



*the*  
**Devoted  
Dreamers**

AN EVENING PLAN  
FOR DAILY SUCCESS



**NICOLYA WILLIAMS, CCP**

The Devoted Dreamers: An Evening Plan For Daily Success

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# DREAMS

*D* - Design your day for tomorrow

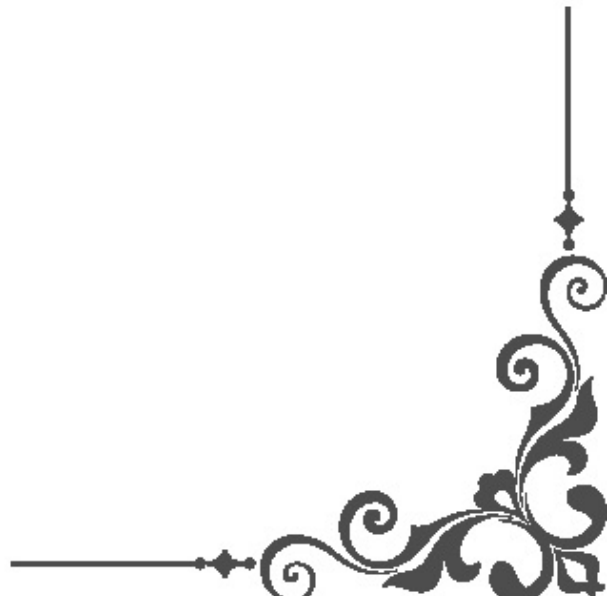
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Journal: Dream for Tomorrow



*“You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction overnight.”*

*~ Jim Rohn*

Everything we do in life is a choice. Hence, our life is made up of a series of our choices. This reality is often the hardest pill to swallow, as we have to own up to the fact that where we are currently in our life, is a result of the choices that we made. Although this can be hard to embrace, there is joy on the other side. Since everything is a choice, we now have an opportunity to choose differently; we can make choices that propel us towards the direction of our dreams.

Learn to accept that you have more control in directing the course of your life, than you want to admit. The truth is that life is a choice; love and happiness are a choice, and so is success. When you look back on your life, what choices were you making that you are grateful for? What choices did you make that you regret? Owning up to this reality will help inform your decisions in the future. *The Devoted Dreamers* will help you to make daily choices which allow you to live up to the best version of yourself!

This book was inspired by *The Miracle Morning* by Hal Elrod. In *The Miracle Morning*, the premise is to implement strategies every single morning for success. Since I read that book a while ago, I have taken the tips and implemented them into my life. I have experienced major changes. I was excited to wake up; I looked forward to completing every part of the process, and even got my friends involved. Working with various women, I have come to see that the morning can be a bit challenging for many women. You see, morning routines are great, but having the right evening routine in place has the potential to further double your success. That is because what you do before you go to bed really has an impact on how you rest, and how you begin your morning. The last thing you do before bed often has a significant impact on your mood and energy levels the following day. I started coaching clients on ways to increase productivity and reach goals by using their evenings for success. This is what I will share with you.

When I first started my business, I was working both a full time and a part time job, attending graduate school for my doctorate full time, going through a divorce, raising my two beautiful daughters, and volunteering at a small group in my church. So “busy” is my middle name and I can relate to how busy you constantly feel. I continuously felt overwhelmed, but I just knew that I could not stop. All the things I was working on were in alignment with my core values, and my dreams. So, I began reading tons of books on organization and scheduling, to find a way to get a better grasp on my life. One of the most impactful things that I learned during my research was that I could NEVER be successful without a routine. The truth is, our bodies thrive on routines. I knew immediately that I needed to find a routine that worked for me. Therefore, you may wonder what a routine looks like for you. You see daily routines look different for everyone, and as long as you align your daily actions with your core values, this in itself will give you the success you desire.

