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How I Became a Morning Person...And You Can, Too

The morning is *my* time. And it can be yours, too.

It's a dark and dreary morning as I write this, but I am full of life, unlike this time a year ago. That was *before* I became a morning person. Before I started spending my precious 24 hours each day wiser. Before I got in three good hours of productivity before my family even got out of bed.

I've officially been self-employed for the majority of my post-college life. One of the benefits of being self-employed is that, for the most part, I choose my own hours. And, for most of my time, that meant waking up when I wanted to.

What are successful people doing?

That all changed last summer. I learned, like many of you already know, that if you study the lives of the most successful people on the planet, they all wake up early. Before the sun rises.

I realized the truth in the quote above. That my success is dependent upon how I use my 24 hours each and every day.

I used to not be a morning person. I woke up when our daughter woke up, around 8:00 am or later. I would bust it all day long, but I was always playing catch up.

So I started being intentional about when I woke up. I developed a strategy and then learned some things along the way.

3 Things to do Before You Begin

1. **Determine your why.** Why do you want to get up earlier? What will you accomplish as a result? What will it do for your family time? Your spiritual life?
2. **Assign specific tasks for this new time.** For me, I mostly added new stuff to this time. I added stuff that I wasn't doing, but wanted to be doing, such as running/working out and writing this blog. For you, it might be knocking out certain projects during this more focused time.
3. **Re-label yourself.** If you've always referred to yourself as a night owl or that you "hate mornings," it's time to change your words. Declare that you are a morning person.

5 Practical Tips for Becoming a Morning Person

1. **Go to bed earlier.** This tip is worth what you paid for it. As a matter of fact, you should Tweet this: "Amazing discovery from @MattMcWilliams2: If you want to wake up earlier, go to bed earlier. Changed my life." ([*Tweet that*](#)...seriously, if you don't you'll break the chain and the bald eagle will go extinct).
2. **Do it gradually.** The first day, all I did was set an alarm for 7:59 A.M. Then I woke up three minutes earlier every day until I was up at 7:00. Then I started getting up one minute earlier every day. This allowed my body and mind to slowly adjust. I wasn't suddenly waking up at in the dark and spending weeks adjusting. I gave it time, like any new habit.
3. **Fuel your body.** I don't eat breakfast. That is for my time with the family. But I also don't go hungry. Grab a handful of almonds or other healthy nuts or a piece of fruit (apples are particularly good at waking you up). Drink a lot of water (and allow yourself some coffee or tea as well).
4. **Make it bright.** If, like me, your family is still asleep, you'll spend the first minute or two in the dark, but after that turn on all the lights you can.
5. **Get moving.** Except in the heat of summer, I don't workout or run first thing in the morning. You might. Figure out what routine works best for you. But whether you go for your run or workout or get right to work, I suggest spending at least 3 minutes doing some simple movements to get your blood flowing. My five minute warm-up consists of jogging in place, push-ups, jumping jacks, and a few stretches. Then I am good to go.

Last tip: Don't be militant about it.

Give yourself grace when you miss a day. Or a week. Another revolutionary tip (like "Go to bed earlier"): If you go to bed late for some reason, sleep in a bit.

I give myself a break when I am sick or otherwise missed out on sleep. I slept in all week two weeks ago because I had a cold. My body needed more rest. It was not the time to push it. The extra sleep helped me recover. I did the same thing when I returned from a trip to California recently. I slept in until almost noon the next day.

What it's done for me

Since waking up earlier, I have:

- Started and maintained a daily blog.
- Hit my monthly numbers goals with each client every month.
- Trained for and run a 10k (from not running at all). Half marathon next!
- Learned to love the sunrise.

I love what I do each morning now. My day starts with purpose and direction. And it never lets up.

What about you?

What can you do by becoming a morning person?

Perhaps you will:

- Write the book you've always wanted to write.
- Go back to college and study during this time.
- Spend time more with God.
- Join or start a mentoring group.
- _____ (fill in the blank)

Make morning the most exciting part of the day!

What can you do by becoming a morning person? If you are already, what tips do you have for those who aren't yet?