

# CHRIS'LL DEAL WITH IT

episode  
notes



## EP 2 - Do I Own The Business or Does The Business Own Me?

 [www.ChrisKreuter.com/CDWI](http://www.ChrisKreuter.com/CDWI)

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*I'm having a hard time with the professional challenges of running my business. I love what I do and how it helps people, but I'd like advice on finding a healthier work/life balance. Specifically with overcoming the challenge of juggling the many tasks of owning a business, such as: Scheduling, billing, time management, filing, and asking for help.*

### Goal: Achieving a better work/life balance

- Love for the work can cause us to overdo it & create imbalances in our own life
  - In extreme cases it can be leveraged (even subconsciously) as an escape from your life outside work
- A helpful metaphor: Airline safety demonstrations → Put your own mask on before helping others.
- Scheduling or automating business operations has its benefits, and its limitations.
  - Outsourcing too much can strain your profitability.
  - Outsourcing to too many vendors/systems/professionals can create silos that ruin efficiency


- If one element goes awry, it can have trickle-down effects - risk management becomes a thing
- How many people & companies do you trust with your sensitive information/data?
- Managing the outsourcing becomes work in and of itself

## **My advice: Take a holistic view of what work/life balance looks like to you**

- **Start with you: What are your values, principles, and needs?**
- Never shortchange yourself!
  - what are your natural rhythms? Are you an early riser? Do you need 9 hours of sleep?
  - Do you have time intensive hobbies such as reading, painting, outdoor adventures?
- What are your hard commitments outside of professional life?
  - Examples: Spouse, childcare, community organizations, faith services
  - How much time do these require for them not to feel shortchanged and not cause you too much stress to 'fit them in'?
- How's your health?
  - Be honest: Are you taking care of yourself? How do you feel in the mornings? At night?
  - Are you putting off preventative care because it's just too much to manage?
  - Does exercise tend to fall off your to-do list when days get busy?
- Filling the empty jar. Start with the big rocks first, then fill it with the smaller rocks and sand. If you start with the sand, there's no room to fit in the big stuff later.

### Big Rocks in First | The Art of Manliness

Feel like you're busy all day but not getting anything done? This object lesson inspired by Stephen Covey will show you why that is and what you can do to be...

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VNmlxkyHd8>



- It helps to write out these things. Be honest. Put numbers to it.
  - You may need to compromise: Especially if you're starting out or working two jobs to make sure bills are paid and your baby's fed.
  - What does your week look like? Your days?
  - What time is left for your family? For you?
    - Sketch this out! We're focused on a balanced life there - so leave work out at first.
  - Now, tackle the professional needs of the business - by this I mean everything outside of the work itself.
    - How much time are you spending on support tasks?
    - How much time and money are you willing to spend to reduce or eliminate them?
- I find it helpful to think of this in terms of **ROI (Return On Investment)**.
  - Consider 3 examples:
    1. If I spend 10 hours setting up a new system that will save me 1 hour per week - I'm saving time in less than 3 months. Awesome!
    2. I spend \$500 a month on a professional that saves me 5 hours of billing per month. I value my time at \$50 per hour. So I'm overpaying for the service - but it's getting done way better than before and it increases client satisfaction: Solid investment!
    3. I spend two hours every Sunday preparing my schedule for the week - but I often have to make changes on the fly because my life's so chaotic: You're not saving time and you'd be better off considering other time management techniques. And you'd be better off using those two hours on Sunday doing some self-care to be rested for that chaotic week ahead.

- You'll be left with an honest picture of the time you have to spare for "the important work"

## Inverting

- It's very easy to have this whole process inverted: Especially when you're in the business of helping others. You got into your business to help people, to perform a service. Damn right it should be the main focus!
  - But this is why all of the other aspects of your business end up being shoe-horned into your life.
  - You're *Netflix & Billing* instead of *Netflix & Chilling*.
  - Sacrifices creep into your life, leaving you stressed and imbalanced.
- When it comes to inverting - Refer to [Effortless](#) by Greg McKeown
  - Inverting means asking "What if this could be easy?"
  - Challenge the notion that the right way is inevitably the harder one
  - Make the impossible possible by finding an indirect approach
  - When faced with work that feels overwhelming, ask: "**How am I making this harder than it needs to be?**"

## Specific Solutions

### 1. Scheduling

- a. Do you have clients directly schedule their time with you?
  - i. Look at tools that automate this via your website or phones. Example: [Acuity Scheduler](#)
  - ii. These tools can also take care of payments, reminders, and rescheduling
- b. Be wary of maintaining multiple calendars:
  - i. If you can have everything in one place - it allows you to make sure your priorities are clear
  - ii. Share your bandwidth with family - make sure they know what you're dealing with - and when you're carving out time for them.

