

How to Work for Long Stretches of Time

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I don't always recommend this, but there's cases when it needs to be done, especially when your back's against the wall. You got to put down money now or you got a lot of people counting on you to come through at a certain time, and if you let them down, it's going to ruin your reputation.

Before You Begin

The other thing is working for long stretches of time shows you what you are actually capable of. What people are capable of and what they think they're capable of are often two very, very different things. If I had never been a wrestler, I would never know the extent at which you could push yourself to get things done. I probably never even came as close as I could have been. We do stuff in wrestling -- like we would not drink water for 24 hours to make weight. We would not eat for two days, not drink water, and still work out three hours a day. People will tell you that's not possible until you've done it. We used to run stairs in wrestling until we threw up because we physically ran that hard.

The point is once you know what your limitations are physically, then you know how far you can push yourself before you shut down. So you know when it comes time to suck it up and do that, you know you'll have the balls to do that. Or if you're a female, you'll know you have the ovaries to do that. The point is you know you can do it.

My mentor once said to me "Nobody starts off a mile sprinting it. Everybody always waits till the end to put everything on the line. But how will you ever know if you put everything on the line unless you go out there one time and try to sprint a mile? Until you shut down." True. You're not going to get your best time sprinting it, but you'll know how hard you can push yourself before you shut down.

And the same is true with internet marketing. You know how hard you can push yourself to shut down; so you know once in a while when things need to get done right away -- like you need money ASAP or something comes up and you need to put this together because a good opportunity's there -- you'll know that you can do it because you've pushed yourself and done it before.

So that's probably the biggest reason to work for long stretches of time.

So let's talk about first -- let me give you some personal examples here, and then I'm going to give you some takeaways that you can do this and apply this to your own business and the situations that need to be set up for you to work those long stretches of time.

The longest stretch I have worked period was a couple years back I was super broke. I moved out of the house, and I was almost ready to move back in. I had no money. I was trying to make my music work, and I had just gotten a job as a graphic designer from Elance. It's like "Oh, I can do this." I don't know what the hell I was thinking because I wasn't that good of a graphic designer. But the pay was pretty good, and the caveat was -- the reason why the pay was pretty good, at least at that time -- the job had to be done within 36 hours.

So a really good graphic designer could have probably done it in half the time that I did, but I wasn't that good of a graphic designer. It was still a good gig for me, though, but I had to get this job done in 36 hours. There was a deadline there. I worked 20 hours straight. I literally sat down at my computer and just went for 20 straight hours. And then I took a four-hour nap. I actually tried to go to bed and sleep longer than four hours, but I couldn't because I wanted to get this product done. After four hours I woke up and then I worked six straight more hours, and then I turned it in and then I went and crashed for about 12 hours straight. In a 30-hour period of time, I worked 26 hours, only stopping to sleep and getting up and going to the bathroom and maybe stretching my legs once every hour or something like that.

Enter Coffee

The secret? A, I drank lots of coffee, which is not a good long-term strategy, but it worked in the short term. The second secret was I don't think I could have done 26 hours straight if I was doing high-level tasks. A low-level task like graphic design is not a whole lot of ingenuity. You get the idea right away, and then you do all of these mechanical tweaks.

That's why there's a lot of graphic designers out there but very few successful marketers because marketing is a high-level task. You've got to connect the dots together in new and unique ways. You've got to deliver value to the marketplace in ways other people aren't doing it. You've got to connect your communication with your marketplace. Those are very high-level tasks.

Simple tasks -- like an article is a very low-level task because there's not a lot of idea generation going on or big-level thinking. Same thing with graphic design. I wouldn't have been able to do this if it was a high-level task. Let's put it that way. So one of the reasons I could work this long was because it was a low-level task.

The second thing -- and this is the underlying thing in everything you do that's very productive -- I had an extremely intense deadline that I absolutely had to meet. In this case I wasn't going to get paid if I didn't do it in 36 hours. That's

pretty freaking good motivation. If you can figure out ways to trigger motivation within yourself, though, by setting these deadlines, this is a good way to get stuff done.

And finally, I had a good incentive. Not only would I get paid if I get it done on time, but at that time it was very good money, which is sad looking back on it. It was like 800 bucks; so it came out to about 30 bucks an hour or so. I don't know the math, but at that time getting 800 bucks for basically a day and a half worth of work -- I had never done that before. It was like "Oh my God. This is cool."

