

# 7 Habits

That Rob You of Your  
Time, Energy and Inner Peace  
*(and How To Dissolve Them)*



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**7 Habits That Rob You of Time, Energy and Inner Peace**  
**(And How to Dissolve Them!)**

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## Introduction

Do you ever feel like there just aren't enough hours in the day? Does it seem like you're always busy, yet not accomplishing as much as you'd like? Do you feel like your life is spiraling out of control? You are not alone. I've coached hundreds of clients on how to regain control of their lives, and I believe I can help you too.

If you've tried to organize your life and be more productive, but find there's something getting in the way, you're right. And it's not what you may think.

Many people think that obstacles getting in the way of creating their ideal life are *external*. And some may be, but that is beyond your control. The good news is that most of these obstacles are *internal*, which means you do have control.

You can remove these obstacles and make your life more manageable and meaningful. How? By simply learning which habits may be creating these obstacles. Read on to discover the 7 habits and how to dissolve them so you can create the life you want.

## The 7 Habits

### I. Multitasking

You have so much to do and your time is limited. In the scramble to get everything done, you may have fallen into the habit of multitasking.

When working on important tasks, multitasking is usually not a good idea. Although useful in a few situations, multitasking can cause you to lose your focus and make costly and time-consuming mistakes.

Don't fall for the myth of multitasking. Some things require your undivided attention.

***“To do two things at once is to do neither”.* — Publilius Syrus**

Doing several things at once has been scientifically proven to impair memory, increase stress, and make us less productive.

In fact, a study published in the Journal of Neuroscience showed that it takes the brain four times longer to process things when it's switching back and forth between tasks.

Multitasking distracts us from being in the present moment, which can drain our energy and leave us feeling exhausted and unfulfilled.

**Although highly addictive, multitasking is simply a habit, and it can be dissolved. Here's how:**

Next time you are participating in an activity, be with that activity (rather than thinking about all the things you should be doing instead, or have to do later). Resist the habit of trying to do two things at once.

For example, when you are working on an important project, give yourself the gift of focus; avoid checking your email, Facebook or Twitter for a pre-determined amount of time. I know it's a challenge, but you can do it if you set your mind to it. The temptation will be there, but let it pass (and, if necessary, you can download applications to shut out those programs temporarily).

You'll feel much better about how you spend your time and what you accomplish.

## 2. Overscheduling

'Busy-ness' is a behavior that has been conditioned, accepted, and even encouraged in our society. Yet it can make us feel restless, drained and overwhelmed. We routinely schedule as much as possible in our day, because being busy makes us feel more productive and – let's be honest – more important. However, this can eventually take its toll on our health and well-being.

When we try to cram too much into our day, we go through life feeling rushed all the time. It feels like we're always trying to catch our breath. This increases our stress level. When we can't get to everything, we feel like we've failed, which can affect our self-worth. Rushing can take the enjoyment out of whatever it is we are doing in the moment.

***"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." — Lao Tzu***

It's common to feel that we're wasting time if we aren't filling every spare moment doing something productive. And yet, the busier you feel, the more important it is to slow down, because the hurried lifestyle is unsustainable.

But you can take control because, ultimately, you are in charge of how you spend your time.

**Here's how to dissolve the habit of overscheduling yourself:**

Do less. You want to have it all, and do it all, and you can... just not all at once.

Distribute your 'special interest' activities throughout the year so you don't spread yourself thin. For example, if you want to volunteer on three

committees, take dance lessons and learn to speak Spanish, consider volunteering on one committee per year, taking dance lessons in the fall and winter months, and signing up for your Spanish lessons over the summer. This will allow you to completely immerse yourself in what you are doing and truly enjoy the activity, rather than rushing to the next thing on the schedule.

Build in a breather. When scheduling appointments, leave some down-time in between to allow for delays and give you time to transition from one appointment to the next.

When moving from one task to the next at your desk, get up and get a snack or something to drink – or just stretch. The quick break will allow you to tackle the next task with more focus, which will increase your effectiveness.

Be realistic about how long things actually take and spread your tasks across your schedule accordingly. Rather than scheduling ten tasks in a day and feeling guilty if you don't accomplish them, plan five tasks instead. You will feel gratified rather than frustrated.

