

I'm Not Busy. The Art of Unbusyness

This is tough. I'm tackling my first resolution of the year. We've all heard colleagues and friends overusing trite expressions like "I'm drowning" or "I'm just crazy right now." Maybe you do it too. That's so 2014.

I decided I want to be one of the new cool kids who have mastered the art of unbusyness, no longer running around touting how busy, important, and in-demand I am to boost my own sense of self-worth.

I've identified these items as my launching point:

- I never tell anyone how busy I am;
- I keep my phone "off the table" at meetings;
- I am reducing multitasking and focusing on individual tasks one at a time; and
- I am dedicating specific time periods for email throughout the work day and breaking free from the stream for the remainder of my time.

I told you it's tough. Have you tried this? Going gluten-free was easier.

The Resolution Is Focus

Everyone who knows me knows I am serious about New Year's resolutions (see my recent post here: [Your Resolution Resolution, Start Early, End Strong](#)). They have been a big part of my success thus far. So when I read several recent articles on how we often tout our busyness, I realized I do this myself too often and decided this is where my resolutions would begin.

When I took an inventory of the people in my life I admire the most, the one trait they all share is the ability to **focus**. They are some of the most in-demand people in my business, yet you would never know it. They are engaged with the task at hand; they are devoid of excuses, and the time that they have allotted for you is just that—yours.

Something happens when you spend time with these folks and dial back your own busyness to join them in that space.

- First and foremost, a good amount gets done.
- Secondly, an unspoken respect for each other is conveyed.
- Lastly, and perhaps this speaks to the first point, everyone steps up their game. We are more focused.

You may have heard this story, but it bears repeating. When Bill Gates first met Warren Buffett, their host at dinner, Gates' mother, asked everyone around the table to identify what they believed was the single most important factor in their success through life. Gates and Buffett gave the same one-word answer: "Focus." (See more in [The Snowball by Alice Schroeder](#)).

What else is there to say?

Status Check

Well, we are only a few weeks into the New Year, and my schedule has been rather robust. (Note: I did not say, "I've been crazy busy.") I've employed all the aforementioned tasks with these results:

- I haven't told anyone I'm busy. So far I've gotten a few quizzical stares; for the most part I suspect they think I've fallen on hard times.
- My iPhone is off the table. Literally. I bury it in my purse or in the back of my desk drawer for all meetings. Small problem, though: I haven't worn a watch in about 15 years. Now that I don't have access to my phone, I've nearly been late to my next meeting. It does feel counterintuitive to ask my colleagues around the table, "By the way, what time is it?"
- Numbers 3 and 4 are works in progress, folks. I've always prided myself on my quick response time to email. But I realized before, and more so now, it comes at a major cost. A constant shift in focus (aka multitasking) ultimately slows us down and robs us of the ability to fully engage with the task at hand.

Big Takeaway:

When you attempt this, you are amping up your game. You are producing better results for your clients and presenting yourself in a way that brings out the best in your team and everyone around you.

My professional life spans 20 years. What I am undoing now is much of what I learned it takes to succeed in business. But it's a new day. Here I come.

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P.S. Have any tips on how to get unbusy? Let me know at Dayla@DaylaArabella.com