the day was half gone with nothing productive getting accomplished. Now with email flying at us all day long and on every device, it's easy to get distracted and lose momentum while working on other tasks. To keep productivity on track, set 2 times a day to check and respond to email. Not only will you get through your emails quicker by having focused time, but it will also clear the way for you to be more present and productive in all areas of your life.

@MELANIESOLIEL

Create a workflow to streamline every task. Learn keyboard shortcuts. Seconds saved from each click add up surprisingly fast! Being productive is all about finding ways to be more organized and save time, because it's so easy for work to consume the precious time we have in life.

@DANIELLEBLOCKER

Start small! When you stare at that list of 20 items you may end up completing none. Give yourself a realistic list of 3 things and start there. Limit distractions. Sometimes silence is best. Music and Netflix can help pass the time but they can also distract you. Lastly, find out when you are most productive, if your not

a morning person, save easier and routine tasks for the morning, and tougher to tackle items for later in the day!

@LAURENBUMANPHOTOGRAPHY

It's all about systems! Put a system in place that walks through your client experience - you should have all of your basic emails and client interactions set ahead of time so that you don't have to waste time creating everything from scratch with each new step.

@ALLIESIARTO

The key to productivity to me is organization in all aspects of my two businesses. As a mompreneur I need to keep to my hours, I schedule out specific days for editing, marketing and web/branding development. I always make sure to only work 8am-2pm so I can be present in my everyday family life, sometimes we forget how important that is! I also make the most out of my social interaction by using scheduling apps like Later and Planoly and I use HoneyBook to manage the backend of my business, I love that I can atomize payments, questionnaires and create workspaces for shoots and collaborations.

@VANESSAVELEZPHOTOGRAPHY

# WORKING SMARTER, NOT HARDER

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BY @BYWAYCREATIVE

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

- Get 7-8 hours of sleep.
- Drink 8 glasses of water every day.
- Eat a healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Keep a log of what you eat.
- Create and maintain an exercise routine.
- Track your exercise and fitness activity.
- Do something for your mental health everyday.
- Meditate, keep a journal and/or a sketchbook.
- Create / maintain good habits, rituals, and routines.
- Eliminate bad habits.
- Spend adequate and quality time with loved ones.
- Take breaks, half days, full days, and long vacations.
- Reward yourself for completing a big project.
- Don't let overwhelm and anxiety have the power.
- Work in natural light.

## FINDING MOTIVATION & INSPIRATION

- Reflect on your progress and achievements.
- Listen to a podcast, read a book / blog, watch a movie, etc.
- Check out what your peers are working on.
- Learn a new skill.
- Get a change of scenery,
- Get out and be social.
- Surround yourself with things you love and are proud of.
- Keep your workspace clutter free, clean and organized.
- Check your bank account.
- Remind yourself why you love what you do and what the benefits are.
- Read your own testimonials and reviews.

## TO-DO LISTS

- Make daily to-do lists really achievable. If you finish everything and add more, that's a bonus!
- Checking off a task releases endorphins.
- To-do lists help create routines and good habits.
- To-do lists help with scheduling.
- It's ok to edit a to-do list and move something to another day.
- It's ok to add and check off tasks that you have already completed

## BE FREE FROM DISTRACTIONS

- Adjust notification settings.
- Hide tempting games and applications in a not so easily accessible and thoughtfully named folder.
- Disconnect from the internet.
- Try working in complete silence. No music, no tv.
- Lock out your pets.
- Find activities for your kids to keep them busy, and take advantage of naps.

## BREAK YOUR OWN RULES

- Stop being a perfectionist. I promise the world will not come to an end.
- Know that just because someone else is doing it doesn't mean you have to: Choose one or two things you know you are awesome at and put your all in.
- You don't have to follow everything on this list.
- Remember This: If you fall behind, eat junk food, don't exercise, don't drink enough water, forget to email a client or have a mental meltdown, IT'S OK! Everyone falls off the wagon.
- Always do your best, get back up, and try again.

TUESDAYSTOGETHER

# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- What are some systems that you have in place to help you manage your day to day tasks, your weekly production, and your yearly planning?
- In the last three months, what has been the most helpful insight that has helped you be more productive?
- What is the most important and fundamental principle for being productive?
- What are some ways that you avoid distractions and remain focused?
- How do you spend the first hour of your day?

These are just to start the discussion. Feel free to include your own and encourage group members to do the same!

THANK YOU TO OUR TUESDAYSTOGETHER LEADERS,  
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