Your Momentum Turnaround
(Part 3)

Making The Most
Of Your Time

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Hello, and welcome. This is Naomi from IttyBiz, and you're listening to the Momentum Turnaround track, part 3, called Making The Most Of Your Time.

Today we're going to be talking about three things you can start doing today that will help you do a lot less messing around from day to day. Human beings are time wasters, and as you are a human being, you're probably wasting a lot of the time you have devoted to doing the thing your ittybiz does. Today we're going to start turning that around.

Before we begin, I want to congratulate you on getting this far into the Momentum Turnaround track. You're already halfway through this part of the class, and if you can get halfway, you can get all the way. I want you to remember that when it comes to building your ittybiz. You may not have the business you want yet, but you have built some of it so far. And if you can build some of it, you can build all of it. If you can get 20% of the way there, you can get 30%. And 40%, and 50%, all the way to the end. So remember that - you're already on the path. You can make it to the other side. Just keep working on it, every day.

Now, let's get started.

Start Seeing Yourself As Good With Time

It's a pretty typical thing for the average ittybiz owner to feel like they're not good with time. You might feel the same way. You might look at your business and all the things you haven't been able to get around to doing, and start thinking that you suck when it comes to managing time.

Maybe everything seems like it's taking too long, or you spend too much time on email or too much time screwing around clicking links on social media, or maybe it's just general procrastination. Either way, the stuff you need to do piles up, everyday, and you feel terrible about it, everyday.

Which is really fantastic when you think about it, because there's nothing like feeling like a complete failure at getting things done to motivate you to start getting things done. That's a recipe for success.

We need a better way than that, don't we? Let's talk about that.

If one of your problems is not making good use of your time, chances are high you see yourself as someone who sucks at managing their time. You use phrases like "I'm a procrastinator," or "I'm just not very good with my time." You tell yourself that these phrases are actual, valid labels for you as a human being.

That's got to stop. Now. If you're going to label yourself, for God's sake, give yourself a label that will actually help you. So we're going to start working on that right away.

You may feel like you suck at managing your time - and you may have a lot of proof of that, actually - but a label like that only comes when you have bias and you only want to see one side of the story. Since we human beings have an unending fondness for beating ourselves up, that works just dandy. We're more than happy to replay all the mental videos that show us wasting time, not getting things done, and totally procrastinating.

The downside of that is that you're only getting one side of the story, and that side sucks. The good news is that there's another side of the story that can actually help you.

Think about it: are you always, always, always bad with your time? Have you really procrastinated on every single thing in your life? You know you haven't. You know that there have been times in your life when you've really hustled to get things done, and focused on making something happen without getting caught up in distraction.

I want you to think of one of those times right now. Just one. Maybe you were getting work done fast so you could get out the door to your kid's school play. Maybe you were online writing something that had to be out by three, and so you stayed off of distracting things. Maybe you had an impossible deadline and somehow, against the laws of God and man, you made it.

Or maybe it wasn't quite so dramatic. There's probably been at least one time in your long and eventful life where you just said to yourself, "You know what? I want to get this thing done and over with, and I'm not going to let myself get distracted." And then - miracle of miracles - you did it.

Whether it's dramatic, mundane, or anywhere in between, I just want you to think of one moment in your life where you were really, really good with your time. Just one. And

I want you to give it a name. Any name. The project you were working on. The feeling you had at the time. Any name will do.

Just think about it, name it, and hold on to it. Because the next time you have to focus and get things done, I want you to remember it. I want you to be able to honestly say to yourself, "I can get this thing done without getting distracted," and I want you to mean it. I want you to be able to play that movie back in your head and realize that you - yes, you - can actually be trusted to be good with your time.

Just hold on to that one moment for now. But as you move forward in your ittybiz turnaround, I want you to add another moment in there. And another, and another, until you change the label for yourself. Until you realize that staying focused isn't that big a deal at all. But just start with one moment for now. It will help, I promise.

Start Setting Time Limits for Things

So the next thing I want to do is to help create more of those moments for you, starting right now. We're going to talk about a very, very simple technique for getting things done without distraction. We're going to talk about putting a little box around your time when you have something to do.

Here's what I mean. If you're doing something - anything - whether it's writing something important, building something you're going to sell, or doing some activity that will help your ittybiz grow, I want you to think of how long it will take. You don't have to be right about this guess, you just have to have a guess.

