
Eight Epiphanies for Effectively Engaging with Your Email

April & Eric Perry at LearnDoBecome.com

Once you've reached inbox zero (LearnDoBecome.com/emails-zero), it can be incredibly easy to keep it that way. Here's some of the best advice from world-renowned productivity experts that will keep us all on the right track.

1. Keep Our Emails Reviewed (David Allen)

“Just as people have learned to accept commute time as dues they pay to live and work where they'd prefer, they must integrate the time and energy to deal with email into their life and work style.”

Simple, but brilliant. If we think that we can ignore our emails (or keep shuttling them into folders) and still have perfect clarity on what we need and want to do, we're setting ourselves up for failure. Instead, let's think of handling email the same way we think about commuting to work: We want to minimize it, but we accept it as something that needs to get done.

Go here for more from David Allen: <http://gtdiq.com/media/pdf/email.pdf>

2. Never Check Email in the Morning (Julie Morgenstern)

“If you start your day with an important, focused project, you'll get significantly more done, and this is what successful people do.”

Sure, it's tempting to check our emails within five minutes of waking up (studies show that's what most people do!), but if we can let our inboxes wait while we accomplish our highest-priority tasks for the day, think how that will influence our productivity over the course of a week, a month, or a year.

Go here to check out Julie's book:

<http://www.amazon.com/Never-Check-E-Mail-Morning-Unexpected/dp/0743250885>

3. Check Email Only Twice a Day (Michael Hyatt)

“I think checking e-mail twice a day is sufficient. If someone needs an answer faster than that, they can call me. It is amazing how much you can get done if you turn your e-mail off and actually work through your to-do list.”

This might feel impossible to some of us who are used to checking email 16 times per hour, but try it—and watch what happens!

4. Use Keyboard Shortcuts and Avoid the Mouse (Michael Hyatt)

“The mouse is a horribly inefficient input device. Nearly every mouse action has a keyboard equivalent. My personal goal is to never use the mouse. Every time I do, I must take my hands off the keyboard. It doesn’t sound like that would cost you much time, but it adds up.”

This will take some time to research and apply, but if we can learn even five or six keyboard shortcuts, that will give us hours of extra time over the course of a year.

For more from Michael Hyatt, go here:

<http://michaelhyatt.com/getting-your-e-mail-inbox-to-zero.html>

5. Respond Less to Receive Less (Tisha Leslie from Smartsheet Blog)

“Take care of actionable items, and only respond as needed.”

Clearly, this is easier said than done, but how many times do we send back an email response when it really isn’t necessary? We can do much by setting email expectations with those from whom we frequently receive messages. Our time is valuable, and we can’t possibly respond to every single email request while simultaneously living our personal missions to the fullest. Using discernment when it comes to which emails merit a response is an essential skill.

To read the whole post from Tisha, go here:

<https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/inbox-zero-how-finally-get-there-and-how-actually-start>

6. Utilize Boomerang for Gmail and Inbox Pause (John Lee Dumas)

“Boomerang for Gmail. This tool allows me to STOP email conversations and still get to inbox zero. Google it, you’ll understand exactly what I mean when you do.

“Inbox Pause. Another awesome tool. How many times have you gone in to ‘write a quick email’ but then saw 5 messages you were going to take ‘take care of quickly?’

“Happens to me all the time. Inbox pause allows me to pause my inbox and only get new messages when I CHOOSE to un-pause.”

John emphasizes that our email inboxes are full of “O.P.A.” (Other People’s Agendas), and while we definitely want to be helpful to our friends and colleagues, we’ll only end up feeling exhausted and sad when we consistently let our own goals and projects

slip. (And FYI, the Inbox by Gmail app has a free “snooze” option that works like Boomerang...)

Read John’s whole post here: <http://www.eofire.com/jldrant/>

7. Talk in Person (Lorraine Twohill)

“I still believe the best form of communication is talking. I know this is very antiquated. The most common email people get from me is two words: ‘Call me.’” (Fast Company, November 2015, p. 76)

Email is great because you can get right to the heart of the matter and respond quickly to questions, but sometimes the effort to craft the “perfect” response—with the right message and intonations (and then waiting for an equally well-crafted response)—takes much longer than just picking up the phone and having a brief chat.

8. Evaluate Your Relationship with Email (Merlin Mann)

“Where you decide to put your time and attention says a lot about who you are. If I sat down and asked you what’s really important to you, you’d say, ‘Oh, my family and my church group...’ But if I looked in your email inbox, what would the last two weeks of your electronic life say about how it maps to the stuff that you claim is really important? You need to find ways to honor where your time and attention go.”

Great points, don’t you think? And while our emails may be where we primarily handle our business matters, are we giving too much of our time and energy to people, organizations, or agendas that don’t actually support our personal values and goals? Would our email history show ample investment in the things we say we value most?

For the full video of Merlin’s speech, watch here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9UjeTMb3Yk>

If these ideas have been helpful to you, we’d love to show you a simple system for organizing all of your to-do lists and activities, easily managing complex projects, and more fully enjoying your relationships in the process!

Come learn more about Steps to Everyday Productivity:
<http://LearnDoBecome.com/STEP>