

PRACTICAL PRODUCTIVITY

simple habits for busy humans



WRITTEN BY

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

"If you aren't wearing a watch by Friday, you're fired."

That's how my productivity journey began. I was 22 years old, working alongside some of the most incredible people on the planet, and thought I had it all figured out. Sure, I had one small flaw (well, at the time I thought it was small... and the only one). The problem? I was consistently late for our weekly team meetings. Not dramatically late, just a few minutes here and there. No big deal, right?

Wrong.

Around the third or fourth time I strolled in late, my boss pulled me aside after the meeting. He made that statement like it was the most normal thing in the world. As if he was telling me what was on the menu for lunch. *"Hey Wayne, if you aren't wearing a watch by Friday, you're fired."* It took me a minute to process what he was saying, but eventually my brain caught up and I mumbled a quick, *"Umm... OK,"* and made my escape. By Friday, I was wearing a watch. And I have rarely been late since!

More importantly, that moment sparked something in me. It was the start of a journey of discovery about learning how to be more efficient. How to manage time, projects, tasks, and resources. How to stay focused and get things done. As those skills grew, unbeknownst to me at the time, something interesting happened. My *capacity* to take on responsibility and leadership grew too. Turns out, productivity isn't just about getting our act together. It's about becoming the kind of person others can count on and it's about accomplishing more without losing sleep at night. Oh, and in case you're wondering, yes, I still wear a watch!

Fast forward through years of refining these skills, teaching workshops, and working with hundreds of teams. I've watched brilliant, hardworking people get stuck on the never-ending hamster wheel. New managers drowning in team requests. Freelancers missing family

time because of client deadlines. Experienced professionals watching their inboxes explode while feeling like they're accomplishing nothing. Different stories, same exhausting pattern.

I've also seen many of those same people discover real freedom by implementing simple, tried and true, productivity habits. Take Jon, for instance, who learned about calendar management in one of my workshops. Months later, he reached out to tell me what he learned had massively changed his life. He wasn't working less hours, but he had more breathing room. Time for his family. Mental space to stop and think instead of just react. That's the kind of transformation that's possible when we stop winging it and start working with intention.

OK. I know 'productivity' can seem like a pie-in-the-sky concept. Maybe you picture some guru on the top of a mountain with a color-coded calendar calmly checking off tasks with his eyes closed. Yeah, that's not a thing. But becoming more efficient, productive, relaxed and focused is a thing. It is possible! I've learned the difference between drowning in chaos and cruising through my day isn't about being perfect. It's about having the right tools and knowing how to use them. Most of us are just winging it with whatever system we've cobbled together over the years. But when you find strategies that actually work with how your brain operates, things *will* start to click. Maybe not overnight, but bit by bit, day by day.

Productivity doesn't have to be overwhelming, and despite what you might think, it doesn't require a master's degree. It really *is* attainable! What we really want is to cruise through our days feeling like we've got this thing figured out. We want to focus on what matters without that nagging voice in our heads going, "*Wait, did I forget something important?*" We want to be present for the good stuff in life instead of mentally planning our next five moves during dinner conversations.

This book is packed with simple, no-nonsense strategies to help you take control of your time, tasks, inboxes, and energy. You'll figure out how to work smarter (instead of like a maniac) and focus on work that actually moves the needle. By the time we're done, you'll have the

tools you need to tackle both work and life responsibilities without feeling like you're drowning.

Where We're Headed

Here's what we'll cover together in this book. These six areas are where I see people struggle most, and where small changes can create the biggest wins:

1. **Taking Control of Your Time:** Learn how to prioritize what matters through time-blocking, clarifying priorities, and structuring your day for maximum productivity without burnout.
2. **Turning Tasks into Results:** Create actionable tasks, organize them effectively, and manage your daily to-do lists. We'll explore prioritizing tasks that move the needle and turning them into a streamlined, productive routine.
3. **Planning & Executing Projects with Confidence:** Understand what a project is and learn best practices for planning, building, and managing them. Whether working solo or leading a team, we'll cover strategies to keep projects on track.
4. **Mastering Your Communications:** Keep your inboxes and notifications from hijacking your day. You'll discover strategies for managing emails efficiently, setting boundaries, and preventing communication channels from derailing your focus.
5. **Staying Focused in a Distracted World:** Handle both external distractions (notifications, interruptions) and internal ones (procrastination, mental clutter). You'll gain tools to stay focused and protect your time in today's distraction-filled world.
6. **Building Energy That Lasts:** Productivity isn't just about getting things done; it's about removing things that sap your energy and finding reliable ways to gain energy. We'll identify common energy drainers, and offer tips for sustaining energy throughout the day.

This book isn't about theories, methodologies or a cool new productivity framework. It's about creating *habits*, one by one, that will actually work for you in real life... right now. The strategies you'll read about are straightforward and regularly used by people who get a lot done (including me). At the end of each chapter, you'll find 'next steps' designed to help you get started. My goal here is to make productivity feel doable and lasting, instead of just another "I hope it works" idea that sounds good but never sticks.

Tips for Getting the Most Out of This Book

With that in mind, I should stop talking.. I mean... umm... writing and get to the practical stuff. No, actually, I still need to write. You... you get the idea. Here are a few helpful things *you can do* to get the most out of this book:

Take Notes and Highlight: Mark, underline or highlight concepts that resonate with you. This makes it easier to revisit later and reinforces the ideas and strategies that matter.

Act Quickly on What Clicks: When something stands out, don't wait to put it into practice. You don't need to finish the book first. Just stop reading and add it to your calendar or task list right away.

Start Small, Focus Big: Rather than implementing everything at once, choose two or three habits to focus on. This keeps things manageable and increases the chances of your new habits sticking.

Share and Discuss: Talking about these ideas with friends, family, or coworkers isn't just nice; it helps cement them in your brain. When you explain an idea to someone else, you're more likely to remember it and use it. Plus, sharing keeps you accountable and might spark some great conversations!

Read in Order or Jump Around: The chapters *do build on each other*, and I reference habits across different chapters. But if you're dealing with a specific challenge (i.e. Like drowning in email or can't focus), jump straight to that chapter. You can always circle back to fill in the

other pieces later. That said, if you could ONLY read just one chapter, I'm going to suggest starting with Chapter 2!

Come Back to This Book: Full disclosure; you won't be able to implement everything on your first read (unless you're already doing it all). That's totally normal. Set a reminder for three weeks or three months from now to revisit this book. You'll be amazed at what hits differently once you've established your first few habits. Different chapters will speak to you at different times.

Give Me Your Feedback! Help me make this book even better. If something really works for you (or really doesn't), I'd love to hear about it. Drop me a note through my website (waynedlund.com) or leave a review. Your thoughts will help me refine these ideas for future readers. Thanks in advance for taking the time to do so!

*Now, strap on your watch and take a deep breath.
The next few chapters might just change your world!*

Ready to keep reading?

Practical Productivity: Simple Habits for Busy Humans is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle edition.

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