It is tempting to binge watch episodes of your favorite show, catch up on the latest gossip with your friends, or mindlessly surf the internet waves, but the truth is, that a proper evening routine can lay the foundation for success the next day. The other options do not lay the foundation you deserve. Through years of research, it is a well-known fact that successful people develop a shutdown routine that helps to increase their daytime

success.

I am literally obsessed with finding time and ways to improve my productivity, my mindset, and to accomplish my goals. In fact, the various time management and organizational tips and tricks I learned by refining my personal routine, and from observing those around me is what further prompted me to write two books on how our daily routines can either set us up for success or failure. I have tried many different things in life to make the most of my day, and to increase my success, but the routine has by far made the biggest impact on my life. Using this evening ritual in addition to the daily routine mentioned in my previous book *Quick Tips for Busy Women*, has been my arsenal in tackling even the most busiest weeks. I am well aware, as are most successful people, that there are 1440 minutes in a day, and it is our job to make the most out of each minute. Money that you spend can be made again; however, the time that you waste can never be made up. Therefore, in my eyes, time is the biggest currency in my life. The energy that you spend doing something that doesn't get you closer to becoming successful, is wasted time currency. Everything we do expends our reserves of our precious time and energy, so why not utilize it towards establishing a routine that will take us closer to that envisioned success?

Each moment of your life counts. There was a famous gymnast named Shannon Miller, who lived by a routine and made the most out of each moment. She was quoted saying, "*You must master your minutes to master your life.*" The point I am trying to make is that your life is sacred, and there is more that you could be doing to get the most out of your life! There are many actions you can take that may seem insignificant when only done occasionally, for example, brushing your teeth; however, over time those actions will add up, hence having a major impact. Think about it, if you don't brush your teeth for one day, it won't really hurt; but if you consistently do that, there will be real consequences to pay. Conversely, if you brush your teeth one time that is nice, but if you brush your teeth every day, there are going to be some beautiful results. Just as brushing your teeth consistently is part of a healthy dental regimen, and gives you that beautiful smile; **working on your goals by establishing a daily routine is the regimen and blueprint for your life, and how you choose to live it.** You must work on your goal a little each day in order to experience the grand impact that those small steps can have.

There are so many things that I intend to do in my lifetime, and without being intentional about them, I will never accomplish any of these things. Majority of people settle when it comes to their goals. According to Inc.com, 92% of people set goals, but never actually achieve them. We must learn to accept the fact that if we are not committed to thinking, acting, and living differently than other people NOW, while we still have the opportunity to do so, then we are going to live just like everyone else does. That includes living a life of struggle, resentment, and failure. However, if you want to live a life of purpose, and success, then the key is to live intentionally by having a willingness to change what is not working for you in your life.

Our time after work is what I like to call - special and sacred time. Most people use that time to either catch up on a nap, clean, watch tv etc. This is what I call doing



nothing. Doing nothing may be good once in a while to regroup, but too much nothingness leads to a brain, and body that is close to impossible to motivate. Keeping your brain active, and taking time to reflect really allows for your growth muscles to expand.

A 2005 study<sup>2</sup> on businesswire.com highlighted that the average person wastes at least 2.09 hours each day. Take a moment and think, if you used even one of those hours productively, how much closer would you be to reaching your goals?

Another common phenomenon after work is to just “go with the flow”. This may seem fun and exciting, but without a plan, you are allowing other people to lead your life. You are allowing things to come up, and keep you distracted from doing what you are supposed to do.

Have you ever seen a cruise to nowhere ad? These are advertisements about cruising to nowhere. This is where people sign up to take a cruise to simply cruise. They do not stop at any one location; they do not set out to sightsee. They simply just go to relax, regroup, and refresh. This is an awesome idea for people who worked hard on their goals all year long, and need a great vacation. The problem is many people are just cruising in their life permanently. They set off just hoping to reach their goals, but never really have a plan, or any intentions in place.

