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Calendar Hacks for Introverts The Marketing Chat Podcast ep. 049 Podcast Transcript

It may not seem like it on this podcast or once I'm around people in person. But I am an introvert. The key thing that defines an introvert is that we need lots of downtime to refresh and recharge. We aren't all shy. I'm not!

The thing is that we all get drained by interacting with people. In contrast, extroverts get energized by interacting with people. It's not that they never need downtime. Of course, they do. But they can go hours a day, for days on end, interacting with people and keep their energy up.

Not so with introverts. Too much time around other people, and we're wiped out for days.

Lockdown during the pandemic affected introverts and extroverts in different ways.

Extroverts tended to get really frustrated and down by being stuck at home and not being able to be around a variety of people. Even if they lived with other people, that tended not to be good enough for them. Extroverts need variety.

Now, introverts were hit differently. Introverts who live alone were kind of in heaven! There were jokes running around social media that lockdown was an introvert's dream come true! I mean, this was an exaggeration because, of course, introverts don't want to live in isolation forever. But lockdown took the stress off of introverts from having to be around people all the time.

Of course, introverts who live with other people tended to get frustrated that they didn't get alone time. They were forced to be around other people all the time for all those months. They were constantly drained. And, if they lived in a small house or apartment, they had no escape at all.

I was living in a large house then with my son who was 14 at the time. I was divorced, but my ex-husband had been living in the house. Luckily, he moved out that January—just two months before lockdown. We're friends. But, if he had been living in the house during lockdown, it would have been a bit stressful. I would not have had any alone time at all.

As it turned out, in that too-big-house, my son and I had plenty of space to ourselves. So, we had a balance of alone time and together time. Super-lucky. I certainly missed my weekly dinner with a couple of girlfriends and eating out in general. But, otherwise, lockdown was not overly difficult for me.

So, today I'm talking about calendar hacks for introverts. Why calendar hacks?

Well, introverts tend to hate having people-based appointments on our calendars! At least, we hate having too many appointments on our calendars.

I mean, I love having a calendar full of clients. But I want my calendar more full of client *work* and less full of client *meetings*. Client work is solo work. It's time that I can control, time when I can be creative.

While I schedule client work, other creative work, and basic must-do tasks into my calendar, these scheduled tasks aren't set-in-stone fixed to a time. And they aren't draining. In fact, the client work and creative work energize me.

Client *meetings*—or any people-based meetings—mean that I have to suddenly stop the creative work that I'm doing. They are totally fixed to a time and expend energy.

I don't mind having a full calendar. I put everything in my calendar—all my little to-dos, when I'm going to write and publish a podcast, when I'm going to write my newsletter, when I'm going to answer emails, all of that kind of thing.

I just don't love seeing my calendar filled with people-based appointments because those appointments mean that I'll have to stop my other work, possibly in the middle of being in flow, and those appointments may end up wearing me out.

Other introverts are the same way.

So, I thought it would be helpful to you for me to share some calendaring tricks that I use to keep my schedule manageable and not wear me out. There's nothing worse in

the morning than waking up to a calendar that is wearing you out before the day has even really started!

By the way, if you're an extrovert listening to this episode, you can still implement these tips. They're really helpful for increasing creativity and getting into flow.

So, let's dive in!

First, I block off one day a week for nothing but creative work. In my calendar link at Honeybook that people can use to schedule with me, I never allow scheduling on Wednesdays. Those days are all for me. And I do not waver on that.

I like to do this on Wednesdays, right in the middle of the week, so that I have a pretty balanced week. I don't have work meetings on weekends. I allow some work meetings on Monday and Tuesday. Nothing on Wednesday. Then work meeting on Thursday and Friday. So, two off, two on, one off, two on. And so on.

Next, I block off other solo time in my calendar every Tuesday and Thursday. I run the live sessions for my podcasting course and community, the Women Podcasters Academy, every Tuesday at 3p eastern. So, I don't want a bunch of other work meetings that day. I schedule a block of solo time on Tuesdays to do my own work that includes prepping for that session.

Thursday just feel good to have a little solo time blocked off. I know a lot of people do this on Friday. But I don't mind having a fairly packed day on Friday heading into a weekend of two days off of meetings.

Also, I have a standing weekly dinner every Thursday. Every two out of three weeks, I'm in charge of making the main course or dessert. So, I need to block off time for making that. Also, some weeks I might be putting the finishing touches on next Tuesday's podcast or that Friday's newsletter. So, I definitely need to schedule in time for those items.

Now, here's the key to scheduling that solo time, especially when it includes creative time, not just time to do bills or bookkeeping. You want to schedule it during a time when you are most energized and creative. That doesn't mean that you want to schedule work meetings and client meetings when you are tired. But, if you schedule solo time during an energetic trough, you won't be effective then at all.

In my case, I'm most creative in the morning—well, 6a to 2p. This works out perfectly on Tuesdays when I teach the live session at 3p. So, since I don't want any people-based appointments right before the live session, I schedule the alone time from 1p to 3p on Tuesdays. I allow people meetings on Tuesdays from 9a through 1p.

So, figure out a day of the week that you can totally block off for yourself. Then pick two days of the week to schedule in more solo time.

Now, this doesn't mean that you can't have solo time on other days of the week. Feel free to schedule in solo time every day of the week. If you don't have many people meeting every week, then maybe you can schedule two or three solo days every week and have only one or two days be for people meetings!