Making It Cool

Now let's look at IM. What was the longest project I worked in IM? And actually, I don't know if this was the longest, but this is what came to mind when I was coming up with the mind map. I'm sure there's been several times where I've done this, but the first time I did this was very instructive to me. I made my mind up one day. I woke up and I said, "Dagnabbit. I am going to create a product from scratch today, from an idea to an actual product."

At that time I was only writing; so I couldn't do it as quickly as I could now. So I wrote for six straight hours. I only stopped to recharge my battery, to take breaks in between. Actually, it was more about seven or eight hours total time, where I just did nothing but either write or take a 15-minute break and then come back and write.

So I wrote for six straight hours. Now that I think about it, I've done that probably several, several times. In fact, I think the longest I've ever wrote is eight hours -- like I said when I was creating this mind map -- I remember that one because it was very significant because it was the first time that I had ever done anything like that. Before if you had told me that it was possible, I would have never thought you could do that. And I got it done.

In that case it was a self-imposed deadline, but I was so determined to not let myself down; to succeed so I could feel good about myself that I did it -- wrote the e-book, wrote the sales letter the next day. I discovered that formula, which I use to perfection this day: create a product in one day, create the sales letter the next day, launch it the day after that. And I got it done.

The longest IM project I worked with another person -- this is very instructive because it comes here in Daily Seminar. One day me and Robert -- we were knocking down the door. We almost had all the interviews done for 2009, and Robert's like "Let's close them out." I'm like "Okay." He goes "6 a.m., Saturday." It was 6 a.m. on a Saturday. He goes, "Let's finish the rest of these interviews." I go "If you're serious, let's do this." He's like, "Yeah." I think we were just kind of joking at first, but it sounded like a good idea. Well hell, let's see if we can do it; so we did.

He woke up at 6; I woke up at 8 my time, but I had a ton of stuff to do; so I actually woke up at 5:30 that day. On a Saturday morning I went in at 6 into the office. I worked for two hours -- about an hour and a half actually to get ready -- a half hour for showering, brush my teeth, and eating something in the morning. Robert got on at 6, and we did ten interviews in a row, or something like that, or nine interviews in a row. Then I had to get off the call and do a consultation call with somebody, so Robert got a break. After my consultation call was done, we hopped back on the phone and did the rest of the interviews.

What made it work? We had that deadline: "We're going to get this all done today." And really we're like "We're going to push ourselves as hard as we can to see if we can do this." And we did. And we set that goal. We knew what we were aiming for.

Making It Work

The other thing that I think worked really good is we had a fresh day. We started first thing in the morning; so we were fresh. When I did this project up here and when I do a lot of my big write-it-all-in-one-sitting products, usually I get up early in the day and I seize the day. I get going right away so that way I'm fresh. If you start doing these long stretches of time when you're not fresh, it's going to be much, much harder.

Realistically, I remember starting at 6 in the morning that day and not getting done till about 1:30 in the afternoon. So it was like seven and a half hours straight where we only took one little break in between -- me and Robert did. And Robert had that second break when I did that consult with that guy. And that was really good.

What I've discovered about working. There's some good stuff and there's some bad stuff that you should be aware of.

The first thing is you should -- every so often -- you should work in long stretches otherwise you'll never know how hard you can really go if you have to. Two years ago if someone said to me "You're going to wake up one day and you're going to do 12 separate interviews on 12 separate subjects, and you're also going to do a consultation call and you're also going to do an hour and a half of work before that. And you're also going to do it on a Saturday, Jason," I don't think I would have believed them. But now if I had to do something like that again, I know not only could I, but it would be easier because I have done it before; so I know some better ways to cope with it now than I did back then when we first did that. And I could probably do more. Because to be honest with you, I think I could have summoned it up -- now that I look at it -- and knocked out a couple more.

So many people -- and I just got to be redundant here. It's better to be redundant than remiss on the subject because so many people -- they never even come close to pushing themselves as far as they can go. I remember when I was a monk --

okay, this is a great example. We had these things called Ekadasis that happened every two weeks. Basically when the moon was in its 11th day from changing its phase, some weird esoteric stuff like that, they'd have what's called an Ekadasi fast. And generally people that followed this would at least refrain -- they would fast from eating grains, and there was certain other things that you avoided, too. So you wouldn't eat any grains that day. In our religion, in our spirituality, we were already not meat-eaters; so when you take away grains, when you take away meats, all's that's left is fruits. And then there were some vegetables you could eat, and other vegetables had some restrictions on them. So you were really limited on what you could eat. That was the general public. At that time I was known -- I was what was called a brahmachari, where we lived a very -- what you would want to call -- austere.

