

Goodbye, Teacher Tired: Day 1 Challenge

Get real about how much you can accomplish each day, and eliminate the unnecessary.



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 **Mindset: Recognize that you have more control over how you spend your time than you are giving yourself credit for.**

Your task for the first day of the challenge is to get real about how much you can accomplish each day, and eliminate the unnecessary. This is something that everyone knows they need to do, but somehow, it never seems to happen. Usually, that's for one of the following reasons (see which one applies to you):

- Everything is too important to be eliminated--there's literally nothing I can get rid of.
- I don't have control over the tasks I'm given--it's not in my power to eliminate things.
- I'm the only person who can get this stuff done--if I don't do it, everything is going to come crashing down.

As we do a deeper dive into the obligations on your time, I think you'll find that these statements are only partially true. But even if they were wholly true...would you be satisfied with that? Are you really willing to accept that this is just the way things have to be?

When we tell ourselves we can't control our schedule, or we don't have a choice about the way we teach and the demands on our time or everything we're currently doing HAS to be done by us, we've completely disempowered ourselves. It's a martyr mentality: This is just my lot in life, so I'm just going to continue to sacrifice my own needs and wants in order to take care of everything that everyone else wants me to do."

That's no way to live if you want to be healthy enough mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally to fulfill your purpose on this planet.

Just because you're a teacher does not mean you must resign yourself to working 12 hour days for the rest of your life and never have a moment to yourself.

 **Commitment: Decide that you will be realistic about what you can accomplish with your time, and eliminate less important things to make time for your biggest priorities.**

If your current workload and schedule is not sustainable, then YOU have to decide to make a change. No one else can make that decision for you. YOU have to decide, *I am not willing to live every day of my life*

feeling frazzled, overwhelmed, and pulled in a million different directions. I am taking charge of how I experience my life and the way I use my time. It's precious and I choose to be intentional about it.

If you're ready to make that choice now, the first step to becoming more intentional is to get real about the fact that you do not have enough time to do everything you want and need to do, and you never will. Never! None of us have enough hours in the day.

This is a critical piece of information to understand because when you ACCEPT that you cannot possibly do everything you want and need, you can stop frustrating yourself by trying to fit everything in. There is no amount of rearranging your schedule which will suddenly allow you time for everything you care about.

The ONLY way to get sanity in your life is by recognizing that you cannot do everything and choosing to eliminate the things that are less important.

I challenge you to make that determination today: I want to stop being tired and overwhelmed, and I'm choosing to make peace with the idea that certain things are just not going to get done. I am giving myself permission to say no to the things that are less important so I have the time and energy to say YES to my biggest priorities.

Decide today to release yourself from the guilt that comes from having 500 things written on a list that probably won't get done for years. It's just not happening, so you have to be ruthless about eliminating anything that is a distraction from what matters most right now.

 **Action for Now: Brainstorm a list of obligations on your time that could conceivably be eliminated, and choose two to stop doing right away.**

I'm willing to venture that at least a third of the things for which you're trying to find time *don't actually need to be done*. Or, maybe they don't need to be done by YOU. Or, they don't need to be done by you RIGHT NOW.

If you can identify those tasks and get rid of some of them, you will immediately feel like your load is a bit lighter, and have short openings of free time which you can use for more important things.

I want you to set aside about 15 minutes right now to think through the things you're doing during the day that wear you out, feel redundant, take up excessive time, or don't feel meaningful in any way.

Just do a brain dump: nothing is too big or too small to be included, and you can use the template on the last page of this PDF to help you get started. Mentally run through your day and write down things you do regularly that may not need to be done: social media time, excessive trips to the grocery store, lengthy chats or phone calls with people you don't even enjoy talking to, inordinate amounts of time on hair/makeup/choosing clothes, inefficient meal preparation, cleaning up after people who are capable of cleaning up after themselves, and so on.

As you start to make this list, I think you'll find that there are dozens of things which are taking up small chunks of time and don't actually need to happen. 5 minutes here and 15 minutes there can add up to hours a day!

When you've finished your brainstorming, I challenge you to pick two things you're doing on a daily basis that don't need to be done and eliminate them immediately. If you're not sure where to begin, pick the things that are easiest things to say no to and that other people probably wouldn't care if you stopped doing.

 **Ultimate Goal: Continually evaluate what you're saying YES to, so you can eliminate (or streamline) anything that is a distraction from your biggest priorities.**

Ask yourself, *If I were to look back a year from now at this list of obligations, demands on my time, and things to do, which ones would I say were actually worth doing?* Try to eliminate as many things as you can which don't fit those criteria.

If you're a perfectionist, you may need to ease up on the expectations you've created for yourself. One of the key principles in the 40 Hour Teacher Workweek Club is to "look for creative ways to relax your standards to a level where no one else will notice but you." Think about how you are creating more work for yourself by raising the standards impossibly higher than what anyone else is requiring of you. Are you insisting on a spotless home, a perfectly organized classroom, or over-the-top lesson plans?

You can't go above and beyond in EVERY area. And that's because you don't have enough time and energy to give 100% to everything that's on your to-do list. So, which things will you give a little less to in order to give fully to the stuff that matters most?

Remember: What you *don't do* is critically important, and most people are giving very little thought to that. They're just cramming in as many things as possible and trying to do more.

I'm advising you to do less. Say no to the things that are less important so you have more time and energy for things that are your biggest priorities. It's okay if you're not exactly sure what those priorities are just yet. They will become clearer as you begin eliminating things that obviously are NOT priorities.

With practice, you can train yourself to continually analyze what is necessary, and eliminate anything unnecessary. This will allow you to release yourself from that weight of feeling like you're never really done, and there's always something more you should be doing.

Take Action on Day 1

Brainstorm a list of obligations on your time that could conceivably be eliminated, and choose 2 to stop doing right away.

Use the next page to help you run through a mental list of your average weekday.

What's the first thing you do when you wake up? Can that be eliminated? For many of us, the first task of the day is checking our phones to see which emails or social media posts came in overnight. This is a habit which could potentially be eliminated, so you could add that to your list.

What's the next thing you do, and could that be eliminated? Keep working through the day and examine your routines and daily habits.

For example, getting dressed for work is essential, but do you often spend time hunting for things in a disorganized closet? That's something which could be eliminated by cleaning out your closet and getting rid of things you don't wear.

Write down anything you can think of that feels unnecessary, redundant, unimportant, unfulfilling, or more complicated/time-consuming than it needs to be. Even if you can't get rid of that responsibility altogether, knowing that things that you want to reduce in your life is a good starting place for helping you streamline.

Remember, you don't have to eliminate everything on the list--you're only going to pick two easy things to start. You can revisit the list over time and slowly begin eliminating other things. For now, just brainstorm a list of things you're doing as part of your daily routines that may not be important enough to make time for on a regular basis.

This exercise will help you see the potential for eliminating things even when you feel like every part of your day is essential and cannot be removed.

Ideas for things to eliminate

Morning at home

Morning at school

Classroom routines & structures

Non-instructional time at school

Afternoons

Evenings

Weekends