

## Get to Peak Productivity Fast

What makes an elite performer isn't how you show up when Plan A's working. What reveals a true superstar is the way you deliver when your best laid plans are falling apart.

These are messy times. Days of intense volatility. A period of immense uncertainty. And one of the dominant themes in work + life these days is distraction (a constant stream of activities begging for our attention that in the end amount to nothing).

So the fight we face as Leaders Without Titles and as human beings on a mission to express our absolute best talents is to block out the noise so we get real work done. Here are some of my best strategies to help you do this

**#1. Get Great at Reverse Engineering:** Engineers working with technology startups are masterful at taking a competitor's product and breaking it apart – piece by piece – from the finished version to its initial components. After study, they then make their own product even better. Truly productive people do the same thing with their most valuable opportunity. They know the final result they are after and maintain acute clarity on it. Armed with this awareness, they reverse engineer this big goal into a series of small and actionable steps that they then put into a 1-2 page plan of execution. This strategy works for them. And it'll work for you.

**#2. Abhor Distraction:** I fiercely fight distraction in my own life and teach the teams I work with at companies like Starbucks, Coca-Cola and Oracle along with the billionaires I privately coach how to do the same. Everyone's fighting for your focus. And too many people are stealing your attention. Don't be so generous in giving it to them – unless it's for something that truly matters. So, clean out the distractions in your workspace and personal life. I just read that special forces on a military mission are kept in isolation from other teams and denied access to TV/Newspapers/Internet. Why? To PROTECT their focus so they deliver perfection on their mission. Pretty great metaphor for you and I, no? So please remember: Distraction is the greatest thief of time. And time is a non-renewable resource.

**#3. Stop Multi-tasking:** A recent case report shared a story of a medical resident who was using her cell phone to input data about the dosage of a patient she was attending. She was interrupted with a text message from a friend inviting her to a party. The resident replied and started a conversation. The only problem was she forgot to get back to her patient who then began receiving a near-fatal dose of the medicine. Open-heart surgery saved his life. But the larger point is that so few of us are fully present to the work/activity in front of us anymore. I see people on airport runways checking their Twitter feed. I see taxi drivers reviewing their emails. A huge competitive advantage falls to the 1 in 100 performer with the brilliance to develop the skill of becoming massively focused on the one thing in front of them. Truly a game-changing move.

**#4. Build Rituals:** Ok, this is another valuable tactic to unleash your productivity. When I studied the lives of People of Great Output like Stephen King, Winston Churchill and John Irving, I saw that they didn't leave their productivity to the fleeting winds of

inspiration. Instead, they instituted precise rituals into their daily lives that allowed their creativity to flourish. Stephen King, for example, sits down to work at 8 am every morning, in the same chair, with his papers set in the same way. His belief is that this obsessive consistency sends a signal to his mind to focus and deliver serious results.

**#5. Launch at Beta:** So many of us procrastinate by waiting for ideal conditions to get big things done. Here's what I've learned from some of the software enterprises we've consulted with: launch at beta and then iterate to perfection. What I mean by that is stop waiting for perfect conditions or the perfect product before you get to market. Yes, I stand for ensuring anything you offer is best of breed. But sometimes putting off a project until its flawless demonstrates nothing more than your fear of success. And we both know you're so much larger than that.

**#6. Practice Productivity:** When I was learning to ski, my instructor taught me about muscle memory. He made me practice many tiny moves over and over again sharing "this is going to build your muscle memory", meaning that if I practiced the technique relentlessly, a time would eventually come where I could perform it swiftly, elegantly and unconsciously. Same applies to your productivity. Practice doing work that matters. Practice sitting in one place for many hours focused on a single result. Practice running rituals and elite performance routines that will lift you into the realm of world-class. Because as I know you know: Genius isn't so much about genetics as it is about work ethic and sheer practice.

I hope these strategies have been of service to you. The world needs you at your productive best.

**Stay Great,  
Robin Sharma**