# 7 Keys to Getting Things Done, Living On Purpose and Being Happy in the Process

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*simple mindfulness*
simple steps to a happier life

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There are hundreds of books and other resources out there to help us get things done and be more productive. In my opinion, many of them are very complex and expensive tools to organize the minutia of life that doesn't really deserve so much attention. It's just one more thing to create busy-ness and many of us love that because we feel more important when we're really busy and we think we're accomplishing something by merely crossing things off our to-do list.

I used to be one of those people until I realized how it was just burning me out and pushing me further from my real goals and the life I envisioned for myself.

Each day I would follow the advice of writing down everything I wanted to accomplish the next day and prioritizing it. Usually that list ended up being a bit too long to actually accomplish everything so I would feel bad about not being able to cross everything off the list which would sabotage my mood and drive to keep getting things done. This led to procrastination and generally not getting things done.

Most of these programs left out some key questions that you have to ask yourself before even thinking about putting together that list. This guide will take you through the process of asking those all-important questions and setting you up for success. No special software or planners required.

After using this guide for a while you'll soon realize that you're actually closer to the life you've always imagined for yourself.

Let's get started!

## Step 1. Determine what your values are.

Without knowing your core values, you're a ship without a sail, blown aimlessly by any wind that comes by. What are you all about? Who are you? What do you stand for? What are the most important things in your life?

These things are your base, your core. These are the things that ground all your decisions and actions.

The things that are most important to me are my health (without it, everything else goes down the drain), my family, integrity, contributing to others and financial freedom.

I'm bombarded with new ideas and things to do and I'd love to follow many of these things but it's impossible. To keep myself from going crazy thinking about all these things, I ask if it's in alignment with my core values. If the answer is yes, then I ask if it will be something I can use and implement *today*. If the answer is no, I write it down in my collection of notes for the future and forget about it for now.

Every time something new comes up or someone asks you to do something, ask yourself if it's in alignment with your values. If it's not in alignment, then why would you do it? (Hint: Pleasing others and needing acceptance is not a valid answer. Learning to say no is one of the most powerful skills you can develop.)

### The 5 most important things to me are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

## Step 2. Determine what your real goals are.

Your goals are the big things you want to accomplish like major projects or accomplishments. Goals are not things like "Get through my to-do list" or "Get the kids to all their activities on time." Goals are the big things like "Start my own business" or "Find supportive, like-minded people to support me in following my passion."

It goes without saying that your goals must be in alignment with your values. If they're not, you're living your life for someone else or doing what you think you're supposed to do to please others.

Focusing deeply on our goals can be an eye-opening experience. Asking why we're doing what we're doing may bring up some uncomfortable feelings.

Many people have goals and do things because they think it's what they're supposed to do based on societal conditioning. I spent the first half of my life like this. My thinking went: do well in high school so you can get into a good college where you do well and major in something useful so you can get a good job. Then you get married, buy a house, have a family while you're climbing the ladder at your job and you somehow live happily ever after. I didn't question it and started down that path. I got as far as getting the good job and getting married. When the concepts of kids and home ownership started to come up, I couldn't do it yet. It just didn't feel right.

Fortunately my intuition told me something was wrong along the way. At first I didn't listen and my logical, monkey mind told me I was doing everything right. Then I couldn't avoid my intuition screaming at me (the little voice in my head) and I started questioning whether all this was what *I* really wanted. The answer was a resounding "no" but I didn't know what the answer was and I spent the next couple of years figuring it out.

Get clear on your goals and everything will flow from there.

My 3 most important goals are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The values that these goals support:

Goal 1. _____

Goal 2. _____

Goal 3. _____

## Step 3. Brainstorm everything it will take to achieve your goals

Take some focused time where you can be alone for a while and just dump all your ideas on paper or in a mind mapping program (there are lots of free programs online). No distractions (phone, email, friends, kids, etc.).

Look at each goal individually and just start writing every little thing you can think of. No editing. Stick with one goal until you feel that you can't think of anything else to write. Then move to the next goal if you have more than one.

If you have no idea how you're going to accomplish something, write down the names of other people who have done what you want to do. If you don't know people, write down places to search for people. And if you don't know people or places, know that everything you ever wanted to know is on the internet somewhere.

