

8 QUESTIONS TO SEPARATE ACTIVITY FROM IMPACT.



Busy feels like progress. It isn't always. This guide is eight honest questions that tell you whether you're actually moving things forward — or just moving.



**CUTS
WASTED EFFORT**



**SHARPENS
PRIORITIES**



**REDUCES
BUSYWORK**



**PROTECTS ENERGY
FOR WHAT MATTERS**



**BUILDS REAL
MOMENTUM**

1



**AM I WORKING ON
WHAT MATTERS, OR
WHAT'S LOUDEST?**

- Urgent tasks crowd out important ones by default, not by decision.
- The loudest request in your inbox is rarely the most valuable use of your time.

ASK YOURSELF:

What's one important thing that's been quietly waiting behind everything urgent this week?

2



**WOULD ANYONE NOTICE
IF THIS TASK DIDN'T
HAPPEN?**

- Some work exists because it's always existed, not because it still matters.
- Busywork often survives because stopping it feels riskier than continuing it.

ASK YOURSELF:

What's something on my to-do list that I keep doing purely out of habit?

3



**AM I PRODUCING OUTPUT,
OR PRODUCING
OUTCOMES?**

- Output is activity — meetings held, emails sent, hours logged.
- Outcomes are what actually changed because of that activity.

ASK YOURSELF:

What did I actually change this week — not attend, not discuss, change?

4



**AM I CONFUSING MOTION
WITH PROGRESS?**

- Constant activity can be a way of avoiding a harder, slower decision.
- Effective leaders sometimes do less, more deliberately.

ASK YOURSELF:

Is there a decision I'm avoiding by staying busy with something else?

8

BUSY ISN'T THE SAME AS EFFECTIVE

5



WHO AM I BUSY FOR?

- Some busyness is performative — visible effort designed to be seen, not to produce results.
- If the effort disappeared tomorrow, would the actual outcome change?

ASK YOURSELF:

Is any of my current busyness more about being seen than about the result?

6



**WHAT WOULD I STOP
DOING IF I HAD TO CUT
MY WORKLOAD IN HALF?**

- Most people can answer this quickly — which means they already know what's not essential.
- The gap between knowing and stopping is where busyness lives.

ASK YOURSELF:

What's stopping me from cutting the thing I already know doesn't need to be there?

7



**AM I SOLVING THE PROBLEM,
OR JUST RESPONDING TO IT?**

- Reacting quickly feels effective in the moment. It isn't the same as fixing the actual cause.
- The busiest-looking leaders are sometimes solving the same problem for the tenth time.

ASK YOURSELF:

What problem have I responded to more than once this month without actually solving it?

8



**IF I LOOKED BACK IN A YEAR,
WHAT WOULD HAVE
ACTUALLY MATTERED?**

- Busyness lives in the day. Effectiveness lives in the year.
- The things that matter most rarely feel urgent on any single Tuesday.

ASK YOURSELF:

What am I doing right now that I'll still be glad I did in twelve months?



REFLECT

- Which of these eight questions was hardest to answer honestly?
- Where have I mistaken activity for impact this month?
- What's one thing I could stop doing this week?



TRY TOMORROW

- Pick one task off your list and ask "would anyone notice?"
- Block 30 minutes for something important but not urgent
- Say no to one thing that's loud but not valuable
- Ask a colleague what they think you should stop doing

*Do less.
Choose well.
Matter more.*



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