

The Earley Examiner

A Letter from Chris Earley

June 2021

“It is not enough to be busy... The question is: What are we busy about?” – Henry David Thoreau

As attorneys, time is our stock in trade. Effective time management is therefore the name of the game. Maximizing our time is essential to our personal productivity. More importantly, time management allows us to maintain our sanity. Here are some time management practices I have found to be very useful in my own practice:

The telephone. There is nothing worse than being bombarded with phone calls when you are trying to focus deeply on an upcoming deposition, trial strategy, etc. The brain needs time to go deep into a focused state and does not respond well to constant interruptions. As my practice started to grow, I realized that it was really hard and frustrating to constantly answer random, unplanned phone calls. The phone was draining not only my ability to focus, but also my time. Now, I don't take unscheduled phone calls. I explain this protocol in my initial welcome letter to new clients so they know about this policy from the start (always send a letter to new clients warmly welcoming them and in that letter name the person that will be handling their file). This phone policy applies not only to clients, but attorneys, insurance adjusters and whoever else calls. If the call is not on my calendar, a team member will schedule me to call the person back the following day at a specific time. This helps save so much time and avoids unending phone tag.

Email. I am a recovering email addict. I used to check email constantly. I used to erroneously think that by constantly checking and responding to email that I was working and being productive, when in reality, all I was doing was checking email and wasting time. That is classic busy work, as opposed to productive work. I decided to end this toxic habit. Now, I check email each weekday at 10:45 am and 4:00 pm, and one time on the weekend. If I have to check email for something urgent and truly important, I jump into my inbox and jump out as fast as possible. I also unsubscribed to unnecessary email subscriptions to further tame the email beast. I have discovered that by extinguishing this addiction my productivity has skyrocketed.

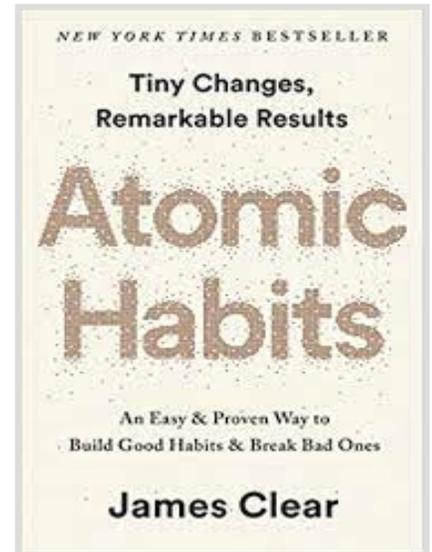
Open door policy. I found that as my practice started to grow and more team members were added, I was getting interrupted more and more by team members coming into my office for “just a quick question.” This was impacting my productivity because it was eliminating my ability to really, deeply focus on a particular case, business strategy, etc. Now, I have “office hours” each day from 11:00 am-12:00 pm. This forces team members to solve problems on their own, reducing their dependency on me. They now

only come to me when they truly can't solve something on their own. After all, the whole point of having staff is to empower them to be problem solvers so that you can focus on high-level decision making and execution.

Protecting your time requires intentionality, self-discipline and commitment. Guard it like a hawk. If you have other time management tips that you find helpful, please email me at cearley@chrisearley.com because I would love to hear them.

This Month's Book Recommendation

Atomic Habits is a really good book that focusses on the impact of daily habits. It highlights the compounding effects that both good and bad habits have on one's life. One big takeaway for me was that habits are about creating a new identity, as opposed to achieving particular outcomes. Small and consistent efforts each day add up very fast and make huge long-term impacts.



Thank You For Your Referrals!

Referrals are the lifeblood of my practice. Your trust in us to handle your referral is incredibly appreciated not only by myself, but by my entire team. I want to say thank you so very much to the following attorneys for your recent referral:

- Len S.
- Kevin G.
- Ida C.
- Melissa L.
- Emmanuel G.

Be Our Guest

Let me know if you are interested in being a guest on The Earley Show. It is an informal Zoom exchange that takes roughly 20 minutes. If you want to be a guest email me at cearley@chrisearley.com and we will get you scheduled on the calendar.

Quote of the Month

“If opportunity does not knock, build a door.”

Kurt Cobain