

**BUSINESS EYE**

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# So, what have you done today?

WRITTEN BY

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**T**his week's balderdash masquerading as the words of the Prophet Alexander come to you from a baking hot Turkey where early morning buggy golf and an all-inclusive food and drink package at the hotel have me slumbering in a hammock during the middle of the day.

Henry David Thoreau wrote: "It is not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?"

This is a question that has been on my mind for a while now, not least because I'm

possibly the busiest person I know, forever bouncing between one sphere of influence to the next, always restless, preparing for what comes next.

When our lives are spread across many areas as is the modern way, no-matter how busy you stay, in each area you never quite feel present enough to play your full part in the eyes of others. The result can be that the people in your life start to think you are more interested in the other people in your life.

The odds are that you will at least partly relate to this way of being. Always busy, yet at the end of the day, wondering what you have actually got done that matters.

Worse still, the next day you must continue the journey already overwhelmed by unfinished activities which grow heavier on your mind.

We all come to feel unfocused and unsure of how best to juggle our growing list of priorities. Even with a to-do

list, you will find it becoming difficult to get down to the right thing because there is too much to cover.

These days, there are emergencies, interruptions and other unexpected demands that come at us thick and fast. This modern truism can easily blow a hole in your daily to-do list discipline and leave you feeling overwhelmed.

At day's end, we need a way of evaluating what got done and what is still to do. It's important to be able to leave it all behind in a way that is easily picked up from where you left off. Only then will you truly leave work at work.

I'm trying a 15-minute daily checkout that I read about recently, a simple routine that might help save your sanity as well as an hour or so a day.

I'm taking a brief pause at the end of the day to evaluate and set myself up to start anew tomorrow. It's a simple routine that, done consistently, helps reject the "everything-is-a-priority" mindset.

At work, you won't then bounce from meeting to meeting, project to project, without properly transitioning to the next thing. And in life, you might stop rushing to ferry the kids, make dinner, get to the gym or simply enjoy life without having properly left your worries behind you.

At the end of the day sit down, take a deep breath, and ask yourself three questions.

What did I accomplish today?

It is unlikely to be what you had on your to-do list, but you did something, right?

We need to celebrate small wins, to build the energy to contend with bigger obstacles.

Then ask, what can I do right now to disengage? This second question helps deal with that nagging feeling that you've forgotten something.

Check your inbox or to-do list one last time to catch anything that absolutely must get done today. If you're stopping mid task, jot down a 'breadcrumb' note about what needs



Alex says we should take time out to reflect on our successes

to happen next. It makes it so much easier to get back into it later and will allow your mind to relax.

Finally, ask when do I actually need to do the things I didn't get done today?

There is always a lot left on our to-do list, plus the new

stuff that came up during the day. Rather than dumping it all into your to-do list creating more 'undone-ness' — just schedule these tasks. Having a concrete plan for open issues helps ease the mind and gives us permission to let go.

Why not give it a go?