



EPISODE 26:
ANATOMY OF
A CALENDAR

Full Episode Transcript

WITH YOUR HOST LAUREN CASH

YOU ARE LISTENING TO THE EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEUR PODCAST WITH
LAUREN CASH, EPISODE 26: ANATOMY OF A CALENDAR.

Hey, how's it going? Doing well? I hope so. I have been having a lot of fun recently playing with my own Anatomy of a Calendar, and working on decreasing the number of hours I do "live" things or things that are more energetically draining for me throughout my work week as I build a team, build support, change up my business a little bit so that I can have more impact without more hours. I also have been playing with using my feminine cycle to plan out when I do things. So right now, I now batch all of my podcast recordings around a certain time of my cycle, and I also write most of my emails for my, at least the regular list at the same time, and I'm starting to play with that. I also think it would be really fun to have different schedules around different times of the year as well. I love the cyclical nature of this human existence and also, being in a body that has a lot of those flows and cycles. Instead of going against them like I have for so long in my life. What if I went with them?

If that's something that's interesting to you, I'm going to start to incorporate that as another tool around this Anatomy of a Calendar and planning your more ideal flow of your life. So stay tuned for more of that. But today, we're going to talk about the Anatomy of a Calendar. This is a tool that I really loved using with my clients as they've been getting started with being more intentional with their time and using time blocking on a digital calendar like we teach in Monday Hour One. Also, I teach my clients both privately and also in a lot of the courses that we teach and coach in. So before we get started talking about that, I want to shout out this awesome review. If you want to submit a review, you never know when I'll do a drawing giveaway and I also love shouting it out. So head to vivere.co/review in order to give yours.

This one today is by Shwag86 and it says, "Love!! Lauren offers such valuable information. I love her delivery and content. I'm a working mom of three and I gain something every time I listened to her, I'm still learning (aren't we all?!)" Yes, we are. "and I know that she will add value to anyone who listens and applies her methods. Go listen and have fun." I love that. Yes, listen, and let's have fun together.

So today, I'm going to introduce you to Anatomy of a Calendar. This is what I call the time blocking process and really grouping and batching like things together in sort of a calendar template that you are working towards in the way that you plan your calendar. What we teach in Monday Hour One is a time blocking method for a digital calendar. I hear a lot of pushback on the digital-only calendar situation. So I want to just give you a few of the pros for using digital. If you're not digital-only, don't worry. I wasn't either until maybe four or five years ago. I finally embraced that fully. I used to do a hybrid-type situation, but I'm so glad I ditched all of the physical planners, and now, I'm on virtual-only. So here are some of the pros that I have found.

One is you don't have to recreate appointments and time blocks every single week. You can just have them be recurring. So that'll save you a ton of time. You don't have to remake decisions all of the time, and then you also just already have them there so you're not having to write them all out again. You have them right there and you can just adjust during your planning of your week. You can just move them around the calendar as you would like them to be for the current week.

Another thing is that everything is all in one place. So let's say you have a lot of Zoom meetings. All of your Zoom links can be right in there on your calendar and you don't have to be referencing a paper calendar, and then trying to find out, "Where's the Zoom link? Where did I place that?" Everything you need to know can be right in your digital calendar, and it goes everywhere with you. So you have it on your phone, on your computer. You could even, if you really want to, print it out to have, if you don't want to always be looking at screens, you could print it out for the week if you want and you don't care about the trees, but then you have everything there; the address, who you're meeting, all their info can be right there in the block without taking up a lot of space. When you try to write all of that out on a physical calendar, it gets really messy and takes up a lot of space.

Another thing that's nice about digital is that when folks send you calendar invites, you can automatically have them added to your calendar that you already have going on, and you also can use calendar invites if you like that with other people. Then that saves a lot of time and effort for involved to make sure they're all on the same page and showing up to things at the same times.

The other perk is that you can use a scheduling software. This is the best. Most people I know only really use it for scheduling client sessions, but you could actually use a scheduling software, even for scheduling meetings, scheduling consults, scheduling anything, podcast episode guesting, etc. Right now, I don't really do a lot of my meetings on my scheduler, but I want to start doing that more and more so that we don't have to go back and forth and back and forth about what time would be best for folks. Also, it's easier then to share your calendar if it's digital.

