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## **DAYTIMERS: THE SURROGATE FRONTAL LOBE** **SAY HELLO TO YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND!**

People describe me as being extremely organized, prompt, and good at remembering things...even though I am not any of these things at all by nature! My secret is my DayTimer. Using one is an excellent strategy that I highly recommend. Some people might think that needing to use a DayTimer proves they are stupid or weak or inferior. On the contrary, using a DayTimer shows your wisdom in recognizing a personal 'roadblock', your maturity in accepting how your mind works best, and your intelligence in using a good 'detour' around an obstacle to get your work done to the best of your capabilities! RESISTING a great tool like this, when it helps so very much, would be far, far MORE silly.

Now that I've been using a DayTimer for years (I started in high-school and boy did it give me an advantage at school!) I've learned some 'T(r)IC(k)S of the trade' on how to make the most use out of your 'extra brain'. I hope they help!

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### **Getting Going!**

- get a DayTimer that is big enough so that you will not easily miss seeing it or lose it:
  - complete the contact information sheet at the front in case you ever DO accidentally misplace it
  
- get a DayTimer with both monthly and daily pages:
  - at the beginning of the year put all of your major dates (e.g., birthdays, project due-dates, exams, etc.) on the month-at-a-glance pages
    - \*this means that you, in one quick look, can get an idea when your busy times are and not get swamped!\****
  
  - at the beginning of each month transfer that month's major dates to the daily pages
    - \*this means that you don't have to remember to flip back and forth between monthly and daily pages each day!\****

### **Everyday Use!**

- get into the habit of carrying your DayTimer everywhere
  - \*this means you will never have a thought or request where you can't immediately log it in your 'brain'!\****
  - \*this means that the anxiety or embarrassment over forgetting something is GONE!\****
  
- log things as they are said to you, or as you think about them:
  - if anyone tells you an appointment, meeting, date-time, or work-hours, immediately pull out your DayTimer and log it.
  - if anyone asks you to remember a task or asks you for a time, immediately pull out your DayTimer and check your schedule before answering
    - \*this means that you only need to remember 1 simple thing: PULL OUT YOUR DAYTIMER WHEN YOU ARE PLANNING SOMETHING!\****



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-break tasks into pieces across many days:

-e.g. rather than just writing “study for exam”, write “read Unit 1 notes” on one day, “practice Unit 1 study questions” on another day, “make Unit 1 study notes” on a third day, etc.

*\*this means that it is not as scary to get started; it is easier to cross things off, and easier to feel good!\**

-if there is no clear time or date set for when something is due (e.g. you need to check to see if your rollerblades are fixed yet, or find out if a friend has finished a task for you), just pick an arbitrary date or dates and log these tasks in to remind you

-if someone offers you an appointment card, decline it in favour of logging the information into your DayTimer

*\*this means that you won't be scattered — if you need to know something all you ever have to remember is to look at your DayTimer\**

### **Filling Out A Page!**

-don't assign a time to a task unless it is required

*\*this means that you can work the way you work best — keeping busy by letting your mind hop from task to task!\**

-visually break the page up into different areas

-e.g., the upper part for work things, the lower right for volunteer duties, and the bottom for personal things to do in the evening

-use different coloured pens to symbolize different tasks:

-e.g. red for work, purple for birthdays/anniversaries, pencil for volunteer duties, blue for everyday tasks

### **General Tips!**

-decide that your DayTimer will NOT ALLOW YOU TO END YOUR DAY AND TURN THE PAGE until all tasks on current page are crossed off:

*\*this means that you only ever have to remember to look at ONE PAGE in the DayTimer!\**

-if you did not finish everything that day, transfer what you didn't finish to the next day or the next available day for working on it.

*\*this means that you will not forget the task, and you will have constant reminders to get started on it!\**

-log EVERYTHING: appointments, homework, chores, friends to call, things to ask your mom, something you want to say to a partner — anything that you might forget, or that will preoccupy your thoughts if you don't record it

*\*this means your head is 'free' of holding all that stuff — you can relax, confident that your DayTimer will remind you at the right time!\**



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-log a task onto the page of the day that it needs to be done AS WELL AS the day it's due

***\*this means that you will never be negatively surprised by an assignment that 'snuck up' on you!\****

-slide relevant materials for each day (e.g., tickets, printed directions) in front of that page in your DayTimer

***\*this means you don't have to remember where you put everything — it is all in the same place!\****

-if you know an unstructured day is coming up, prepare for it by adding tasks that you need to do on that day as they come across your mind

-when that day comes, allow yourself to move from task to task when it feels natural to do so

***\*this means that you can be productive without feeling forced to expend your energy into staying on just one task!\****

***\*it means you can be more efficient with your time — you won't spend the whole day trying to remember the different things you need to do!\****

-expect that there will be days where you cross NOTHING off your list, and other days where you cross MANY things off your list:

-this is simply the nature of working the way we do: for brief periods on many things. Do not get frustrated or scared — remember:

-we are still doing just as much (if not more) work than others each day: you kept constantly busy just like everyone else!

-we are bringing many tasks closer to completion SIMULTANEOUSLY: other people may get one thing done before us, but they've only been working on that one thing!