

# Liberation Through Discipline



Get More Time for What  
Matters

Susan Moscaritolo

Copyright © 2022 Lark-Elders Publishing House  
All rights reserved

## DEDICATION

Dedicated to Lauren, who just stared at me during a conference when I asked what she would do with an extra 5 hours a week.

## CONTENTS

|   |                               |     |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|
|   | Forward                       | iii |
| 1 | Values                        | 5   |
| 2 | Liberation Through Discipline | 8   |
| 3 | Focus                         | 12  |
| 4 | Resources                     | 15  |

## FORWARD

### Getting Started

Simply follow the instructions - you're going to get your time back. If you're lucky, it'll be like playing a country song backwards: get your truck back, get your girl back, get your job back. Don't say I didn't warn you, though. Living a conscientious life according to your core values might cause a serious disruption, depending on how far away from them you've gotten.

When I first did this, I was on a desperately needed vacation in Kauai. I'd been putting in 12- and 14-hour days for over a year with a startup, and managed to carve out a whole 6 days to unplug. But I was exhausted, and frustrated. The stuff I needed to do never got done, and I was always answering to someone else's needs before my own. I wasn't even sure what I needed anymore, just that *something* was wrong. I slept all the way there.

The warm breeze, the songbirds, the popping flowers... and there I was, kneeling on the cement floor with over a hundred index cards in front of me, trying to piece together my life, muttering, "There **MUST** be a better way." This is it - I hope it works as well for you as it did for me.



No more worry, no more hurry

## 1 VALUES

This is all about you - where can you possibly find the time you need? How do you even know for sure that's something is important? How can you measure the immeasurable?

### Where do you spend time and energy now?

People **always** spend time on what they value.

You go to work. You have chores, the gym, the dog to walk. You don't have time to go to the coast, pick up the guitar, take that hike out to the falls. You don't have time to have coffee with your best friend - work's been so busy.

But at work, you're bored, checking the clock, and getting annoyed because it all seems so futile. Where is your gumption, your grit, your moxie? Did it get buried under Adult Responsibilities?

I know, I don't understand how hard it is. Everyone else has a support system, money, connections. Sure. I get it. Except none of us are getting out alive, and if you don't take control of your life, right here, *right now*, you never will have the support, money and connections.

That stuff comes by birthright to very few people, and most of them lose it before they know it, and have to scramble like the rest of us to get it back. Everyone has a story - it's time to write yours.

### What are your obligations?

How much of your life do you do because somebody told you to? How many times do you have the same conversation and

wish you could get out of it? Are you having dinner with your 80-year-old mother every Sunday, when you'd rather be hiking? Are you missing out on your kid's baseball game because the report is due? Are you going to work to fill out papers when you have a cold?

Work will expand to fill the time  
available for its completion.

- Parkinson's Law

## What are your core values?

It's time to take a look at what you really value. Who are you when you're at home? I asked a woman at a conference a few years ago what she would do with an extra 5 hours a week.

She just stared at me, and finally said, "I don't know - it's been so long." This is a sad, sad thing. You have to know who you are and what you stand for, in order to take advantage of this book.

This is the first step. Take some time - *really* take some time, and think about values you are living by, and how well they serve you. **Write them down.**

Think about how much your actions align with your values. *If you do this right, you will be incredibly frustrated.* This is a good thing. Nothing changes until we are too uncomfortable with the status quo.

Here's an example: you're at work, arguing with your boss about a key project. A phone call comes in - your son has

broken his leg. Suddenly the key project is not important anymore, and you go off to the emergency room.

This is an extreme example, but it shows where your values lie. We all act on our values, every day. We make momentary decisions based on our values.

Our values don't change, just the circumstances, and our expressions... what happens is that you get away from our values, because we don't think about them on a regular basis.

What would happen if there was a system to bring your values to top of mind every single day?

I don't mean a mission statement, or a vision board, though those may help; I mean something as basic as brushing your teeth. Remember, we are what we think about.

Combine that idea with your core values *and your willingness to express those values*, and you end up with more time for what matters, and a happier life.

## 2 LIBERATION THROUGH DISCIPLINE

Keep your core values in mind while you do this exercise. Remember, if your values aren't serving you, you can change them.

