Lesson Thirteen. Your Highest Payoff Activities

ACTION: Define Your Most Important Activities to Achievement of Your Goals

In this lesson, we will be focusing on identifying your highest payoff activities. HPA’s are actions that have the biggest impact on you reaching your goals in the timeframe you set. In other words, they are the actions that catapult you forward, faster than other actions.

Being aware of HPA’s can literally take days, months and even years off the time it takes to achieve goals. Identifying your highest payoff activities takes nothing more than simple action evaluation before choosing which activity to pursue. Before choosing which activities to add to your calendar, consider the end result of your options and choose the activity that brings about the best result. The result can be a short-term result and/or a long-term result.

We all have the same amount of hours in a week (168 hours) and given a finite amount of time, choose the activities that bring the biggest return first, and then prioritize the remaining activities based on their return.

Let’s apply the 80/20 rule to your HPA’s and your time. Let’s say that 80% of your time is spent in HPA's only. Of that 80%, you need to decide how much time is spent on things that produce short-term results and what percentage of your time is spent on activities that have a longer-term result.

The remaining 20% of your time might be spent on preparing for your HPA’s time, getting organized, cleaning up your office, delegating tasks, etc. These would be activities that currently you have to do and can’t delegate to anyone. Keep in mind, you want to try and do similar activities together so you don’t have to continually change your ‘thinking hat’ for different activities. This will significantly help you be even more efficient and effective.

Imagine how effective you will be if you only concentrate on the highest payoff activities every day?
List your highest payoff activities - non-delegatable

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 

Prioritize what you have on your list. If you can only get one thing done, what activity has the biggest impact on you achieving your goals in the timeframe you set? What are your highest payoff activities and that always need to be done first in order to put you in the best probable position to achieve your goals. Delegate what is delegatable or delay activities, if and when possible.

When you view each activity, you should be asking yourself if you really need to do it or can you really delegate it. If you don’t have someone to delegate to, find a temp or part-time person. If you aren’t in a position to hire someone, then come up with the most logical schedule to get at least the highest payoff items done. If you have to do all the work, do high-payoff activities first, then you pick the best ‘down time’ to do lower-payoff activities, if you can’t delay them. This means you will complete lower-payoff activities during ‘non-prime time.’

For example, prime time might be the best time to make certain types of phone calls for the best possible results. You may not know the best times to do certain activities until you go through a trial period and explore this more thoroughly. Always be thinking of when is the best time to get the best results and try to focus on doing those things during those times.

If client acquisition is still important to you so you can grow your
business even more, you want to know exactly how much time you want to devote to this each week. What percentage of your time do you want to spend in prospecting, acquiring new clients, and getting additional business from existing clients? This is a high payoff activity that must go on your calendar first each week? Everything else gets placed on your calendar after this is determined.

Sometimes activities that aren’t your highest payoff activities are easy to do so many of us work on them first, get them done quickly, and move on. I would call this procrastination to doing the ‘real’ work that will produce the biggest result in the time period you would like.

Doing the items that are easy and quick to do still take time and it is valuable time that you could spend on the things that have a bigger impact on you achieving your goals. Since we all have a finite amount of time, we need to use it most effectively.

**List the lower payoff activities - and delegate or delay them**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

**Focus on activities within your control.** I have worked with people who get frustrated with moving forward on certain projects, due to some aspects of the project being out of their control. If you
Currently rely on others to complete projects, do your best to make your timeline needs known. If you are waiting for tasks to be completed by someone else, attempt to refocus their efforts on completing the project.

While you cannot control other people, communication is key for establishing effective accountability measurements to help ensure things are completed on schedule.

If you need something done by a certain date, tell the person the deadline is at least 1-2 days before the actual deadline. This gives you a bit of cushion time, if you need it. If they get it done early, you can get the whole project done early so you aren’t pressed up against the deadline and possibly feeling pressure or anxiety. Wouldn’t that feel great to have things done on time or even early? If you have ever experienced this, you know how great it feels, so let’s create that feeling more often.

Decide how much time is required of each of your HPAs. Put them in priority order and calendar as much as possible.

Review your lower payoff activities and determine which ones you will delegate to whom, and then communicate this to them with a target date for completion.

Determine what you will delay or for how long you can delay each one. Determine which ones you will have to do and by when, and then calendar those in the 20% portion of your day.

**Visualize** the end result you want to have happen and manifest it in your life. Think about it, feel how it would feel to achieve each goal you have, and then experience it happening. Get excited, in advance, about you hitting your goals and achieving the results you want.