I let people schedule meetings with me during limited hours four days of the week because I've got different types of meetings throughout the week. I've got people scheduling podcast interviews, 1-on-1 sessions through the Women Podcasters Academy, client meetings, and general consultations. I've actually got different time slots set up for different types of meetings.

Now, once I get a meeting or two on the calendar, I go into my scheduler and block off the rest of that day. I do not want to have more than two meetings on any given day. And I may even block off the rest of the week to make sure I have enough solo/creative time to get all my client work done.

Let me make one other comment about scheduling this solo time. Just because I don't officially schedule solo time on Monday and Friday doesn't mean that I don't *have* solo time on Monday and Friday. Most weeks, I have a ton of solo time on Monday and Friday. It's just that I *allow* for multiple meetings on those days. Well, I allow for two meetings on those days.

I allow for one meeting on Tuesday and Thursday. And I allow no meetings on Wednesday.

So, the most number of meetings I'll do every week is 7. Seven is really maxing out my energy.

Okay, so these two things are huge: Blocking off at least one day a week for nothing but solo time then scheduling some solo time into at least two other days each week.

Now, to make the best use of that time, at the beginning of every week—I do this on Sunday—you’re going to look at your goals for the week and create the tasks you need to do in order to achieve those goals. Then you’re going to schedule those tasks into your calendar.

So, let’s say I need to create a solo podcast this week. I need time to write it. That’s one task. I need time to record it. I need time to create the cover art. And I usually edit and schedule it at the same time. So, record, edit, cover art, and schedule are one task for me.

So, I’ll look at my calendar at one of my solo blocks and pick a time to write. Writing a 20-minute podcast tends to take me about 90 minutes. So, I’ll need to find a 2-hour solo block of time. Recording, editing, cover art, and scheduling all combined take me about 90 minutes to two hours. So, I’ll need another 2-hour solo block of time.

Now, even though you’re scheduling your blocks at the beginning of the week, you can always make adjustments every day. We introverts do *not* like having calendars that are set in stone!

I frequently change mine. But, what’s that advice from Stephen Covey? Big stones in first. That is, you put your big priorities on your calendar first. Then you put the little stones in after that—the little things that don’t matter as much and aren’t so urgent.

My podcast is a massive priority. So, it go in first.

Client work is also a massive priority. It goes in with the podcast. I work them around each other. But one never displaces the other. I’ll limit meetings before I limit podcast time and client work time.

Now, here’s another trick for scheduling your solo work time. Do your tasks in batches.

I try to write my podcasts in batches. That is, I’ll try to write at least three podcasts in one day—usually a Wednesday. Then I’ll record them that same day, if I have time—or another day, if I run out of time.

When I batch my writing, and know my topics ahead of time—which I do because I keep a running content calendar that’s scheduled for months in advance—I tend to write faster because I know I need to get several episodes done in a short amount of time. I work well to deadlines.

I can then record them all at the same time. Then I'll edit one after the other. I'll create the cover art at the same time. Then I'll schedule them at the same time. Then I'm done for a few weeks. Of course, I'll go through this whole process again before I get to the end of that cycle. I like having a little buffer.

So, you're scheduling your tasks for the week at the beginning of the week. You have the flexibility to adjust them day-by-day. And you're batching your tasks as much as possible.

A really important thing for introverts is that you balance your people with your solo time. Now, by "balance," I don't mean equal time for each. You probably need more solo time, more creative time. So, be really vigilant about that. Schedule that time in, and guard it well. Make exceptions only when you really have to.

And sometimes you will have to. There will be an event you need to attend. A client just absolutely can't meet on any other day before they leave town. Or you're about to leave town and need to fit in more meetings.

So, let's review:

1. Schedule at least one day a week for nothing but solo time/creative time
2. Schedule more solo time during at least two other days of the week
3. Set your goals for the week on Sunday
4. Figure out what tasks you need to do to accomplish your goals
5. Schedule those tasks into your calendar
6. Remember that you can be flexible with those tasks day-by-day
7. Batch tasks when you can, and schedule those batching times into your calendar

That's it!

If you're an introvert, these tips will help you maintain your energy without getting drained and needing days to re-energize.

If you're an extrovert *or* introvert, these tips will help you be more creative and get into flow.

You don't have to wait until Sunday to get started! Start right now.

Decide what day of the week you'd like to day as your solo/creative day. Look ahead in your schedule and see what you'll need to rearrange to make that happen.

If you've got meetings scheduled on that day in the future, start rescheduling the ones you can. If there are some that can't be rescheduled, then leave those alone and just try not to schedule anything else on that day in the future.

Next, go into your scheduling system—if you use one—and get rid of the option to schedule with you on that day. Erase it completely!

Next, pick what times you want to block off on at least two other days every week for solo/creative time.

Try to reschedule any meetings you have during those times in the future. If you can't, don't worry about.

Then go into your scheduling system, and get rid of the option for people to schedule with you during that time in the future.

Now, when Sunday rolls around, set your goals for the week. Just 3 big ones. Then figure out what tasks you need to help you achieve those goals.

Schedule those tasks in your calendar, trying to batch them by themes where you can.

How does that feel?

It will take a bit of time and thought upfront. But it won't take any time in the future—except for setting your goals and tasks. Your calendar will already be set up. You'll just be dropping your tasks and your batching times into your solo time slots.

How awesome is that?!

That's it for today! You can leave comments on this episode's page on my website. Link in the show notes. See you next time on the Marketing Chat Podcast!

[Link to this episode](#)



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