### Head Dump the Task List

Clear a block of time for this. Use a spreadsheet, or index cards, or colored sticky notes - and write down *every single task that's in your head*. This will take a while.

The first time I did this, it took over two hours, and I had over 150 items. It is important to take a break at this moment. There is always more in your head than you thought at first. Take 10 minutes and go for a walk to clear your mind.

Silence is not an absence but a presence.

– Anne D. LeClaire

### Categorize

Now comes the fun part. Group the tasks into categories. Don't worry about naming the categories, just put similar things together. When you're done, you should have a bunch of piles of paper. It's time to bring your values into play. Make space for your top four or five values. Plonk the stacks into those spaces.



## Prioritize the Categories

What is your top core value? The one thing that you stand for? Community? Health? A selfish disregard for authority? Family? Prioritize those top level categories with their stacks of cards in order of your values.

Name them; combine them if you can, because fewer value-categories are easier to express. I wound up with four categories - that first one encompasses an awful lot:

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Me       |  |
| Income   |  |
| House    |  |
| Archives |  |
|          |  |
|          |  |

Why is 'Archives' a value-category? Because, for me, running my life according to systems is vitally important. I want to leave a legacy; I want to make it easy for my kids when I die, I want to have people reproduce what I've done; ergo, archives.

Your categories will be different, obviously. You may have seven or ten base categories. Just start there - you can always refine it later, if you need to.

## Prioritize Within the Categories

This part isn't so fun, so you may want to take another walk, and get a cup of coffee first. Within each category, prioritize each task.

If it has a hard deadline, it gets higher priority: buying a plane ticket, paying the gas bill, sending your son a birthday card.

**The rest are prioritized not by how important they are, but by how much they express your core values.**

| Task   | Priority | Effort | Time Estimate | Task Cost | \$ Cost | Category  |
|--|----------|--------|---------------|-----------|---------|---|
| complete bills                                     |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| build site   |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| copy to ordered program                            |          |        | 4/4           |           |         |   |
| FBA  |          |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| forward program orders                             |          |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| prepare bills                                      |          |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| copy pages and content to new site server          |          |        | 4/4           |           | 1       |   |
| list beta  |          |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| send letters to customers                          |          |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| contact radio show hosts                           |          |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| pay net user for 100 items                         |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| pay net for new software                           |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| order for phone                                    |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| get help to fix bug after 1 week more for net user |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| ask if what's needed for NY King                   |          |        |               |           |         |   |
| pay for software fees                              |          |        |               |           |         | MODULE SYSTEM   |
| pay for passport                                   | 2        |        |               | 0.3       | \$120   |   |
| list site  | 3        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| list people to clean up                            | 3        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| list test/audition                                 | 3        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| pay up customer bills                              | 4        |        |               | 6         |         |   |
| send packages to China & Paula                     | 4        |        | 3/22          | 0.5       |         |   |
| clean garage                                       | 4        |        |               | 6         |         |   |
| create curriculum for Benji                        | 4        |        |               | 4         |         | not up health book  |
| make program orders                                | 4        |        |               | 1         |         | PHONE BOOKS/DOCS  |
| finish prep work                                   | 5        |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| get requirements for calendaring                   | 5        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| send international                                 | 5        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| send international                                 | 5        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| get online ATV license                             | 6        |        |               | 1         | \$30    |   |
| create SA business map                             | 6        |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| do the business                                    | 6        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| get connect to build up and extra                  | 7        |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| get connect to build up and extra                  | 7        |        |               | 4         |         |   |
| build website for concierge                        | 8        |        |               | 3         |         |   |
| buy indoor plants                                  | 9        |        |               | 1         |         | INTERNAL ALICE ENGISH INV. PHOTO DOCUMENTS, BRICKS PLANT, DIFFERENTIAL, FUDGE |
| create car books, order books                      | 10       |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| create car books, fees and handup                  | 12       |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| get  | 13       |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| buy outdoor plants                                 | 14       |        |               | 1         |         |   |
| create entry business map                          | 4        |        |               |           |         | ERA PAGE CONNECTED TO AUTOMATIC CAR BLOC                                      |
| write up website stuff on ad                       |          |        |               | 2         |         | BOOKS   |
| house threat vs fire, line mac, april 2007         |          |        |               |           |         |   |

When you're done, your life is now organized. But you still don't have more time. In fact, you have less, because you just spent hours doing this. This is where the rubber hits the road. If you're going to change, this is the critical moment.

