Journaling
By Paperitalo Staff

Years ago, I worked for a boss who decided to take a time management course. One of the outcomes of this course was that he was supposed to keep a daily log, recording his activities every fifteen minutes. Meetings with him at the time became something like talking to someone today while they are texting. It was ridiculous. After a couple of weeks of this, I finally asked him, "Frank, what are you doing with all this information?"

"Well, nothing. They just told us to record it."

Before you start laughing, do you keep a journal or notebook? Do you ever look back in it for action items which you are supposed to follow up?

A friend and I were talking the other day on this subject. We noted we both see people in meetings taking copious notes, yet we observe these same people letting tasks fall through the cracks. And a confession--I have been guilty of this in the past.

You need to develop a system whereby you in some manner highlight tasks you either need to do or believe are important to follow, and then go back and look at them via some routine you develop. Otherwise, you are just wasting ink.

I have a morning routine I try to follow wherever I am, office or on the road. There are certain websites I check each morning and I page back through my journal for highlighted follow-ups. It takes fifteen minutes to do all of this. The practice makes sure I am staying on top of my follow-up items and it centers me for the day ahead. It is the roadmap or GPS path for the day's journey. When I don't do this, I feel lost and confused about what I am trying to accomplish. I also find when I don't do this, along about the middle of the afternoon, I suddenly remember a commitment I made to someone that is unfulfilled. Not a comfortable place to be.

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I have been in a working environment for over forty-one years, and other than perhaps the first year or so, I have always had a "To-Do" list, a journal or both handy at my side. How you do this is a highly personal matter, just like your calendar. What is important is that you have a system, a routine for keeping up with all the activities going on for which you are responsible.

The best way to move an organization towards either a static objective or a dynamic series of on-going objectives is "close coupled feedback." Sometimes this is confused with "micro-managing" however the difference is close coupled feedback is objective driven, not driven by Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder or Paranoia. Key to close coupled feedback is careful note taking, to-do lists, and follow-up. Using these techniques, even old established cultures can be moved in a new direction very rapidly.

For safety this week, do you make notes in safety meetings? Do you organize these, either electronically or in a notebook? Do you refer to them when certain potential safety issues arise? This is how to maximize your safety meeting learnings.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##

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