You may be surprised to find that once you stop overscheduling yourself, you are more productive than you were when you were rushing around trying to squeeze in too much.

### 3. Indecision

Do you agonize over even the simplest decisions? Unmade decisions can keep us up at night and rob us of inner peace.

Putting off decisions is a habit that many people have developed as a way of keeping their options open. Or to avoid choosing the wrong option.



But when decisions are put off for too long, the negative consequences can be just as damaging (if not more) than choosing the wrong option. Not deciding is a decision in itself, and could result in missed opportunities, disappointment and regret.

Sometimes, in an effort to make the right choice, we spend a huge chunk of time researching online, polling our friends and overthinking. This often leads to ‘analysis paralysis’, which keeps us stuck.

### **Here’s how to dissolve the habit of indecision:**

Give yourself a timeframe and stick to it. Decide how much time you will devote to gathering information, and once you’ve invested that time, stop and make your decision based on what you’ve learned.

Don’t let others make decisions for you. For example, if your friends ask which movie you want to see, avoid saying “I don’t care, whatever you want”. Although you may be trying to please them by letting them choose, they’re probably tired of taking responsibility for every decision in your relationship.

Stop playing it safe and start playing a new game. Risk making a mistake. Making mistakes is not the same as failing. In fact, some of the most successful people in the world admit to making many mistakes on their way to the top. It’s one of the most powerful ways to learn.

You may find that making decisions become more comfortable with practice; the more you do it, the more confident in your decisions you will become. And you’ll sleep more soundly.

## **4. Overextending**

Do you take on too much? Do you automatically say 'yes' to just about every request, even though you'd really rather say 'no'? Oprah affectionately calls this 'the disease to please' and it really can lead to disease.

For many people, especially those who are naturally nurturing, saying 'no' can feel uncomfortable. Funny, we didn't have a problem saying this simple two letter word when we were toddlers. I think it was one of the first words my children learned right after 'mama' and 'dada'. When they were teenagers, it became a large part of their vocabulary! So why, as adults, do we have trouble saying no?

When I considered the times I couldn't say 'no' and asked myself why, part of it was because I wanted to be agreeable and get along with my team. Another part of it was fear. I was afraid of disappointing others and worried that people would not like me. But afterwards, I felt resentful and angry because in trying to please others, I had let myself down.

I decided that I no longer wanted to base my decisions on fear. I gave myself permission to say 'no'. And you can too. It felt awkward at first, but each time I was true to myself, I felt more empowered.

When we say 'yes' when we really mean 'no', we lose a little bit of self-respect; it's very draining. On the other hand, honoring ourselves by saying what we mean allows us to keep our personal power.

The more we do for others, the more people will demand of us. On the other hand, people who really like us will still like us when we say 'no'. They'll understand. No one's world will collapse.

**You can dissolve the habit of overextending yourself and here's how:**

Let yourself off the hook. Accept that you are not obligated to say 'yes' to every request. Give yourself permission to say 'no' when you feel you can't do a job properly because of lack of time or resources, if it's a low priority for you, if you are not feeling well, if you are overextended or exhausted, or if you are going to resent it later.

Create a script and practice ways to say 'no' gracefully, until it feels as natural as saying 'yes'.

Remember that when we reluctantly say 'yes' to something, we are really saying 'no' to ourselves. On the other hand, every time we honor ourselves, we take back some of our power.

## 5. Neglecting Self-Care

We are a nation of doers. And yet, no matter how much we accomplish, we feel we are just not doing enough. If you can relate, you are not alone. When clients call me for time management coaching, they seem startled when I tell them I can't help them do more, because I don't think that's the answer.

What I will do is show them how to do more of what brings them joy and less of what drains them. It's about being kind to ourselves daily – giving ourselves the love and respect that we so freely give to others – regardless of whether we crossed everything off our 'to-do' list that day. We all deserve it.

Imagine yourself as a car full of gas. Your boss asks you to work late, and even though you had other plans, you give some of your time, and your fuel gauge goes down a notch. You get home exhausted and your child asks you for yet another drive to the movies, so you give him a ride and your fuel gauge goes down some more. Your significant other wants you to

invite the in-laws over for dinner tomorrow, so you reluctantly give them a call and then cook a gourmet meal. Your tank is now empty. You've given and given until you have nothing left. You're drained and, as we know, a car cannot run when it's on empty.

Like the light that comes on in our cars when the gas is low, our body gives warning signs when we're running on empty. We might experience irritability, sleep problems, poor concentration, headaches or constant fatigue. It can lead to chronic overload and stress-related illnesses like anxiety, depression, lower back pain, stomach problems, reduced immune function, etc. If we don't refuel, our immune system suffers and we increase our chance of developing serious illness. In this unhealthy state, every aspect of our life is affected. Our productivity and effectiveness drops. Our organizational systems break down. Our relationships suffer. Just like a car without gas, we won't get very far in our lives when our energy is leaking.

The best way to prevent our tank from running dry is to become a little selfish. It's okay, really. I use to think that 'selfish' was a negative word, but it has a positive side too. When we are on a plane with our children and the flight attendants demonstrate what to do in an emergency, they direct us to put the oxygen mask on ourselves first, then our children. In order to meet the demands put upon us as parents, spouses, employees and entrepreneurs, we have to put ourselves first. Only then can we be fully available to others without feelings of resentment or anger.

If we consistently try to make others happy at the expense of our own health and happiness, everyone loses in the end. Taking care of ourselves is the best thing we can do for others.

**You can eliminate the habit of neglecting self-care and here's how:**

What's the one thing that you are not doing enough of that you would like to do more often? Whatever this activity is, schedule time for it once a week for the next three weeks, just as an experiment. And honor that appointment as you would any other (client, doctor, and dentist).

Then, at the beginning of each month, before your calendar fills up, schedule time for a self-care activity of your choice each week.

***“Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans” — John Lennon***

Make time for yourself and your life because if you don't, who will? It's easy to get lost in all the chores that have to be done each day. We all have busy lives and there's never enough time in a day. But a day turns into a week, a month, a year, and before you know it, a whole lifetime. Let's not let the years pass without doing what matters most to us.

## 6. Perfectionism

Are you a perfectionist? You're not alone. I've been there myself.

Did you know that a 'to do' list is the signature of a perfectionist? (A 'to do' list is great for getting things out of your head so you can relax, and I often recommend it, provided the list is realistic and manageable rather than overwhelming).

Overusing the word 'should' is also a sign of a perfectionist: “I should be cleaning the floor instead of reading this romance novel.”

***“Perfectionism is the highest form of self-abuse” — Tao Te Ching***

Perfectionism can be crippling. It can cause loneliness, anxiety, depression, low self-worth, unhealthy body image, guilt, pessimism, controlling

behavior, OCD, rigidity, procrastination, burn-out and isolation. It can strain relationships and cause illness.

Unlike other addictions like alcohol, drugs and eating disorders, perfectionism is actually accepted and even encouraged in our society.

Some will argue that there are benefits to being a perfectionist, but the high costs outweigh the advantages. There is a fine line between the desire to excel versus striving to accomplish goals that are beyond reach and reason.

Perfectionism diminishes our ability to be productive because a task expands to fill the time we have allowed for it.

**You can free yourself from the inner critic that tries to tell you your best is not good enough. Here's how:**

If you find perfectionistic tendencies coming out during certain tasks or projects, put a time limit on them. Resist spending an inappropriate amount of time attempting to achieve perfection.

Ask what the return is on your time investment. If the return is limited, then limit your time; the payoff should match the time invested in it.

Set priorities and boundaries carefully, so you're spending the most time on the things that provide the highest returns.

As a recovering perfectionist, trust me when I tell you that when you let go of perfectionism, you will experience incredible freedom and inner peace.

## 7. Procrastination

***“Whenever there’s something I’m supposed to do, I’ll do anything other than the one thing that I’m supposed to do, and then I feel bad about myself, and then I get depressed, and then I really don’t get anything done ‘cause I’m depressed....” — Ellen DeGeneres***

Procrastination is a common habit that can rob us of inner peace and prevent us from reaching our goals and potential.

Can you think of something you really want to do but keep putting off? What's it costing you to delay it? Putting things off actually takes up more energy than just getting them over with.