Before I started my blog, I had absolutely no idea how to create a web site, put together a mailing list or send emails to that list. I knew almost nothing about social media. I looked into outsourcing everything (the easy way out which I do not recommend when you're starting out) and found that the cost was outside of my meager budget.

Despite these challenges, I knew it could be done so I learned all I could from the many web sites and blogs out there offering tons of great free content. It took a little extra time and a fair amount of trial and error but I figured it out. Now I'm so happy that I did it myself because I'm more self-sufficient in my business, I have gained many new skills that I can teach others and I understand what others online are saying and doing much better.

Don't let not knowing how to do something stop you from wanting to do it or acting on it. Just start somewhere and the next step will reveal itself.

## Everything I think it will take to accomplish my goals:

Goal 1. _____

_____
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Goal 2. _____

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Goal 3. _____

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## Step 4. Figure out what's most important.

First review your overall goals and put them in their order of importance in terms of contributing to your values. Which one will make the biggest impact on your life? Do that one first and organize the rest in order of importance to *you.* Make sure your monkey mind isn't in there telling you what you *should* do.

Now look at everything from your brainstorming session along with all the other "to do's" on all of your other lists.

Before you start organizing and prioritizing anything, look at what you're organizing. Think about each thing on the list and ask yourself a few questions:

- Is this in alignment with my values?
- Will this directly contribute to my end goal?
- Can someone else do this for me?
- Do I *really* need to do this?
- Is there an easier way to do this?
- Am I doing this to fit in, be accepted by or to please someone else?

If any of the answers don't support *your* values or goals, then seriously reconsider whether that item should be scratched from your list or moved to the list of things to delegate.

Now take your revised list and, focusing on one goal at a time, prioritize each item by asking, "What is the next thing I can do that will move me closer to my goal quickly?"

I'm a master of getting ready to get ready. I can come up with volumes of things that I need to do and learn before taking the core actions that will actually move me forward. I feel productive when I'm doing these not-so-important things, all the while knowing that I'm not really moving any closer to my goal. It's that silly "feeling important because I have lots to do" thing that gets me nowhere.

I'm basically appeasing my subconscious monkey mind who fights to keep things the same and fears new things. I've gotten much better at noticing that I'm doing this, which is a big step (you can't change something you're not aware of). I'm finally

getting to the point of being able to tell that monkey where he can go when he tries to stop me from taking meaningful action. I know I feel fantastic when I take action on those big or little things that move me closer to my goal.

Don't let getting organized be one of those "getting ready to get ready" things that slows you down. Get focused before you get organized. That way you'll have a lot less to organize and will be one step closer to your goal.

## My prioritized list of what it will take to accomplish my goals:

### Goal 1. _____

Step 1. _____

Step 2. _____

Step 3. _____

Step 4. _____

Step 5. _____

Step 6. _____

Step 7. _____

Step 8. _____

Step 9. _____

Step 10. _____

### Goal 2. _____

Step 1. _____

Step 2. _____

Step 3. _____

Step 4. _____

Step 5. _____

Step 6. _____

Step 7. _____

Step 8. _____

Step 9. _____

Step 10. _____

## Goal 3. _____

Step 1. _____

Step 2. _____

Step 3. _____

Step 4. _____

Step 5. _____

Step 6. _____

Step 7. _____

Step 8. _____

Step 9. _____

Step 10. _____

## Step 5. Take the first steps.

You've got this big, beautiful prioritized list. Now what do you do with it?

Pick the first item under the first goal and ask yourself what steps, big or small, you can take *today* toward accomplishing that item.

Every day, at the end of each day, make a list of *no more than* three things you'll do the next day. These things may be doing research, writing one page of your book or making an important phone call. Make sure they're small enough that you know you can accomplish them.

Before you go to bed, mentally review this list and ask for guidance from your Higher Power on the best way to accomplish these things. This will get your mind working on solutions that you'll miraculously wake up with.

Our days are always filled with distractions and things usually take longer than we think they will. Three things may not seem like much but many days you'll be lucky to do that much. If you're having a wonderfully productive day, feel free to do more from your important list. Or take the extra time to reward yourself for what you've accomplished so you'll be motivated to repeat the process the next day.

Don't be tempted to add more to your list. If your list gets any longer and you can't get to everything on it, you'll get discouraged and succumb to the distractions and get nothing on your important list done.

