I Audited My Time for One Week. Here's What I Changed Forever.

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Key Takeaways

- Lead with intention by protecting your best energy for what matters.
- Invest attention like capital to create meaningful growth at work and home.

Early in my career, I recall many top business leaders and executives bragging about how busy they were. They took pride in wearing full suits to the office and carrying 10-12 hours of meetings and calls.

This "hustle culture" mentality isn't new. For my two and a half decades in the business world, I've done my best to live and work in a different manner than what seemed popular. I've guided many entrepreneurs out of that hustle culture, helping them realize that *activity* and *impact* are not the same thing. Real growth doesn't come from a slammed calendar; it comes from being fully invested where it counts.

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Why founders mistake activity for

progress

First, because looking busy feels like winning. I get it. Rapid-fire email replies provide a quick hit of accomplishment, a small dopamine rush that tells you that you're important and you're working hard. This is because our culture rewards speed and visibility and hands out gold stars for the optics of work.

Here's the catch: you can sprint through ten things on your list, feel spent and proud and yet not much progress was made. You may still be the bottleneck, slowing your team's growth, while they're still waiting on that one decision that sets the direction. Activity is loud and easy to track and count, but it crowds the stage. Real progress might be quiet, and may come from a few challenging choices.

Others use "busyness" to avoid discomfort. I know because I've lived it. Clearing an inbox feels more productive than having that hard conversation. Next thing you know, you've turned into a reactive switchboard and your culture starts to reward noise over real progress. People begin tracking things that *feel productive* but aren't really growing their business impact in any material way.

Lead intention, not reaction

I've seen business leaders finally have to admit that their current path of being a fraction of themself in every room is exhausting. Trying to be one person at the office and another at home is a slow-burning burnout. Eventually, you'll reach a point where you know that grind is unsustainable. The only way forward is to get brutally honest about the person you want to be, and that's to bring your whole self to every table you sit at.

From there, tradeoffs get simple because you know what you're

optimizing for. You can confidently say “no” without apology to protect what matters most. You’ll realize that you can treat your freshest hours as sacred and reserve them for deep work that sets the direction of your life and your business career.

With that clarity, your mornings won’t be a time of reactionary, draining tasks (like replying to 100 emails before 9 am) and can start with one important question: “What would make today a win?” That single priority should get your best energy first. You’ll replace wandering meetings with short one-page briefs that force a clear decision. You’ll draw a line between the problems you own and the ones you trust your leaders to handle.

When you live and lead with this level of intention, incredible things happen. The frantic energy of reaction loses its power. You start setting the pace, rather than letting the world and your circumstances dictate it for you.

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Audit your time like it’s capital

Most breakthroughs came when I started treating my time with the same discipline I brought to our finances. For one week, I ran a simple, honest audit of my calendar where I tracked where every hour went. I have to tell you, the results were alarming to me. I saw how much of my most valuable asset (my focus) was being poured into low-return activities and things that were a complete drain on my energy.

That painful awareness gave me the nudge I needed to be ruthless with my calendar. I started building a new system around principles and a filter for deciding what is “good, better and best.” I created untouchable blocks for deep work. I batched communication into tight windows so I was driving

the conversation, not reacting to it. A huge step was hiring two full-time assistants, not just for my business but for my personal life, too — a way to ensure both domains received professional support so my energy could go where it would compound the most. It was another commitment to living 100-100.

Finally, I defined a few simple rules that removed friction for everyone. No meetings before late morning, so the whole team could have focused time. A one-page brief is required for any big decision, which replaces dozens of status calls. And that's the real lesson I've learned in all this: you can't win by just trying to have more willpower. You win by building a structure where focus becomes the path of least resistance.

Invest your attention where it matters most

I finally learned that my attention is the only asset I can truly control, and I had to start investing it like meaningful capital. This meant making fewer, bigger bets. Instead of spreading myself thin across endless status meetings that just recycled information, I zeroed in on the things that would compound over time. That included coaching my leaders until they could fly on their own.

But the real surprise wasn't just that the business ran with more clarity. The real win was that my *life* got better. I never believed in work-life balance. Create an integrated, fully invested life, lived with intention. The same discipline that protected my deep work on a Monday morning was the same discipline that protected dinner with my family. When your decisions finally align with your values, your energy multiplies.

You only have to choose whether to lead a life of reaction or a life of intention. Go 100% in on what matters at work and at

home. The return on that investment shows up not just on a balance sheet, but in the calm, the confidence and the relationships that make it all worthwhile.

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