My goal with this book is to help you to be more intentional in your planning. I want you to plan your day for success, instead of just letting things happen to you. **Remember, life doesn't happen to you; rather, it responds to you, and it happens for you.**

Contrary to what most people believe, or would like to hear, successful people are pretty much time conscious about how their evenings are spent. For most people, early mornings are the times of higher productivity and least distraction. However, I have found that in addition to that, the evenings matter and play a role in my outcome as well.

What if I told you there was an evening routine that would increase your productivity, and ultimately your success?

It sounds too good to be true, but I promise it does exist. And not only does it exist, it really works. I have used it not only for myself, but for my clients as well. In one week, there are 168 hours. Most people spend 40 hours working, 61.6 hours sleeping. That leaves you with 66.4 hours for driving, taking care of household responsibilities, leisure time and personal development.<sup>3</sup> How are you spending your time?

It is imperative that your time is being spent on activities that have value.

I am not saying that leisure is not important, or that having fun should never happen. What I am saying is that they should be practiced in moderation. If you are always taking leisure time, there won't be any time to grow or to work on your goals.

Successful people understand that if they are feeling run down, distracted, or unwell, that's going to influence the quality of their work and hinder their success. How you spend your evenings after working, or spending time on your business really has a profound impact on your life. If you want to be highly successful, you must manage how you spend



your free time.

Accomplished people know that they can't do everything, be everywhere, and help everyone all in one day - or one lifetime. Instead of wasting time and energy on television and social media, we need to expand our definition of fun. When you open your mind to all that life has to offer, you will truly change your life. Lisa Messenger says it best, "*We should all open our eyes and minds to the limitless possibilities the world has to offer.*"

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<sup>2</sup>Dulles, and Needham (2011, July 05) *Americans Waste More Than 2 Hours a Day at Work, Costing Companies \$759 Billion a Year, According to Salary.com and America Online Survey*. Retrieved from

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20050711005088/en/Americans-Waste-2-Hours-Day-Work-Costing>

<sup>3</sup>United States Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016, December, 20). *Charts from the American time use survey*. Retrieved from Bureau of Labor Statistics Online. <https://www.bls.gov/tus/charts>



*“When you chose to make intentional choices aligning with your goals, you are guaranteed success.”*  
~ Nicolya

Have you ever wondered how you could actually accomplish all that you want? The first step is to get more clarity about what you want in advance. Clarity accounts for probably 80% of success and happiness. Without clarity, you are increasing your chances of feeling frustrated, lost, confused, and underachieved. In this chapter, we will learn how to gain clarity about what you want, and how to design your day allowing you to be set up for success.

Most people wake up with a stressor(s) (an unhappy position at work, clutter in the house, a lengthy to do list), or in a rush due to an alarm clock jarring them out of bed. This often sets them up on the wrong foot. They then go forward through their day hoping for things to go well. I am here to tell you that you do not have to wait for things to go well. Get up and start moving towards your dreams. Too many individuals are letting their day tell them what to do, instead of planning their day ahead and directing their steps accordingly.

Be honest with yourself. How often do you start your day without an idea of what you hope to accomplish? How often are you beginning your day with little direction about what you want out of the day? So maybe you have a general idea of the day's tasks, but if you have not taken the time to write it down in advance, you will therefore be less likely to achieve your goals.

Dedicated and disciplined individuals take time to plan their days in advance. This is ultimately one of the main practices that increases their success. In addition, it reduces anxiety about what is ahead, because they always know what they are looking ahead to.

It does not have to be rocket science, or a long ten-page draft of your plan, but it is important to have a plan written out so that you can use it to review and reflect upon, during the next day.

