

A Little Planning Saves a Lot of Time

By Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D.

It may seem paradoxical, but usually the fastest way to get something done is to slow down, think it through, and do it right. Are you one of those people that says, “I don’t have time to get organized?” The truth is, getting organized saves time.

When people talk about “getting organized,” often they are referring to some vast task of sorting and putting away everything in their household. Yes, that’s one kind of “getting organized,” but “getting organized” can also take place on a smaller level every day.

Let’s take Lisa. She has an appointment tomorrow morning in an unfamiliar part of town. The appointment is important – an interview for a possible new job. At minimum, it’s a great networking opportunity and she wants to make the best impression. Lisa, however, isn’t used to “getting organized” the night before. As usual, Lisa is playing catch-up in the evening instead of preparing for the next day.

Although Lisa was busy playing catch up on overdue tasks the night before, had she only spent 10 minutes in planning, her morning could have gotten off to a good start.

What should she have done?

1. Laid out the clothes she planned to wear the next day
2. Looked up directions on the internet and printed them out
3. Gathered everything she needed for the next day (including the paper with the person’s name and address on it) and placed these items with her purse and brief case on her “launching pad.”
4. Gotten to bed on time
5. Set her alarm to allow an extra half-hour in the morning for contingencies (such as gas for the car)

Organizing time expended: no more than 10 minutes.

Time saved: at least 30 minutes

Cost of not planning and organizing: feeling frantic and anxious, arriving late one more time, and losing the chance to make a good first impression. Lisa's lack of planning may have lost her a job!

So, the next time you feel you don't have time to get organized, remember Lisa and realize that you don't have time NOT to get organized! A little bit of regular daily advanced planning will keep your days from being frantic "ADD days" and set you out on a day where you feel more focused and in control.