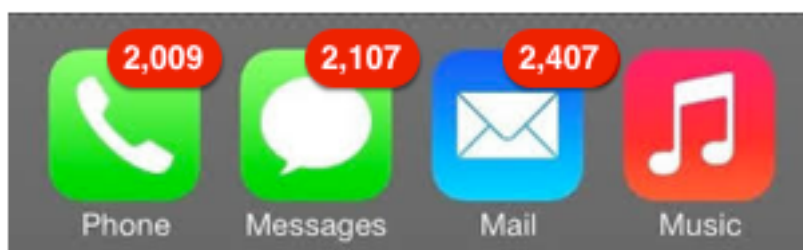


## Top 10 Tips For Associating **Pleasure** with **Efficiency**

In business, many of us are running on empty, just trying to stay up with the massive influx of messages, overloaded agendas and performance pressures. It amounts to a ton of stress and, unfortunately, we can find ourselves underperforming despite all the activity.

Here's a list of my top ten tips and tricks for making sure that burnout is averted and that you can work alacrity and efficiency. There's no reason that effectiveness and pleasure cannot be associated with one another in a work environment.

1/ **CLEAR MESSAGE INBOX.** Take stock of the number of unanswered messages. Especially on the mobile, you cannot be running around with a home screen that looks anything like this:



*Tip:* You'll need to organize your mails to be synchronized. Even though it will require some time, it's time well spent. You cannot continue with these badges that serve to remind you how far behind you are. Aside from anything else, it's often visible to those around you who might furtively look over your worried shoulder. It's an automatic indicator of disorganization and/or, worse, a signal of disrespect to anyone else who has thought to try to reach you.

2/ **SHORTCUTS.** Do you find yourself typing certain expressions regularly? On a small mobile keyboard, this can be awfully frustrating, especially if the expression requires a mixture of upper and lower case letters, numbers and/or accents.

*Tip:* Go to the settings and find the way to set up shortcuts for such things as your addresses, long email addresses, etc. In the iPhone, you go to *Settings-General-Keyboard-Text Replacement*. Then, for example, input a 3-letter acronym that would not otherwise be regularly typed and input the full text you would like that acronym to spell out automatically. In Android, it's not quite as intuitive. While the Google Keyboard has text expansion already built-in, the feature is buried in its settings. Plus it only works for that specific keyboard. A developer MitchTech brought functionality similar to Apple iOS over to the Android OS for any keyboard. You can find out about in the form of his Xposed module Macro / Text Expansion. [See more here](#). (Warning, it's a bit geeky)

3/ **MINDFULNESS.** We'd all like to "be in the moment," but things seem to keep getting in the way. If you are in need of a little resourcing, but can't find the time to go the gym, do some gardening, read a book or go for a walk, or whatever it ideally takes, there are some truly adapted tools and methods that help insert some moments of plenitude into your day. Many people talk about doing yoga, pilates and "zoning out;" but that just doesn't work for many of us. The beauty of these mindfulness exercises is that they are easy to fit into our daily existence.



*Tip:* Download the [Headspace](#) app and listen to Dave for no more than 10 minutes a day, slotted in between meetings. In French, there is [Petit Bambou](#).

4/ **JUST NOTIFICATIONS.** Along with badges that show up on the top right of your icons on your smartphone, there is the plethora of beeps, pop-ups and pings. These notifications are operating on their own schedule. In fact, the owners and operators of these notifications are keen to interrupt you, to draw attention to their app. It's how they make money... based on *your* eyeballs. Thus, it's very important to take matters in hand and control the notifications to the ones that *you* want.

*Tip:* Be most scrupulous about the notifications that appear in your **lock screen**. To the extent we refer to our smartphone between 50 and 200 times a day, the first point of contact will inevitably capture your attention and will potentially sidetrack from what you wanted or needed to do. For example, on the lock screen, I only allow meeting reminders, text (SMS and Whatsapp) messages as well as the tweets from 5 key people I follow. Secondly, one must be vigilant to keep the regular pop-up banner notifications down to the bare minimum. As a default position, I put all apps on Off. If I allow notifications, it is *never* with sound. Then off come the banners. And finally, there are the badges.

5/ **SERENDIPITY**. You've probably heard of the powers of 'serendipity.' However, it might also seem that some are better at having those "lucky" meetings. Introducing *purposeful* serendipity. It's about allowing it to happen. Ideally, serendipity is happening naturally, by accident. Since we all tend to lead crazily busy lives, and because I believe luck comes before work only in the dictionary, I think a little "work" can help.

*Tip:* The way I make sure that serendipity enters into my day is to ensure that I have planned to meet someone new every day. Look into your agenda and verify that you are allowing one instance every day to have a chance happy encounter.

serendipity

(n.) finding something good without looking for it

OTHER-WORDLY

6/ **PODCASTS**. Some of you may undoubtedly be listening to podcasts. Others shun or haven't taken the time to check them out. If you don't know what they are, podcasts are downloadable radio or audio shows. They can come with videos as well (vidcasts), but the power of the audio format (lighter to download) is that you don't need to keep your eyes peeled on the screen. Podcasts continue to mature as a media. [Here's a state of the podcast industry](#). I listen to podcasts regularly as a way to stay up to date on key topics that concern my business, as well as a way to introduce a degree of extra pleasure into my day. I like to listen to some friends who are running shows on topics of personal interest (e.g. [The Guitar Channel](#) by Pierre Journal). Another podcast you should make sure to listen to is called [Serial](#), an award-winning and absolutely captivating series in 12 sessions. Podcasts are an easy way to digest content, especially when you are on the move.

