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Quotes from Leslie Shreve

Paper and Information

- “I bet you *don't* know where everything is in those paper piles and even if you did, I think it would take you more than 5 seconds to find it and it shouldn't take any of us more than 5 seconds to find anything in our offices.”
- “We get new information constantly. This includes articles, files, projects, papers, voice mails, e-mails, attachments and more. Build time into your day to file reference information in existing files or make new files as *soon* as you recognize you need one. This goes for both paper *and* electronic files. No matter what, don't let this information build up. If you do, you'll regret it later!”
- “Get rid of anything you don't need, use, want or love. Whether it's paper, information, business cards, books, binders, office supplies or anything else in your office that could be getting in your way, let it go to make room for clear space and a clear mind, both ready for progress.”
- “Setting up new systems is not a case of “set it and forget it.” A new task list, a new file system, a new e-file system, or new contact management system all need to stay current, up to date and ready to support you at a moment's notice. To keep systems like this, you need to give them daily attention because we get information daily. The most important thing to

remember about maintaining your systems, once you have them, is that they don't take care of themselves."

- "Make sure by the end of every week you have no reading pile left. Read daily, weekly and monthly information as soon as you can or on a regular weekly basis. Why? Because more is coming!"
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Time Management

- "We're all familiar with the tired time management phrases: "make time, save time, block time, keep time, manage time, etc..." What we really need to do is *protect* time. Time is such a finite thing. We can't have more or less of it, but what we *do* have is the choice to protect it. I recommend professionals protect at least 20% of their work day so they can focus and get their work done, uninterrupted."
 - "Don't give away your day to meetings. If you're in back-to-back meetings all day, when will you get your work done? And how can you be flexible enough to handle real priorities as they show up instead of not when they blow up?"
 - "Your personal productivity depends on your ability to say 'no' on a regular basis. Your stress level and peace of mind depend on it. No matter how stimulating and fun it might be to be *busy* all the time, don't forget that being over-stretched and over-committed can be stressful and unhealthy. Know the power of NO."
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Task Management

- "I recommend using an electronic Task list, preferably in Microsoft Outlook®, one that you can add to, delete from and change in a second. It's trustworthy because it won't be lost in the shuffle on your desk. To-do lists on paper are high maintenance and full of loopholes. Written lists will never, ever be complete; to-dos must be rewritten frequently; and lists can

be easily lost among other papers and files. A list can land in a pile and never come out again.”

- “Your daily, electronic Task list is the tool you need to effectively compare and contrast everything you need do to, have to do, want to do, or dream of doing – all in one place. You’ll have more control and clarity in your day and you’ll be better able to hit your priorities, be more productive and enjoy more time to do what you *really* want to do.”
- “Don’t fall into the ‘pending’ trap! Pending always turns back into action for you, with *very* few exceptions. Pending items –and things you’re *waiting for* - are typically follow-ups for later, so add these to your Task list and add a “do” date for when to take action if you *haven’t* gotten the results you were waiting for.”

E-mail Management

- “Your Inbox is an IN box, not a file cabinet or a to-do list. It’s meant for bringing e-mail IN. These e-mails are not LIVE-INS. They can’t stay. Look at them more as wanderers that need a better place to stay, either temporarily or permanently.”
- “Make sure you *minimize* and *organize* the amount of e-mail folders you use under the Inbox or on the left side of the screen. This is a short-term data storage area. Don’t park anything in those folders if it’s something you need to read, act on or file for long-term reference.”
- “You may feel safe holding on to all your e-mail in the Inbox, but the likelihood of missing something important – a task, a sale, a lead or an opportunity – is huge. Every time I work with a client to review their e-mail and establish a new system and process to get their Inbox to zero, they find something extremely important that was missed when the e-mail originally arrived.”

Delegation

- “Don’t hesitate to delegate. If you’re a manager or leader, the tasks and projects that are keeping you stuck may be things that others in your organization would love to do or love to learn how to do. No one to delegate to? You can still identify tasks that don’t bring you a lot of value or results, especially if you are doing tasks you don’t like doing, you aren’t very good at, or you just simply don’t have time for any more.”
- Don’t forget to ask yourself, “What would happen if I didn’t do this task at all?” See if the answer to that question is “*nothing!*” I’ve eliminated a lot of tasks over the years that I used to do regularly and guess what happened? Nothing! Except enjoying the benefits of time saved.”
- “The delegation process takes time, but it’s an essential step in getting your employees to be more independent and getting you to the next level of success.”