



# 80/20 TECHNIQUE



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## 80/20 TECHNIQUE

I had the opportunity to catch up on some podcasts, including one from one of my favorites, Tim Ferriss that taught me a new planning technique. I applied Tim's unique approach and found it helpful for planning. Try it!

1. Schedule one hour on your calendar for this exercise. (I found it took me 30-45 minutes.)
2. Take a blank sheet of paper and draw a line in the center, from top to bottom. Write a "+" at the top of the left side, and a "-" at the top of the right side.
3. Open your calendar and go week by week reviewing all of your work and personal appointments, efforts, asking yourself this question: what were the 20% of items/effort I spent that gave me 80% of my emotional satisfaction (pleasure, positivity, learning, etc.). Write each of those items down in the left-hand column.
4. Restart the same review, but this time ask what were the 20% of items that gave you 80% of emotional dissatisfaction (fatigue, frustration, negativity). Write each of these items down in the right-hand column.
5. Once completed, review each of your columns for patterns—what were the characteristics, trends, patterns, that made the right-hand list give you satisfaction? What was it about the left-hand list that drained you?

Steps 1-5 completes the 80/20 analysis of your time and effort. I started to notice patterns immediately.

### **Positive (+) patterns:**

- + Impact
- + Engaged Audience
- + Travel
- + Learning
- + Working on the Fly

### **Negative (-) patterns:**

- Repetitive
- Lack of Leadership/Drive/Results
- Going through the motions

These patterns reminded me of the kind of work and personal time I enjoy—the sense of making an impact, whether for a client or with one of the Scouts in my Boy Scout troop, and the energy and fun I have consulting real-time on challenges with clients and my team. It also was a wake-up of what drained my energy and passion over the year—at times feeling a sense of futility or a lack of commitment to drive change or results. From this, I'm asking myself "how does this effort/client relate the positive or negative patterns?" If it leans towards the negative, can I do anything to pull it towards the positive?

**What do you do with it now? You apply those lessons to this year:** Consider how to say "no" or delegate those items that were on your right-side column and find ways to enhance your right-side patterns. Intentionally seek opportunities to work on those efforts that give you pleasure and satisfaction and work to remove those that wear you down emotionally. In a year, when you do this reflection, will you have found more of your time in the right or the left column? Own this year.

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Use the table below to record the lists from your 80/20 reflection.  
On the left side of the table, list any activity that energized you.  
On the right side, list any activity that drained you.

+

-

What patterns do you notice about the positive/negative tasks?

How do you make time for the work you enjoy and reduce the work that wears you down?