Every evening, I have the same routine to set myself up for success for the day ahead. First, I carve out time to list out all of the tasks that I would like to accomplish. Upon completion, I identify one thing that **MUST** be done, in order for me to consider that day a success. When you are writing this list, it is important that you focus on priorities; otherwise let's be honest, you will have a long laundry list of items needing to be done, which will leave you feeling overwhelmed and more likely to give up, resulting in accomplishing nothing. While making a list of high priority items that need to be completed, it is important to ask yourself how else can you be productive, and efficient. Once I make a plan of what I want to accomplish, I write out the day ahead. You may be wondering what exactly does a productive evening look like for me in my life?

- **Include all possible distractions.** It is important that you think ahead about what normally interrupts your ability to make progress toward your daily goals. This will allow you to prepare for how you will address them. For example, my distraction is social media. In order to avoid this distraction, I separate from my phone for about two hours each morning. To be completely honest, those are the two most productive hours **EVER**. Since I am aware of that being a distraction, I am able to brainstorm ideas that allow me to avoid distractions, or to be successful despite my

distractions.

- **Schedule your downtime.** In addition to writing in my distractions, I write in my down time. Everyone deserves some down time. If you are always on the go, and don't take the time to slow down, you will burn out very quickly. I usually allow for about 30 minutes to one hour of downtime per day. Each day this may look very different. It may be that I am watching my favorite TV show, it may be family movie or game night or it may be literally doing nothing. Listen to relaxing music, read your favorite books, do your favorite activities and make sure you embrace and enjoy every aspect of it. Whatever it is that rejuvenates you, make sure you allow some amount of time for it. Just be sure you do not overdo it. If you take too much time off, it is easy for you to lose momentum, or get off track with your goals. Revitalization is an important aspect of life, and you will never get much done without the opportunity to regroup. Things may turn out too rough sometimes, and relaxing is the only way to find your inner peace amidst the chaos.
- **Identify if there are any things that have been lingering, and follow the 5 minute task rule.** This means, ask yourself if there are things that you should have done that you just did not get to yet. I have one rule that I always follow at this point: if it takes less than five minutes, I do it immediately. The truth is that those five-minute tasks multiply, and build on each other, which then cause you to have lengthier tasks. So in that moment, if there is something small that needs to be done (i.e. emptying the dishwasher, sorting through today's mail, writing a quick thank you note etc.), I do that immediately.
- **Set out what you will need for the next day.** This could include getting your clothes, meals, gym bag, and relevant documents ready. Doing this will allow you to be more effective and productive, because everything you need is within your reach. Planning your day the night before is best because you will have a clear mind, and will be able to be more focused, instead of planning your day during an already hectic moment.

When you plan your day the night before, you wake up focused and you wake up with a purpose. When I plan the night before, I wake up less stressed the next day. I already know what to expect, and I know what to look forward to. It's like autopilot. I know what to do, and when to do it; I do not have to think about a single thing! Conversely, if you're not ready for the next day, imagine what can go wrong. Mornings can be extremely unpredictable, and therefore overwhelming. You could be distracted the next day, and pulled in various directions versus focusing on what you truly hope to accomplish. In addition, what happens if you wake up a little late, your entire day will be off.

The most unused, and underrated productivity hack is to plan your day the night before! When you design your day the night before, you are setting yourself up for success. This tip is one of the most important things you can do prior to actually going to sleep. When you take time to plan your tasks needing to be accomplished before bedtime, you avoid being behind tomorrow. This will allow you to wake up the next day with a firm plan, and will decrease the likelihood of you being pulled in multiple directions. I have

included a productivity checklist at the end of this chapter, which will help give you a better idea of how you can design your day for high efficiency, and maximum results. By making a list of the most important tasks you want to complete the following day, and listing them in order of priority, you'll focus on completing what is of utmost importance, and know what needs to be done the moment you wake up.

## PRODUCTIVITY

*Realistic Expectations Leads to Increased Productivity*

To-do List

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What has been put off that can be completed in less than 5 minutes?

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What is the number one task that HAS to be done to be successful?

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What should be completed after this is done?

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How will I feel when this is all complete?

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