Let's say you're writing something, and you tell yourself it will take 30 minutes or so. On your calendar, or in your head if you're not a day-planner type of person, you're going to imagine a little box around those 30 minutes. This mental box is there to help you keep that time set apart and sacred for whatever it is you do, just for those 30 minutes.

So when you're writing during those 30 minutes, you're going to tell yourself two simple things:

First, you're going to try and get this task done in your little 30-minute box. If you start at one o'clock, you're going to try and get it done by 1:30. Now, you're not going to beat yourself up if it's not done then, you're just going to put that little bit of friendly

pressure on yourself so you can treat it like a game. It's okay to make the box bigger if you need to, to accommodate for writer's block, but just create a little box that lets you have the opportunity to prove that you can do it.

The second thing you're going to tell yourself is that you're not going to let anything short of an emergency distract you for this little box of time. If you feel yourself tempted to check email, or refresh a web page, you're just going to tell yourself you'll do it after you're done with your little box of time. So you start wanting to check email, and you say, "I'll do that at 1:30 when I'm done here."

This is big, because we tend to let ourselves get distracted because we're tired of working or want to avoid it. We also don't like denying ourselves our little breaks. There's nothing wrong with little breaks - or big ones. Just make them wait their turn. You can refresh facebook in just 30 minutes. It's not so bad.

This little time box exercise can help you get so much more out of your day, because you're going to be focused on getting things done in a specific time frame, and not just "today." Let me repeat that you shouldn't grade yourself on this. If the writing was hard and it took an hour, than it takes an hour. It's okay. It probably would have taken you two if you didn't imagine that box of time. So no pressure.

Also, you don't have to make everything rigid, either. You don't have to make fifteen blocks on your schedule that have you working like a dog all day. That will just make you burn out. The point here is to learn to be present and focused. To say to yourself, "I'm working on writing now. I'll take a break or do this other thing in 30 minutes or so."

Just doing this can help you create a lot of those moments in time that we were talking about before. Each time you respect the box, you will have one more little movie you can play in your head to prove that you're responsible with your time.

So give this a try today and again, go easy on yourself. Don't beat yourself up if it doesn't work out the first time. Just keep at it and you'll pick up momentum really quickly.

Keep a Time Log

So, there's one more thing I want to cover in this part of the class and it's pretty important, so I want you to really pay attention. This is a really simple thing, but it will help you get a lot more done in the time that you already have. And that simple thing is this:

When you start working on your ittybiz during the day, and you start with your first thing on your to-do list, write it down and write what time you started. When you're done, write what time you finished. Basically, we're talking about a time log here. It's kind of like those notebooks your financial planner would give you where you're supposed to write down everything you spend for a week.

You know why financial planners do that? Because they know that if you start writing down how much you're spending on everything - lunch, dinner, trips to the store or the bar - by day two you'll be saying to yourself, "Holy crap, I'm wasting a lot of my money. I'd really rather be spending it on things that are more important to me." And then you'll be so irritated with yourself that you'll start taking your spending more seriously, so you can get more of what you want. It doesn't mean you'll start pinching your pennies, it just means you'll decide to not buy as much useless stuff so you have more money available for what you really, really want.

And the time log will do the same thing. Once you hit the end of your work day, you'll be able to look at how much of it was actually spent doing work and how much of it was wasted on … well, you don't even know. You're not writing down the distractions and the things you got caught up on, you're just writing down the time you actually spent working. A certain productivity coach I know says that when he does this exercise with his clients, they average out at about 20 minutes of actual work for every hour they thought they were working.

Now, I'm certainly not telling you that you should turn yourself into a productivity robot. That's no fun at all. But there's something about realizing that the 15 minutes you think you spent on social media was actually 45 minutes that makes the light bulb come on. You realize that these little distractions you get caught up in are actually big distractions. You realize that you're wasting a lot more time than you ever realized. And then you discover that you have a lot more time than you think.

And that's the point of the time log. It's not to make you more productive - it's to make you more aware of the amount of time you're not working, the amount of time you spend getting caught up in distractions. Once you have that awareness, your sense of self-preservation kicks in and you find yourself wanting to trim down the distractions and actually do more of the stuff that gets your ittybiz out of turnaround mode.

So do these three things - start seeing yourself as good with time, put time limits on the tasks you're doing and keep a time log for a week or so - and you'll start making every minute count. You'll start understanding you can be trusted with time. I trust you. Now you can trust you, too.

Thanks for listening to part three of the Momentum Turnaround track, called "Making The Most Of Your Time." I'm Naomi from IttyBiz, and I'll talk to you very soon.