Focus on your one to three most important steps each day and visualize completing them.

### The 3 most important things I'm doing today are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

## Step 6. Make the three things your priority.

Regardless of how hard or easy your three things are, make sure you do them first thing in the morning. Using Brian Tracy's advice: Eat that frog! Meaning: Do the ugliest/hardest thing first so it gets done, you feel great about doing it and you can get on with your day without it haunting you and draining your energy. Check out this very short video on eating the frog.

Doing these things first means doing them *before* you check emails and other messages. Emails and messages are all the things that other people want *you* to do for *them*. Unless you plan to live your life pleasing others, helping them to accomplish their goals first and always putting yourself last (and probably never achieving your goals), you need to focus on *your* list *first*.

Constantly putting the priorities of others first will make you a tired, resentful and bitter person. Putting your own priorities first will make you a positive, energized person who is happy to help others. And when you accomplish your three most important things first, you'll feel great and have time to help others.

Write out your schedule for the day and post it in a prominent place or in multiple places.

Try your best to follow this schedule, knowing that things never go as planned. Go with the flow and see interruptions as new opportunities (but not opportunities to procrastinate).

If you focus on *your* most important things first, before seeing what everyone else wants or what *their* emergencies are, your day won't go off track first thing in the morning.

## My Morning Schedule:

5:00 am _____

5:30 am _____

6:00 am _____

6:30 am _____

7:00 am _____

7:30 am _____

8:00 am _____

8:30 am _____

9:00 am _____

9:30 am _____

10:00 am _____

10:30 am _____

11:00 am _____

11:30 am _____

12:00 pm _____

12:30 pm _____

## Sample schedule:

5:00 am: Wake up and drink 1-2 large glasses of water

5:30 am: Exercise (walk, jog, yoga, tai chi, bike, go to the gym)

6:30 am: Meditate, write gratitude list, drink another glass of water

7:00 am: Shower & get dressed

7:30 am: Eat a healthy breakfast (organic oatmeal with nuts & fruit or power protein shake) No TV or reading at this time.

8:00 am: Eat that frog! Do the one thing on your list that is the most difficult for you.

9:00 am: Take a 5-10 minute break to stretch and drink more water.

9:10 am: Do the next most difficult thing on your list.

10:00 am: Take a 5-10 minute break to stretch and drink more water.

10:10 am: Do the next most difficult thing on your list.

11:00 am: Take a 5-10 minute break to stretch and drink more water.

11:10 am: Check emails, texts and voice mails.

12:00 pm: Eat a healthy lunch with 2 more glasses of water. No distractions (TV, internet, texting, email, phones, etc.) while eating.

1:00 pm: Take a walk (preferably with a friend or loved one).

After 1:30 pm: Whatever you want:

- answer emails, texts and voice mails
- play with your kids
- meet a friend for tea (a.k.a. networking if you don't want it to seem like you're goofing off)
- take more steps toward your goals

- read a book
- take a nap
- learn a new skill
- practice your hobby
- talk to a stranger
- so something to push the boundaries of your comfort zone
- *have fun* so you're motivated for the next day!

## Step 7. Repeat the process on a regular basis.

Every three to six months, take some quiet, focused time to repeat this entire process. Our lives and ways of thinking change constantly. There may be good reasons for our goals changing. We may develop different priorities as our circumstances change (i.e. babies, divorce, job/career change, death).

Life truly is a journey and the relationships we create and nurture and experiences we have along the way are the most important part. While achieving our goals is important, the learning and lives we touch along the way are the real achievements. Don't let accomplishing your goals get in the way of living. Who have you become in the process and who do you want to be in the future? Make sure your values and goals will get you there.

Enjoy the ride!!

I hope you enjoyed and, more importantly, will get a lot of value from this guide. I hope it serves you on your journey of taking the baby steps necessary to creating the life you've always wanted.

If you know of other people who may benefit from this guide, please email it to them!

It's my mission to inspire people to see possibilities for breakthrough in their life and to turn those possibilities into reality.

If you have any comments or feedback, feel free to contact me at Paige@PaigeBurkes.com.

To help spread the good word, tweet or post about it on Facebook. There are buttons at the top of the page at www.simplemindfulness.com to make it very easy for you. It only takes a second and it would mean a lot to me.

Have a beautiful day, a wonderful life and make it happen!

Paige