Focusing The Mind

So the prescription for brahmachari was to do a fast without eating anything. So you wouldn't eat anything that day, and you would try to focus your mind the whole time on the spirit, on God. If you were really devout, if you wanted to be a really good brahmachari, then what you would do is what was called a nergal fast. And that means refraining from eating or drinking, and I would do those. I would do 24-hour or even 28-hour nergal fasts, where I wouldn't drink anything; I wouldn't eat anything. All's I would do that day were spiritual and devotional activities the whole day from noon till night. I would just try to focus my mind on the supreme personality of God.

A lot of people, including Brahmans and even the highest level of Brahmans -- which the name escapes me right now, what they called that class -- but these are renunciants -- can't even do nergal fasts. And here I was this lowly peon trying to be a monk, and I could do nergal fasts. How could I do it? It was very simple because I had done it before in wrestling; so this was like "Oh, this is nothing new. It's hard, yes, but I've done this before so I know that I can do this." It actually was very good for me. I'm glad I could do those fasts because I'll tell you what -- nothing brings you closer to God than just completely stripping away all the bodily stuff that goes out there. This isn't a pitch for anything. This is just an instructive example.

So I paid the price so I could enjoy the promise. So I got to enjoy some very deep spiritual revelations and some very deep spiritual connections based on those fastings. And I did that because I knew how far I could push myself. So I knew I could do it over and over and over and over and over and over and over again when the needs arose. So this is a point I just want to hammer home to you.

On the other end, you don't want to push yourself all the time. Cars run on gas, and eventually that gas runs out. You need to put more gas in before you can drive that car.

You run on energy, too, and sometimes you need a renewable source of energy that you have to stop from. So too much of this will result in foolish and costly errors and burnout. Let me give you an example of that.

One time because of a stupid oversight on my part from working too many hours, I accidentally set an affiliate program at 100 percent instead of at 50 percent. It just so happened I had a really good affiliate promoter at that time, and I lost about \$1,500. Whoops.

Removing Burnout

If I would have just took a break that day and not worked that whole day -- because I didn't make 1500 bucks that day -- if I would have done that one thing that one day, I would have made \$1,500. Another time I set up and launched a product, and I made the one-payment option more expensive than if they paid three separate payments. I think that cost me 500 bucks for that stupid error.

You're going to make errors anyway, but those errors are going to compound exponentially when you're working for long stretches too long, meaning every day in and every day out you're burning the candle at both ends. At the same time, you're going to come to a point where you don't like what you're doing anymore. And that's the worst position to be in because you spend your whole life working. You spend so much of your waking hours working that the last thing you want to be doing is working something you don't enjoy working.

So I push myself as hard as I can without getting burned out, without hitting the level of diminishing returns where I'm making too much errors. I typically err on the side of too much instead of too little because it's always easier to scale back than it is to step up to the next level. It's easier to walk down stairs than it is to walk up stairs. So err on the side of a little too much instead of a little too little, but don't overdo it because you can burn out and you can make stupid and costly errors.

No matter what you do, you should always set a deadline. And really, more importantly, you should set a goal. And they call a goal a dream with a deadline attached to it. It's very good; that's a very good point.

So what you want to do here is you say, "I want to do X by a certain amount of time." So I want to make \$30,000 within the next month -- was a goal that we had; so we pushed ourselves, me and Robert did, to hit that goal. And now I'm setting goals every single month on a certain monetary value, deadline, something to shoot for. If you're creating a product, put a deadline on it. "I will be done with this product by _____." That's really going to make you productive and get you through and work and step it up to that next level that you otherwise probably wouldn't.

The State of Flow

The other secret here is learn how to get into a state of flow. This is something you can practice, and after a while, you'll just be able to slip into as quickly as possible. Usually it takes me about 15 minutes when I'm warming up in the morning to slip into a state of flow. Then after that it takes me about 5 minutes.

What's the state of flow? That's kind of when you lose track of the world around you, when you go into a trance where it's just you and the task at hand. I bet you when Leonardo da Vinci was working as an artist, he became one with his paintings or sculptures. When Mozart or Bach was composing, I'm sure they became one with the music that they were writing and they lost track of all reality around them.

That's your state of flow. When you can eliminate all these distractions and it's just you and the task at hand, then you kind of lose track of time.

The other thing that goes hand in hand with that is learn how to work in environments that stimulate productivity.

