



## Time Management and Productivity Expert Laura Stack Advises Readers on Self-reviews



DENVER, Colorado, February 19, 2013 – Consistent self-reviews should be a part of any time management plan, according to time management and productivity expert Laura Stack. In her latest blog titled [“How to Conduct Weekly, Monthly, and Yearly Reviews.”](#) Stack tells readers that they can’t afford not to review their own progress routinely, even if they think they can’t spare the time.

“If you don’t look up and adjust where you’re heading once in a while, you’re going to end up way off course,” Stack says.

According to Stack, some people avoid self-reviews out of fear of appearing to be goofing off. However, Stack says that taking the time to review one’s own progress can be compared to the old tale of the woodsman who sits under a tree sharpening his ax.

“He is doing more than resting,” Stack says. “Every swipe of the whetstone makes his task just a bit easier, and ultimately he saves time and effort, although he might not seem like he’s working very hard at first glance.”

Taking time out for self-review represents a proactive approach to accomplishing one’s objectives, because it clears the way to accomplishing goals.

“Everything you do to maximize your productivity leaves you a few more minutes to spend on other tasks, or on the rest of your life,” Stack says. “Otherwise, you waste time being reactive, tackling tasks as they occur, whether or not they get you closer to your goals.”

“When you have no clear plan for your day, you rarely accomplish anything significant no matter how many brushfires you contain—just staying busy has no place in modern business.”

Stack says that this holds especially true for workplace leaders who can’t afford to just “stay busy,” or their entire team is at risk of slipping out of alignment with the rest of the organization. As a result, the team is at risk of grinding painfully (and expensively) to a halt.

“Then where will you be?” Stack says.

Stack offers some advice for sitting down to conduct two brief but thorough reviews at the end of each week and at the end of each month:

**1. Forward thinking.** Look ahead to the tasks scheduled for the upcoming week or month (whichever applies) and decide how to approach and complete them.

“Do you have deadlines looming, or new projects to start on?” Stack says. “Check your master task list and see what’s ready to activate.”

**2. Reverse thinking.** Individuals should reflect on how they handled the previous week or month’s tasks to determine what tasks may have not been completed and why.

“Review each task to determine the last time you checked in on the person in charge of it,” Stack says. “Don’t micromanage but do oversee, and let them know you remain available for consultation.

Even after the weekly and monthly performance reviews are completed, Stack says the yearly review still needs to be accomplished. The yearly review requires more time and research than the smaller periodic reviews, but it’s worth the effort because it helps to identify larger themes that need to be worked on.

“Whether you just want to lose some weight, power your way to a more profitable year, market more consistently, or expand your network, you’ll need a plan of action to carry it out or you’ll soon lose motivation,” Stack says.

“Do more than just verbalize your desire to make something happen; take action to make sure it does. Make your goals top priority, setting aside time for them and developing a plan of action to get you started and keep you in line.”

Stack suggests:

**1. Scheduling an annual review** in January, beginning with a look back on accomplishments made the previous year.

“You might find more there to cherish and learn from than you initially expected,” Stack says.

**2. Consider what was not accomplished** despite the best intentions. Arrange to finish, delegate, or abandon any projects or tasks that weigh heavy and continue to distract.

**3. Choose two to three significant things** that need to be changed by the end of the current year.

“For example, you may decide to stop smoking, get a new job, implement a new strategy, lose 30 pounds, or start coming to work earlier,” Stack says. “Even if the item seems purely personal, accomplishing it will most likely affect your work productivity as well.

“Document your goals in detail, wording them carefully but boldly. Be realistic; don’t decide to lose 100 pounds in a year or go from being a classic couch potato to running a marathon by July.”

**4. Break down your goals into weekly and monthly chunks.** Transfer deadlines onto “to-do” lists along with pertinent mileposts and split them further into daily efforts.

“Remember, your needs matter at least as much as anyone else’s, if not more,” Stack says. “If you decide to go to the gym or take a new class three times a week, enter those dates into your calendar as mandatory appointments. Going consistently will make that behavior a habit, and you’ll eventually accomplish what you’ve set out to.”

**5. Post reminders all over the place to stay on track.** Stack says that bathroom mirrors make particularly good places for posting reminders.

“If they don’t work, ask your family to remind you,” Stack says. “There’s nothing like your 10-year-old nagging you about getting to class on time to make you open your eyes and pay attention.”

While weekly and monthly reviews take relatively little time, Stack suggests taking a whole day more for the yearly review—even if it requires checking into a motel to benefit from the isolation.

“Once you’ve reset your course, just take an easy step toward your goals every day,” Stack says. “You can use weekly and monthly reviews to adjust your course as necessary.

“It won’t take you long to feel the positive effects of change—and once you’ve gotten that shot in the arm, your resolutions for the year will last well beyond January.”

For information on effective self-review, visit [TheProductivityPro.com website](http://TheProductivityPro.com), Email [Laura@TheProductivityPro.com](mailto:Laura@TheProductivityPro.com), or call 303-471-7401.

#### **About Laura Stack:**

[Laura Stack](#) is a time management and productivity expert who has been speaking and writing about human potential and peak performance since 1992. She has implemented employee productivity improvement programs at Wal-Mart, Cisco Systems, UBS, Aramark, and Bank of America. Stack presents keynotes and seminars internationally for leaders, entrepreneurs, salespeople, and professional services firms on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in the workplace.

The president of [The Productivity Pro®, Inc.](#), a time management firm specializing in high-stress environments, Stack is the bestselling author of five books: [“What to do When There’s Too Much to do” \(2012\)](#); [“SuperCompetent” \(2010\)](#); [“The Exhaustion Cure” \(2008\)](#); [“Find More Time” \(2006\)](#); and [“Leave the Office Earlier” \(2004\)](#). The 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association and recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, Stack has served as a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot. Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, Stack has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show and CNN, and in USA Today and the New York Times.

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