Also, I like to have different calendars, AKA, I call them calendar layers for different parts of my calendar. So I have a personal one that I would only share with people that I want to see my personal calendar. I have a main work calendar that I share with my employees. Then I have a time blocking calendar that I don't necessarily want a scheduling software to check against it for scheduling conflicts, and I also don't necessarily want to share it with my employees, every single detail of what I'm planning to do on the backend. So I really like the flexibility of being able to have different calendar layers, and then being able to share them out with who is meant to get different things. When you have a physical paper calendar, it's really hard to share that with other people. So I love how it's just not anything extra you need to do, transferring things from a physical to a digital to then share with somebody, but you just are putting it directly into the digital world and you're also not having to re-type or rewrite, etc.

So those are some reasons I love digital calendars. There are probably a lot of other reasons why I love them as well, but those are some of the reasons. But when folks first get started with time blocking on a digital calendar, especially using the process we teach in Monday Hour One, their minds want to get really confused about how to do their calendar. Their minds offer them thoughts like, "I still need to be able to be reactive in the type of position or career I have," or, "I'm a mom and my kids will interrupt me. So there's no point in planning anyway." "I won't be able to finish things when I say I will. I don't know how long to plan things. It's overwhelming. I have too many things to put on the calendar. They won't all fit, so I don't know why I would even try. It'll take too much time to do the download of everything that I want to get done and break down projects to even put it on a calendar." The mind offers so many reasons to not use this tool.

This tool really is a tool to be used for you rather than against you, and it's a tool that's really helpful for the mind to be able to get on board to believe, "There's plenty of time. I know exactly when these things are happening. I can just be in the present moment of this present time block because I know everything will happen this week when I've chosen to have it happen." It also really can help manage your mind around overwhelm when you do this process, and help you be less busy and prioritize the things that you really want to have prioritized in your life.

I also noticed that folks, when they first start doing this, have a really hard time grouping like things together and accounting for all types of tasks, results, outcomes they want to have in their life on a daily basis. So that's why I created Anatomy of a Calendar. I want to offer you an exercise of creating your Anatomy of a Calendar to help you design your ideal calendar. So there's a PDF version of this that you can download, my gift to you. It's a two-page PDF. First page has a Monday through Friday sort of grid-like color-coded system. Then the second page is a key, and it goes through each of the general categories that you probably will find if you're like most people that I work with that you have in your schedule.

I want to offer you that you get to decide ahead of time, where you want these things in your schedule. If you want it regularly on a weekly basis or on a monthly type timeframe, kind of like what I'm doing with my cycle, or if you want to have different time blocks, regular times of the week, etc. It really helps to just decide it ahead of time and experiment and take, what I call, field notes, to then adjust and keep adjusting until you find the flow that you really like that works for you in your business and your life. So I'm going to walk you through the six categories right now. You'll also read them in the PDF and it will help you plan out your regular flow of things. You can go to vivere.co/26 to download your free PDF of the Anatomy of a Calendar.

So the first category is free time. And this is your personal time, your free time when you get, I don't know, your nails done, you take a bath, you have completely unscheduled time, you read a book, you take lunch, whatever free time is for you, which it's been interesting coaching folks because a lot of minds have different beliefs around what counts as free time and what doesn't. So I would recommend using the definition that serves you in your life in the current season the most. So you want to plan that first. You always want to decide which hours will you not work first. You can either plan what you'll do during that time or leave it free. You're just not working. It's interesting some minds think of not working in different ways as well. So I'll let you decide what works best for you. Even if you want coaching around that too, the Vivere Co coaches and I would love to help you figure out what that looks like for you.

The second category is hour one, which I just saw in this PDF, actually, there's a typo I hadn't noticed before, so it's just supposed to say hour one. This one I brought up, it says hour one done but you're hour one practice, and this is what we teach in Monday Hour One is basically your planning of your week. If you want to go into depth for how that process goes, I would recommend taking that course if you haven't yet. So this is the first hour of your workweek, but a lot of people like to plan their calendars over the weekend or even at the end of their week. I really like having space between the hour that is completing the workweek and then having time off in between to then plan my week. Having that space really helps in-between hour one and hour done. You want to do that though before you're really head's down in your week so that you can be really strategic and intentional about how you want your week to go so it doesn't run you and you run it.

