



Wellness Center by Beth Beutler

An Essential Habit: Reading

Yet another one has arrived...a publication or e-newsletter that you know will contain great information, but that for now, you'll just have to add to that growing "read later" pile. Be careful! That may not be the best approach to take. Try these tips instead:

Raise reading to a higher priority. There is no substitute for spending regular time in God's Word as well as with inspiring and helpful materials. Ironically, some of the most successful people in the world, with huge demands on their time, are the very people who make their own development a priority.

Begin your work day with reading. Keep your Bible, helpful periodicals and devotionals at your desk and when you first get to work, read for up to five minutes before turning on your computer.

Keep reading materials handy. I have a few spots where I like to keep reading materials: *bag* (tote bag or purse, for those times when you are forced to wait), *bike* (a stationery bike), *bed*, and *bathroom*. (In a previous workplace, I kept a basket of periodicals in the staff rest room for everyone's convenience) When handy, they'll be looked at!

Divide up the reading. Assign each staff member a different periodical to read and have them give a quick review at your next staff meeting, pointing out the highlights and best tips.

Skim, skim, skim! You do not have to read every word of every publication. Glance down the center of each page to pull out thoughts and tips that particularly apply to your situation.

Manage "read later" piles. I've tried the idea of putting e-newsletters into an electronic folder called "read later." The trouble is, sometimes I wouldn't get to them until much later. Instead, scan all items when you first go through your daily email, keeping only the ones where something jumps out at you right away. Print those out and place them at your handy "reading spots" or into an e-folder you know you will review regularly. Delete the others.

Don't be afraid to delete! Sometimes, you might just need to delete an email or toss/recycle a periodical without really diving in. That's okay! Because information gets circulated so much and is often stored on web sites, you need not fear "missing out." You may even want to discard your current pile and start fresh with a new plan!

Consider unsubscribing. Some time ago, I removed myself from a delightful e-publication that I realized I read more for the sender's unique personal essays than for the actual purpose of the email. Concentrate on publications that do the most for your personal and professional life even if that means stopping others that you may enjoy.

An office professional makes time to learn, grow, and keep up in this information age. There's no way to do that without reading, so use these tips to implement your new reading plan today!



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