*Tip:* There are some useful digests that help “curate” and/or facilitate discovery. For those interested in marketing, try Jay Baer’s [directory of marketing podcasts](#). On a more general level, these platforms are very useful for discovery of podcasts for your taste: [Stitcher](#) or [PlayerFM](#).

7/ **MUSIC.** There is a joke that says that there are just two questions to which we all answer *yes*: we will all die and we all have to pay taxes. Sad, but true. However, I have a third: *Do you like music?* I have yet to run into someone who doesn’t like music. Afterwards, we all have varied tastes and different intensities of enjoyment (playing, watching or listening...). There are numerous neuro-scientific studies that have shown the positive effect of music on the brain. When listening to music, it fires up our neurons and triggers the release of dopamine.

*Tip:* Make sure to include a little music in your day – no matter your age or the amount of things you need to get done in your busy day. For example, listen every day to a playlist of some of your favorite music on your smartphone or play 30 minutes of your instrument just before dinner instead of watching the news!

8/ **SLEEP.** It sounds obvious that sleep is important. Yet it is a real and serious challenge for many people. Because it’s deeply personal, for some reason it is not a topic that business people and HR teams tend to tackle. Some more illuminated companies provide sleep pods for mid-day naps. However, the subject of sleep is now a recognized academic topic. We should research it a bit more to understand our own real needs.

*Tip:* [Sleep With Me](#), by Drew Ackerman, is a fabulous little podcast to help you get to sleep. You can subscribe on various platforms via the site. Also, I ask why don’t *Learning for Development* curricula include some sessions on sleep? Ask your HR LFD team to research it!



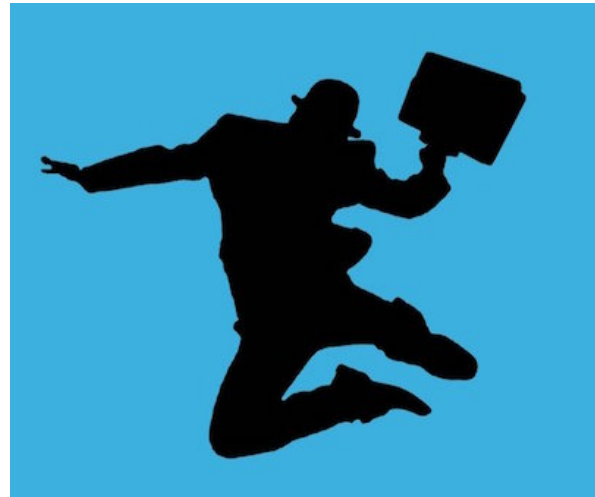
9/ **THE DIGITAL PAUSE.** An Irish cook always told me how important it was for her to touch her vegetables as they grew. Not that I am country bumpkin or someone who can easily live without my mobile near at hand. However, it’s essential that we spend some time living without the digital *invasion*. Programming a weekend without wifi as a voluntary act can do the world of good for rekindling romance, reconnecting with friends or family, revisiting some “analogue” activities or just appreciating nature.

*Tips:* If there are a number of apps that are designed to help control screen time for kids (e.g. Media Time Manager), there are also apps that help us, adults, with our own addiction to the mobile device. There is Moment (for iOS), designed to keep you *in the moment*. There's BreakFree, for "controlling smartphone addiction" by tracking app usage, The Mobile Flow, which tracks how long you stay *off* your iPhone, and RescueTime, which monitors your productivity and distractions on Android.

10/ **HAPPINESS.** Along with a good night's sleep, there is perhaps nothing better and more energizing than laughter. However, laughter is a temporary phenomenon. Being happy is a lifetime's quest. Of course, there is no tidy recipe for happiness; otherwise, we'd all be aware. That said, there are some great new apps whose goal is to help us along the journey. In the meantime, practice the art of being happy by being grateful for what you have, saying thank you and doing something for others.

*Tips:*

- Happier – Launched early 2013 by Nataly Kogan, Happier (mobile only) is the first social network for positive people only. Its core value is happiness. In its words, it is “a fun social gratitude journal combined with a positive community.”
- Happify – Launched Fall 2013, Happify allows you to measure and track your happiness. [Read the New Yorker article for more]. Based on scientific study, Happify provides recipes for generating happiness.
- HappyFuel – Essentially, HappyFuel is a social network, launched in early 2013, that identifies for each user places, moments and activities that create happiness. BTW, better only use the mobile interface as its website is still a Work-in-Progress.



If you liked, disagreed or found fault with any of these, please feel free to send me an email: [dialminter@gmail.com](mailto:dialminter@gmail.com). I'd love to hear your feedback.

Kindest regards, Minter Dial, @mdial – [minterdial.com](http://minterdial.com)