

Organizing Tips...

When you fall off the wagon

- By Lorena Prime -

It happens to the best of us – we realize we're not being as productive as we once were. Sometimes it is because of a life-changing event (birth, death, marriage, illness, job change, etc.), but sometimes we fall off the wagon from something as simple as a vacation. Our normal routine is changed and we may not realize that it causes us to become more disorganized and unproductive.

The next time you fall off the wagon, try the tips below to decrease your downtime and help motivate yourself to get organized again – even though you might not want to. You'll be able to get back on track and feel just as productive (or even more) than you did before.

Recognize your routine is off. As with any problem, you cannot fix it until you realize there is one! Just recognizing that your routine has changed and that you're not feeling as organized as you used to feel is the biggest part of getting back on track. (Now you are motivated to make a change.)

Give yourself a break. Life happens! There are big and small changes which can throw you into disarray – even good things like a long vacation, a promotion or the birth of a child. All of these things cause you to change your routine. If you're not careful to modify your routine or organizational systems accordingly, you will become less productive.

Get dressed and start work at a regular time. For those who work from home, this is especially important. Sleeping late or working in your pajamas is great now and then, but if it becomes more frequent, then you may have a problem. Putting on your work clothes and starting at the normal business hour will help you get into the right mode and will increase your productivity. When work is over, put the comfy clothes back on and relax!

Maintain what you have (don't start anything new). If a major event is happening, such as a kitchen renovation or a loved one is in the hospital, then you may not be as productive as before until the event is over. Determine if this is one of those times and learn to be okay with a disorganized life for a little bit. When the event is over, then you can get back on track.

(Reread this article to help you get motivated.)

Take small steps. Sometimes when we're stuck, we cannot see what to do, and we remain immovable. (Did you know that procrastination is a sign of being stuck?) To get moving again, think to yourself, "What's the very next step I can take to move this project forward?" Think micro steps...can you make a call, go online to do research, read an article, or ask someone for help in order to make progress? Thinking about the very next tiny step and then completing it is often all you need in order to get moving again.

Form a new routine or get back to your old routine. It's important to have a routine because it helps you do things more quickly. Because you've done these same things over and over again, it is faster, easier, and takes less thought. (You're on autopilot.) When you don't have a routine, it's like doing something new every time which will take you longer. The sooner you can create a regular routine or a system to accomplish something, the more productive you will be.

Seek help. If you've been unproductive for too long, you may need a kick in the behind. Call your mentor, a friend, your spouse, or a therapist for help. You don't have to have a long conversation, but just enough to admit that you're not getting done what you need to. Sometimes admitting that you aren't on top of things is enough to get you back into the groove.

In the end, the best thing you can do for yourself is to recognize that you're in trouble and take steps to get back on track. Sometimes it will be easier than others, but know that something will always happen to throw you off your routine and that is a part of life! Your job is to be familiar with the signs, get motivated, and recover as quickly as possible. **Z**

Lorena Prime, owner of Clearly Organized, coaches individuals as well as speaking at companies and organizations on time management, productivity, and using Microsoft Outlook more effectively. She uses a methodology that helps people shorten routine office work and save 1-2 hours every day. What could you do with an extra 1-2 hours? For more information, visit www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com or call 617-633-2199.