

Your Perfect Day Defined

By Taru Nieminen January 31, 2017

“I hope everyone that is reading this is having a really good day. And if you are not, just know that in every new minute that passes you have an opportunity to change that.” ~ Gillian Anderson

How do you define your perfect day? Think about it for a few seconds.

I’ve posed this question to my students and some friends, and everyone has come up with a nice explanation and a great picture of their perfect day.

For example, especially right now in Michigan (there’s snow on the ground and it’s about 28 degrees) many might say: I’d like a day at the beach... you close your eyes and let the sun shine on your face...listening to the waves gently lapping on the sandy beach...a glass filled with a cool beverage of your choice... spending the entire day with family and friends, with not a care in the world.

Sigh.

Oh, sorry, I just dreamed myself onto a beach in Hawai’i!

Well, that’s all fine and groovy for one day or even a week or two of vacation. But what about the rest of the time? What about the other 345+ days of the year? And what about the rest of your life for that matter?

What about when you have to drudge to work, to commitments you’ve made, emails you have to answer? What about feeling the dread of going home to a messy house because you were too tired to clean, do the dishes, or even think of what’s for dinner! Everyone is waiting for **you** to deliver.

Now imagine if you could have your perfect day every day!

What? For real?

Yup. This is what Craig Ballantyne proposes in his newest book *The Perfect Day Formula*. And I’ve embraced it with open arms. I want *each and every day* that I live to be a perfect day. You shouldn’t have to compromise!

Now granted, I don’t spend every day at the beach by any means. At 28 degrees and ice floating in Lake Michigan, I wouldn’t feel the warm air against my cheeks even if I dreamed it. But the dream of spending quality time with family and friends gives purpose to each day.

There are some ground rules, of course, to obtaining your perfect day. You **must** make rules for yourself and implement rituals so that you can have the perfect day every day. The rules are there to make sure you don’t waste the entire day daydreaming, watching TV, or doing other non-essential things that do not propel your creativity and your writing career.

Now, don’t get me wrong- I love watching Netflix, but now I don’t get to do that until 6 p.m. That is one of my rules now. I’ve also implemented the IF...THEN module into watching TV. If I watch TV, then I will knit. I love to knit, too, so this is not an inconvenience for me. And a lot of socks are produced!

Some of the other rules Craig talks about is to get up every morning at the same time and go to bed at the designated time. Now, I’ve struggled with this a lot. If you have children or you work for someone else and have to be at your job at a specific time, then you don’t have much choice. You get up, go to work or take your kids to the bus stop, etc. – you’re up and *doing*.

But I’m a freelancer, working from home. There is no one here telling me what to do!

Some of you might not struggle with the getting up part as much as I do or with making yourself go to bed at the specified time. This is why I don't make resolutions. I don't keep them.

But I do have the wake up and sleep times on my rituals list, and **if** I want my **Writer's Life** to be a reality, then I must do it. Craig said he resisted this change for seven years! But when he did make the change, it transformed his life!

Are you ready for a transformation?

A gentle reminder: Habits take time to establish. You've probably heard the timeline: 21-30 days. I've almost mastered the getting up, and now I'm working on the bedtime issue. So don't exhaust yourself by trying to wake up two hours earlier right away. Just a few minutes a day will do.

So, how do you make every day a perfect day? The formula consists of five steps. Now, I put the five steps in my own words, so I could remember them, so these are not necessarily Craig Ballantyne's exact words.

1. Planning, Preparation, Elimination

- Remove Temptations
- Establish a Work Schedule

For this first step, I've already shared my temptations: watching TV and knitting. Really, I could do both all day, every day, but neither pays the bills. So now they are rewards and not self-explanatory events. And again, only after 6 p.m.

Based on one of [Will Newman's articles](#) on AWAI, I also made myself a schedule, the entire day sectioned into 30 minute increments. First I fill out the events which occur daily or weekly like my Monday afternoon "Skype call with Lisa" and the "Toastmasters meeting" every Thursday, even breakfast, lunch and dinner are on the schedule. Then I write down the "work" I need to do to boost my writing career.

Stole this idea from successful writers: I work in 45 minute sessions, then take a 5-15-minute break. That's when I do the dishes, vacuum, organize papers, etc. It's amazing – I've never had a better organized cleaning schedule! Try it. You might like it.

2. Power of a Professional

- Get a Coach/ Mentor
- Accountability Partner
- Be a Mentor, Teach, Share (Live by example)

If you truly want to be a professional in any business, you need a mentor or a coach. One of my mentors is with a program called Circle of Success. Some of you might have one and not even realize it. A friend or a spouse who is always willing to listen and gives constructive feedback.

You also need [an accountability partner](#). I just secured mine on January 10th and I'm ecstatic! I've already done more for my business and writing in the last two weeks than I did in the last two months! All because I'm now accountable to someone.

But to truly receive the benefits of either, you must also be a mentor. Teach and share the knowledge you have. You could volunteer, help a neighbor, mentor a struggling writer or a friend, or be an accountability partner. The list is endless.

3. Social Support

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Revised from a Toastmasters speech originally delivered on January 26, 2017.

- Seek Positive People
- Surround Yourself with Positive People

Fellow Toastmasters and AWAI writers are some of my positive people. I also have several writing groups I belong to, Skype friends, and email friends, and they are all charged with positivity.

Last week I had dinner with a good friend. She is always encouraging and makes me laugh. That's what you want to surround yourself with. Laughter and friendship.

4. Incentive – Treat Yourself

- Mastery Takes Time – [Delayed Gratification](#)

You might have heard about the study in which small children were given candy and told that if they could just wait a certain amount of time, they would get another piece of candy. Researchers then followed the group of children for five (!) decades to see their developmental progress. Those who waited to eat the first piece, were generally more dependable and had more life success.

So, do treat yourself, but delay the gratification and keep it simple. Obtaining the Writer's Life is hard work. Yet, however hard it might seem now, the reward in the end will be well worth the struggle. The treat doesn't have to be a new Ferrari. Although I'd like mine to be turquoise...

You can also use the IF...THEN principle here. For example: "If it is 3 p.m., then I will respond to emails." What a way to "treat" your business to something good. Incentivize your business success!

5. The Big Deadline (Daily, Weekly, Short-term, Long-term)

- 90 Days to _____
- Next quarter my income will increase by _____
- In three years, I will _____

Do you have goals? One thing is for sure: when you have **written** goals, you are more likely to succeed. Doesn't get any simpler than that.

When you do set goals for yourself, make sure they are [SMART](#) goals: Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based.

For example, I've given myself a deadline to have a business program called "Roadmap to Landing Your Dream Clients" done by February 12, 2017. So therefore, I need to include time for it in my daily schedule. Not only have I given myself the deadline as a date in the calendar, but now I also need to spread the time throughout my daily and weekly schedule to stay on track.

And you can bet I will treat myself to something fabulous when I reach the goal!

It might seem overwhelming to think of everything you must do to attain the perfect day, but I believe Henry Miller, the writer, said it best: "**Work on one thing at a time until finished.**"

How do you propose to make every day a perfect day?