Use whatever tool makes the most sense, and put all these prioritized tasks there. Some people just keep the index cards or sticky notes. Some people use Evernote, or a spreadsheet. I color-code my categories, and put them on a spreadsheet, with a priority number, deadlines, time estimations, cost, and notes. You don't have to go that far, I promise.

## Review Every Night

Now, you'll start to get your time back. Put every task with a hard deadline on your calendar, and take it off the Master Task List. If it's a recurring event, even better.

Every night, drop your top priority items from each category onto your calendar. The next day, **do them**. You will be doing the things you value most, first.

For example, health is a top value, because if I'm not healthy, nothing else can get done. So I schedule my meditation, journal, and gym time first. Everything else has to be scheduled around these.

The nightly review takes 2 minutes. Once a week, do a review of your whole system, and make adjustments. This might take up to 10 minutes. That's the trade-off: 22 minutes to work a system that can free up 5 hours or more a week.



## 3 FOCUS

Understand that some things will fall off and never get done. Either stop caring about them or delegate them to someone who values those tasks. Doing dishes is almost universally disliked. Save up for a dishwasher, eat out, eat off paper plates, hire a housekeeper, or listen to loud music while you do them.

This is where your time comes from. The satisfaction of doing what's valuable to you is irreplaceable. The time saved from *not* doing what you *don't* value is yours as a present to yourself, to do more of what matters most.

What will you do with all these glorious hours? There is a real risk of panic when you have nothing to do. You'll feel guilty, like you should be doing something. Surely, someone needs you? Not really.

We are not actually designed to fill every waking moment with activity. People under a certain age have never lived without pervasive technology, but thousands of generations grew up without radio or television. Don't automatically fill your new hours, even if it's a bit uncomfortable at first. The idea is to fill your time with enjoyable, valuable things that you can put your energy into. Choose carefully.

### Satisfy Your Core Values

So go back to your core values. What is it that makes you **you**? For some people, learning is a core value, and they take classes, or teach them. Adventurous people travel. Family oriented people start traditions. Do more of what makes you different and awesome.

## Play Hard

We only go around once. Don't live a life of regrets and might-have-been. Grab life by the neck and shake it hard. Dance because the beat tells you to, eat the fugu, ask that girl out, start a business, go to Slovenia just to hear that band. Live on purpose, because you mean it!

## 4 RESOURCES

You don't have to make it up as you go along, there are millions of people getting their time back, and living happy lives.

### Define Your Values

Art of Manliness

Steve Pavlina

### The TL/DR:

#### *Liberation Through Discipline*

Make small, momentary decisions that support your principles. Follow these steps in order:

- Write down your core values
- Write down Everything There Is To Do
- Group these items into categories
- Prioritize the categories (max seven) according to your values
- Prioritize the tasks within each category
- Add in duration, cost, and finish date, if it helps
- Every night, pull out the top items from each category to do the next day
- Outline your regular scope of tasks and look for patterns

- Track how long tasks take and how long you can effectively concentrate
- Block out uninterrupted time to accomplish the tasks
- Create an environment conducive to focused attention
- Do the thing that needs doing
- Stop. Stretch. Mentally lay down the task, then take a deep breath and start on the next task block

## *You Can't Take it With You*

Grandpa: "Well, I have a lot of fun. Time enough for everything - read, talk, visit the zoo now and then, practice my darts, even have time to notice when spring comes around. Don't see anybody I don't want to, don't have six hours of things I *have* to do every day before I get *one* hour to do what I like in - and I haven't taken bicarbonate of soda in thirty-five years. What's the matter with that?"

Kirby: "The matter with that? Suppose we *all* did it? A fine world we'd have, everybody going to zoos. Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Vanderhof. Who would do the work?"

Grandpa: "There's always people that like to work - you can't *stop* them. Inventions - and they fly the ocean. There's always people to go down to Wall Street, too - because they *like* it. But from what I've seen of you I don't think you're one of them."

- George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Moscaritolo is the Time Queen. If you want to work with me to regain your time - or find it in the first place, just email [susan@lark-elders.com](mailto:susan@lark-elders.com) for a consultation.