We often procrastinate when we feel overwhelmed. We don't know where to start or feel we don't have enough time to do the task.

Sometimes we put things off because, deep down, we really don't want to do them. Perhaps we dread the work or feel we are lacking the skill or talent to do the task properly.

### **Here are some ways to dissolve the procrastination habit:**

Get it done first. Getting started is the hardest part, so plan to get it over with at the beginning of the day. Then you can relax and enjoy the rest of the day without the nagging guilt of the unfinished task hanging over you.

Do it in small chunks of time. Make a list of all the steps involved in the project, and plan to do just one step at a time, consistently. This will prevent you from feeling overwhelmed and will move the project forward, leading to confidence and gratification.

Decide not to do it. Delegate it instead. If that's not possible, get the help and support from someone who likes to do it and does it well.

### **Want to learn more about procrastination?**

Procrastination has blocked a lot of my clients from making progress, so I've decided to offer in-depth solutions that go beyond the scope of this

guide. So if you're one of the many people struggling with procrastination, and are tired of feeling drained and stressed as a result, check this out now: This one-hour teleclass will show you how to conquer procrastination once and for all. [Getting Things Done: Overcoming Procrastination to Create the Life You Want](#)

So now you know the 7 habits that rob you of your time, energy and inner peace (and how to dissolve them). I have included a quick-reference chart at the end of this guide. You may want to print it and hang it where you'll see it, as a reminder.

I hope you found this information valuable and that you'll want to keep in touch. There are several ways to stay connected and get more helpful tips:

Read my [blog](#)

Follow and connect with me on [Twitter](#)

Like me on [Facebook](#)

[Get your FREE introductory coaching session with me:](#)

Since you've read this far, you're probably serious about dissolving the habits that may be blocking you from the life you want. So I would like to offer you the opportunity to receive more individualized support. [Contact me today for your free Reclaim Your Life consultation.](#)

I wish you all the best on the road to creating your ideal life.

Warmest regards,

Hellen Buttigieg

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Founder of [We Organize U](#)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hellen Buttigieg's mission: **Make Time & Space for What Matters Most**

Life Coach. Certified Professional Organizer. TV Host. Author. Speaker. Whatever challenge Hellen takes on, she's ultimately helping her clients and audience **Make Time & Space for What Matters Most**. Time for family, friends and fun. Space for balance, harmony and happiness.

Internationally recognized as a pioneer in the field of professional organization, Hellen is also a dedicated Life Coach and Founder of We Organize U.

Hellen has been nominated for a Gemini for her work as a television host on HGTV's 'neat'. Her award-winning book, [Organizing Outside the Box: Conquer Clutter Using Your Natural Learning Style](#) has won endorsements from other recognized experts in the field.

For over 10 years, she has been helping busy families, professionals, and small business owners clear their clutter and manage their time. Her passion is to help her clients create a more relaxed home, a more productive workspace, and a more manageable, meaningful life.

Hellen's Philosophy: "When you have the time, space, and energy for what matters, your life is less overwhelming and more fulfilling."

Hellen is an accomplished, dynamic speaker. Known for her enthusiasm and user-friendly ideas, she is available for keynotes, workshops, and seminars. Hellen's presentations are fast-paced, entertaining and practical.

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## **7 Habits That Rob You of Time, Energy and Inner Peace (And How to Dissolve Them!)**

### **Habit #1 – Multitasking**

**Dissolve it by: being present and resisting doing two things at once**

### **Habit #2 – Overscheduling**

**Dissolve it by: doing less and building transition time in-between appointments**

### **Habit #3 – Indecision**

**Dissolve it by: putting a deadline on the decision and risk making the wrong one**

### **Habit #4 – Overextending**

**Dissolve it by: giving yourself permission and practicing saying ‘no’**

### **Habit #5 – Neglecting Self-Care**

**Dissolve it by: scheduling ‘me’ time before your calendar fills up**

### **Habit #6 – Perfectionism**

**Dissolve it by: putting a time limit on tasks based on the return they provide**

### **Habit #7 – Procrastination**

**Dissolve it by: taking one step at a time, getting it done first, or delegating it**