Visualize the actual result happening. Visualize what you want people to say when you talk with them. Visualize what they will do as a result of talking to you. Visualize exactly what you want to have happen every time you do something. You must know the exact desired result you want in order to visualize the outcome that will produce the results you want. The clearer you are on this,
the more you will manifest it in your life and make it a reality.

Put time on your calendar each day to visualize the results you want to have happen. It may only be 5-10 minutes but it can have a powerful effect on your life. Manifest the things you want to happen and enjoy the experience of seeing what you visualize come true.

Visualize an efficient assistant or employees doing all the low payoff activities and a synergistic team making progress toward your goals and dreams.

Visualize yourself doing the things you love and getting the results you desire - you are doing great!

**Leslie C. Lyons shares a story about focus and the impact it had for him.**

“Before I won the World Skeet Shooting Championships in my Class in 2004, I was struggling to break all 100 out of 100 clay targets. I could easily get in the 90s, and usually around 97 or 98, but those last one or two just eluded me.

I worked with an instructor who told me I had to have the proper focus in several areas, starting with my stance. Were my feet correctly positioned? Was my body correctly positioned and weighted properly between my two feet? Was my upper body turned properly? Was I holding the gun properly?

Next, he had me focus on my breathing. Could I feel my breath going in and out? Was it steady? Was it natural? Was it deep, or shallow? Was I holding my breath unconsciously?

Then, he had me focus on my vision. Was I looking at the background, to distinguish my proper hold point? Did I know the background well, so I wouldn’t be distracted by anything when I called for the target?

Then he told me to focus my mind. Only focus on the present and what is happening right now. Not what just happened a few
minutes ago on the last target, or the results from the day before, or what MIGHT happen in a minute when I called for the target, or what might happen in the future, if I succeeded or failed. ONLY focus on RIGHT NOW! Be “in the moment,” he said.

Finally, he told me to focus on the target, or “bird” as we call it. And he said, “I mean REALLY focus! See the target clearly.” I told him I did. He then asked, “Can you see the rings on the different levels of the round target spinning as the bird comes out of the house?” I looked at him like he was crazy! I said, “HUH?” He said, “Yep. THAT’s the kind of focus you have to have. When you can clearly distinguish the rings on the spinning target, THEN you know you are focused!”

Guess what? I put into practice everything he said, and then broke 249 out of the 250 target competition and won the World Championship. (Yes, I let my guard down for a brief instant and it cost me a target. But my competitors did it more than that one time!)

So what I learned is there is focus, and then there’s FOCUS!!! And focus has to be – in most cases – in more than one area at a time, to ensure that everything is “in sync.”

As Peter Vidmar says, to be an Olympic Champion, you only need to work out two times.

1. When you feel like it...and
2. When you don’t feel like it...

Wasted Time Adds Up - How you can make more money by focusing on your high pay-off activities (or have more time to do what you want)?

How much time do you think you waste each day? Do you get sucked into doing emails, surfing the internet, watching youtube videos someone sent you, getting interrupted by staff, clients, or friends, etc.? Think about this for a minute – how much time do you think you waste each day? Remember it all adds up. Five minutes here, 10 minutes, there 30 minutes on something fun yet not productive.
When we asked people how much time do they think they waste in a day, many of them said approx. 2 hours per day. So we will use this as our example. You can easily do the math for yourself depending on the number you came up with for how much time you think you waste each day.

Here’s an example of someone who said they ‘waste’ 2 hours per day.

2 hours per day
= 10 hours per week
= 1 week per month
= 12 weeks per year
Divide by 4 and you get a whopping 3 months per year that is spent in non-productive time.

Now, let’s not dwell on the non-productive time that we waste. Let’s see what that time is worth to us in revenue per year if we utilize that 2 hours per day on high pay-off activities.

What do you make per month on an average? $5,000, $7,000, $10,000, $15,000

Multiply that number by 3 (months wasted if you said 2 hours per day) and that is how much more money you could make a year if you just focused your time more on high pay-off activities.

$5,000 x 3 = $15,000 more per year
$7,000 x 3 = $21,000
$10,000 x 3 = $30,000
$15,000 x 3 = $45,000

Even if you start by being more effective and not letting time-wasters and distractions get in your way for 30 minutes per day, you will make even more money and have the option to take more time to do what you want to do. How can you apply this concept in your life so you can achieve more of your goals?