The third thing is focus time, which is when you will do your deep work. We talk about this more, of course, in Monday Hour One, but this is where a lot of Cal Newport's teaching come into play around deep work and digital minimalism, how to focus and get things done, like that deeper, higher thinking work. I'm going to talk more about how to focus in the next episode. So stay tuned for that.

The next category, category four is called communication time. So in most positions, we have some communication happening either in the form of emails, Slack, phone calls, anything else like that, DMs, Voxer. Whatever it is, you want to decide on when you are going to do communication time, rather than doing a split focus situation where you're working on other things and then you're dividing your focus to then respond to email randomly while you're also writing copy for a client. Or while you're doing some other deep work, you're also trying to notice when Slack lights up and that will really not help you be productive or effective in your work if you're trying to split your focus like that all the time. So I recommend setting aside time for communication, even if it's the top of the hour, every hour. Decide when you will communicate with folks and when you will have your focused time.

Then your next category are like, what I call, the live things; so your meetings, your sessions, any client responsiveness, which could be kind of communication time, too. It depends on what your profession is. Anytime your energy is going into servicing clients, live things, webinars, these sorts of things, then you will plan where those go and what times of day that works best for you, when you schedule clients, don't schedule clients, etc.

Number six is margin time. I love margin. Margin helps us so much, and margin can really just be also additional free time if we don't end up using the margin in order to accomplish anything else. But this is where you can leave time for any unplanned, unexpected emergencies, things that we didn't know were going to happen in a week. It just gives you the breathing room, and you really want to have a section of your time in your workday that is margin, cushion. It's there for you if you need it, and if you end up not using it, it could be additional free time. Or you could decide to work ahead depending on what sort of time management stuff you have coming up and how perfectionistic and overworking you've been, will depend on what I'll advise you to do with that time if you end up not using it.

So definitely get coached on that if you're not sure which one you would fall into, but we go into depth in Cultivate Margin, all about margin, and a lot of other, it's kind of like Monday Hour One 2.0, and that's not released yet as of this episode's release, but it will be on our site soon. Coming attractions, get ready. If you're listening to this later in the year, you'll be able to head over to our website and grab that course if you're interested in taking your time management to the next level and make sure that anything that you want to create is done because you put it on your calendar. That is what you'll be able to create in Cultivate Margin. Plus, you'll cultivate margin.

So the final category of our anatomy is this hour done. You can do this on a daily basis. I like to talk about closing rituals. You can do a closing ritual. You can also do this at the end of the week. I like doing inbox zero, making sure I'm at inbox zero and also downloads folder zero. I've been bad about that lately and it's really biting me in the butt, so I would make sure that you're starting to create a better workflow around that, your files, your downloads, your email inbox, starting to set up your next week for success. I have a lot of tips for how to do this on the website under our Articles as well.

So I hope that's helpful. Start to think about which categories you would have in your life and business that you want to start setting up an ideal calendar template. When do you want to have your focus time? Be strategic around that? When would be the best time to be uninterrupted and not be missing out on something you need to be focused on in your business? When would be the best times for your energy to have meetings, sessions, client servicing? For me, it's really between 10:00 or 11:00 AM until basically, 2:00 PM with an hour lunch break. So I don't really have a lot of time in a day for really live things. So I have to be really strategic about how I use my energy for those things with my human design and just the way that I am wired.

I used to do, last year I had, I think at one point, I had like 25 sessions a week or something like that. As much as I loved serving all of those people, it was not the best for me and for my energy and for my health. So now, I'm making sure that my company can still impact a lot of people, which is why I'm mentoring coaches in the methods that I use and helping supervise them in coaching more of our clients. So if you're interested in being one of our clients to figure out what would be your Anatomy of a Calendar and how can you get your life aligned with that template, I would really recommend working with one of our Vivere Co coaches. You can also find out how to do that in the show notes or email us at hello@vivere.co. But for sure, you want to go download this PDF at vivere.co/26 and have the most fun planning your ideal Anatomy of a Calendar.

Until next week, have an amazing week. Bye.

xo, L.

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