- c. Leave gaps. Don't run back-to-back-to-back, especially if it makes you manic.
  - i. Properly scale your appointments: If someone needs an hour - give them 45 minutes.
  - ii. Use those 15 minutes wisely: Recuperate with a break, go for a walk, etc...
  - iii. Schedule breaks in your calendar: And make them as untouchable as you can.

*Remember: You're goal is to continually be your best self. If you're run down your clients aren't getting your best. They deserve better!*

## 2. Billing

- a. This can be very specific to your field
- b. As a business owner, evaluate tools marketed to companies larger than yours. Whether if be corporations, chains, or professional organizations
- c. Those tools are likely used for a reason: A feature-set that helps reduce busy-work, improving profitability, and is programmed with an awareness of your industry's specific requirements
- d. You likely don't need every option of those tools, so you may be able to utilize a scaled down version to save money.
- e. Don't be afraid to take the time to speak with a sales agent, Ask them hard questions - make sure it's a good fit for you!
- f. Don't settle for the marketing collateral on their website!

## 3. Time Management

- a. Most people are very good about managing their professional appointments: Meetings, travel, deadlines.
- b. Good time management means leaving room for all aspects of your life
  - i. Don't schedule every last thing in your life.

- ii. Set aside time blocks for thinking, hobbies that refill your battery, family & creative problem solving
- iii. Respect those times: Their value, the balance they bring to your ability to bring your best self to clients & your business
- c. **Be honest with yourself:** Carving out that time comes with a direct cost
  - i. It may mean 1 or 2 less client sessions in a day = Lost revenue.
  - ii. Your values come into play here - if you value revenue above all else, then by all means do it. But if you're happy to keep your business manageable, don't adhere to some mantra of always maximizing revenue.
  - iii. *It's okay to do only that which pays for what you need in life.*
  - iv. *Give yourself permission to live your life on your terms.*
- d. Having balance means balance in all areas, and revenue & profitability aren't excluded. So you MUST factor in that choice too

#### 4. Filing

- a. Get as digital as you can
  - i. Invest in multi-page scanners, or a data-entry service if your field allows it
  - ii. You may have specific requirements that limit you - Example: HIPPA
- b. Properly tag your files or maintain a simple, clear folder system.
  - i. This allows massive time-savings when you have to go back and troubleshoot problems.
- c. Make them accessible - Explore cloud storage storage so you can access wherever or with whatever tools you have at hand.
- d. If your job comes with menial tasks like transcription or data coding, look to services to help. Some examples:
  - i. [Fiverr](#)
  - ii. [Mechanical Turk](#)
  - iii. [rev.com](#)

- e. Value your time - give it a price tag per hour. Remember to view service or potential employees in terms of ROI!
  - i. If you can trust them, they're reliable, and can do it for less than your hourly rate - then do it!

## 5. Asking For Help

- a. Professionals are often worth the investment:
- b. At the very least consider having an accountant/bookkeeper & financial planner
- c. Participate in at least one professional organization in your field
  - i. They often have great resources - which often go underutilized
  - ii. They often have forums where you can learn from others in your field - learn from their experience & advice
  - iii. Might provide discounts on some of the tools/services that would help.
  - iv. Also great for networking - learn from what others in your field have already figured out!
- d. Explore consultants, or a trusted friend from outside your industry with a quality of life you admire:
  - i. Don't discount the specific problems in your industry: Listen, take notes, but you'll be making your own decisions!
  - ii. Many people are happy to help - but a paid consultant will invest more time to understand you, your business & your needs. They're also more impartial.
  - iii. Can connect you with personal or industry specific advice & tools that will jump-start your transformation

*Outside perspective is key - you're trying to invert!*