So there was this guy I knew, and we would always make fun of him later because he was about the most unproductive person in the world. In fact, in six months not only has he not posted on the blog, but he's actually taken away content. So he's got negative productivity in six months. Well, he lives with his grandma, which is already tough for productivity, but his office is in a place where the washer and dryer also are. Tell me that's not going to be harder to work in. It is.

I know that there's some real-world constraints, and for him there was. He just didn't have any other option. In my mind, you make a goal then to get out of there as quickly as possible and take it to the next level. That's what I did when I used to live with my dad in a two-room apartment. I stepped up and got out of there as soon as I could because it was not very conducive to my productivity. So I did the best that I had with what I had with the goal of getting into an environment where I will have one that stimulates productivity.

Creating Your Flow

So what I do, for me personally, a clean environment where I can automatically grab anything I need at a fingertip is good for my productivity. Complete silence is good for my productivity, and my environment has that. No distractions is good for my environment, meaning that I'm kind of cocooned in. I turn off my phone when I'm working for long stretches of time. I get off Skype when it's time to knock stuff out. So my environment is just me and the task at hand so I can get in the state of flow.

The other thing is here -- and this is the little stuff that can get you that extra little bit of mile, that extra oomph -- is to learn some tricks with your mind. For

example, learn how to make time more relative. There's two ways you can do this.

The first is you can think of a time, when time just seemed to flow freely -- like you were with somebody very special, and you didn't want the time to end, and it just seemed to go by so fast. So you were at this great party, and before you knew it, it was time to leave and everybody had to go. And you were like, "Oh man. It just seemed like we got here."

You want to think of that time. Picture it in your mind, and notice how you represent it in your mind -- the colors that you use for that picture, the size of that picture, the location, if it's a movie or a still image, the sounds that accompany it, the feelings in your body that accompany it when you think of that visual image. Then take the task at hand and do the same thing.

The second way -- what you do is you picture the task at hand, and you picture everything else around you running at a thousand miles an hour in your peripheral vision. Then you see yourself -- if you're typing or whatever your task is -- doing that task extremely slow in slow motion. So everything around you seems to go fast, and you seem to go extremely slow. That's your comparison for when you actually sit down. And then when you start typing, in your mind you had pictured it to be the slowest, arduous task in the world; and it's faster. All of a sudden, it makes it seem very fast because it's relative to what you had in your mind. That's another trick.

And then a state of absolute confidence. Think of a time when you were extremely confident. How do you represent that in your mind? Visually, auditorially and kinaesthetically in your body? The feelings. Now take the task at hand that you have to do now and modify what you see in your mind thinking about that task so it best and closely looks in quality like how you represent a state of absolute confidence in your mind.

I'm absolutely confident that the sun's going to rise tomorrow. Where's that location of that picture in my mind? What colors do I see in that picture? Do I hear any sounds? What are the feelings in my body? Then I change that picture of the sun rising to whatever my task is -- with the same colors, the same locations, the same types of sounds that accompany it, and the same types of feelings in my body. And that makes me very confident that I'm going to be able to work in this long stretch.

Bringing It Home

Okay, let's bring it home. This is usually the best approach.

Long stretches are good every so often. I do about one a week, maybe two a week now, and I should cut back. In reality what you want to do is work in intense, short spurts of one to three hours. You hit that state of flow, and you keep it until

you start to slip. Then once you start to slip, you take a little break. But make it a break. Don't check your e-mail; don't do forum posting; don't get on Skype; don't do all this crap. That stuff isn't a break. That's still using mental resources. That's still using a lot of your energy. Instead, nap or just lay down and close your eyes. Pleasant visualization is very good. Visualize yourself being more powerful; visualize yourself stronger; visualize all these wonderful thoughts. Listen to some meditative music to calm down, or just simply eat some fruit and vegetables and stare out your window. That's a real break, and then get back to your task until it's done for the day.

And then get your task done at the beginning of the day so you have the rest of the day to do whatever you want. Then save these long stretches for that one time every two weeks or so or every week or every month when you got to really pour it on. Do that; profit from it. I'll check you out on the blog. Thank you for watching.

An advertisement for PLR Content Source. The top half shows a close-up of a hand typing on a white keyboard. In the upper right corner of this image, the text "PLR CONTENT SOURCE" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the keyboard image, there is a white rectangular box containing the text "Your Source For High Quality Private Label Rights Content That You Can Actually Afford and Profit From" in a blue, sans-serif font. At the bottom of this box, the website address "www.PLRContentSource.com" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

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