



Avoiding The Five Daily Regrets

From Jones Loflin-The Speaker With TWO Last Names



As you look back on your day, what are your top five regrets?



About 52% of Americans exercise for at least 30 minutes three times per week.

-Source: Gallup Poll 2011

Isn't the sense of accomplishment that comes from knowing you made the most of every moment in your day just fantastic? What's that... you don't know what that feels like? I must confess that this positive emotion eludes me many times as well. Instead, we reach the end of our waking hours with some level of regret about something we didn't do or the way we actually did complete some task, project or even a conversation with someone else.

The five daily regrets I see most often in my own work and life are:

- Failing to start my day without a time of reflection and planning
- Improperly managing my diet and/or exercise
- Wasting time on tasks that aren't important or urgent at the moment
- Spending mental and emotional energy on things beyond my ability to control
- Neglecting to spend quality time with immediate family members

Determining your list of daily regrets is important because each item represents a mental and emotional disconnect between what you did and what you *wanted* to do. They also form a framework for new attitudes or actions that should be taken tomorrow. If your regrets list looks anything like mine, here are some suggestions on what to do differently:

Failing to start the day without a time of reflection and planning. When we wake up, our mind wants to start working through the first work task or problem, and we miss focusing on the bigger picture. Those few moments of focusing on something bigger than yourself are invaluable in developing a healthier perspective on your day. Develop a regular routine of place, time and activity. And journal any thoughts that come to mind. It's amazing what your mind can fathom when it's not cluttered by the million tasks striving for its attention.

Improperly managing diet and/or exercise. There is no single larger contributor (or detractor) from our ability to maintain focus and energy than diet and exercise. To better manage your diet, look ahead into your day and see where possible temptations or problems might arise.



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Plan your meals accordingly and don't wait until the last minute to figure out "what's for dinner." Keep healthy snacks like almonds and fiber bars at your work area. They don't readily spoil and offer better alternatives than the closest vending machine. Increase your water intake (preferably with reusable water bottle) As for exercise, find someone to hold you accountable. Even if you can't do high aerobic exercise, try walking for 20 minutes. Anything is better than nothing.

First, ask yourself why you are engaging in these trivial tasks?

Wasting time on tasks that aren't important or urgent at the moment.

First, ask yourself why you are engaging in these trivial tasks? Is it procrastination about something else? If you can't avoid the tasks, limit your time on the activity BEFORE you engage in them (i.e. I'll spend no more than 5 minutes working through my email). Get an egg timer to give you a strong reminder to stop and return to the more important work of the day.

Spending mental and emotional energy on things beyond your ability to control. I often find myself taking a sheet of paper and making two columns: One marked "control" and the other marked "no control." I then list the issues or circumstances in their appropriate column. I then review my task list to make sure I have planned tasks to address the elements of my current situation over which I have the greatest control.

Neglecting to spend quality time with immediate family members. We fail to schedule such things, thinking they will just magically happen. To insure I don't miss a moment to daily engage with each member of my family, I have four activities that are always a part of my schedule when I am not out of town: Exercise with my older daughter, reading to my younger daughter, spending at least 15 minutes with my wife on a walk or in the porch swing, and visiting my mom in the nursing home for at least 20 minutes. I have discovered that if I get these four things done, the other parts of my day are seen in their proper perspective.

In 2011, the average time spent watching TV by adults 15 and over was 2.8 hours.
-US Bureau of Labor Statistics



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Mark Twain once said, *Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you did not do than by the things you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.* I find that the days when I have the smallest regrets are the ones where I have lived in the way Twain describes in his quote.

Start addressing the regrets haunting you at the end of your day, and you might be surprised to find what's on your horizon.

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Learn more at www.jonesloflin.com

Jones Loflin is an internationally-recognized speaker and trainer. His messages focus on change, motivation, time management and work/life blend. He is the author of two books: *Juggling Elephants* and *Getting the Blue Ribbon*. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression.