

WHAT ABOUT THE LIST?

It's September, one of the times that people start to make the list, the list of things that have not been done over the summer they need to be done.

The pad is out and that list, the one keeping you up at night, always crossing your mind at odd and inappropriate moments, is starting to find its way to paper.

People hate the list. It's too long, there are too many things, there is not enough time, and avoidance is the name of the game. Avoidance as long as possible, but, when September rolls around it has to be addressed.

Step 1 is just to make a list of everything on your mind that you feel needs to be done. Get it out of your mind and on the paper. No judgement, just write the list and keep writing until you have them all listed.

Step 2 is to organize the list. One needs to break the list down by categories so that it is manageable and no longer overwhelming. Here are the options:

Important

These are the things that just need to be done

Commitments

Things you have agreed with others that you will do

Not important

Things on the list that may not need be done or done anytime soon

Not Necessary

Just cross them off the list, let them go

Step 3 is to review and refine the list. Schedule the important things by date on your calendar or follow up list. By putting it on a specific day you are bound to do it, especially if you allocate the list so that no day has more items than you can do.

We all have the same 24 hours in a day, and we all can only do so many things. If we can't do it, don't schedule it. Do the important things first. It's that simple.

It is important to schedule things so that you do not run out of time. Plan in advance so that you are not rushed at the last minute. If you have to prepare a report to present on the 15th, you may want to schedule to write it on the 10th. It's the last minute rush that causes the stress.

Planning and scheduling in advance also allows for emergencies. Any given day we may run into an emergency that is more important than our list. By working ahead, you can attend to the emergency, and then catch up at a later time.

It is important to decide who should do the items on the list. It may be an item on your list but that does not necessarily mean you have to do it. You might delegate the task to an associate, a family member, or hire someone. That sure relieves stress and allows you more time for other things. Just because it's on your list does not mean you have to do it.

For some, they feel they do not have the time to make the list and feel they can keep it in their heads. The reality is that taking the time to make the list and prioritize it will save far more time than the time to make the list. A little organization saves hours in the doing and reduces stress. The only way to verify what I say is to do it.

Try it. Make the list, organize it, and schedule it. You'll find it far less overwhelming once you have it written and planned. Then, follow the plan and adjust as needed. Simple, yes. Effective, yes. Does it work? Yes.