

**Robert:** Welcome to the Marketing Club Interview with Bill Barren. Bill is a life-long entrepreneur, a transformational business coach and a time management expert. He is the founder of Bill Baren Coaching and has coached hundreds of entrepreneurs to success and prosperity. His approach is to seamlessly integrate the logical and tangible with the creative and intuitive.

Bill has experience running a \$10 million company, managing a large sales staff and owning an innovative music company. He is the outgoing president of San Francisco Coaches Association and is featured on the Fine Living Networks' "What's Your Time Worth" TV show.

Bill is the Executive Producer of the Time Mastery Program, a program to help entrepreneurs and business professionals overcome their top Time Management challenges. In late 2008 Bill brought together the top experts in Time Management and intensively researched the top productivity practices that have taken decades to develop.

Bill, it's great to have you on the call. Thank you very much for doing this.

**Bill:** It is always a pleasure to talk to you. I love what you do, and I'm honored that you have me here tonight.

**Robert:** Thank you. This talk is all about managing time, projects and priorities, getting stuff done and making it happen. How did you become a time management expert for entrepreneurs?

**Bill:** It's an interesting story. Before I get into it, though, I want to talk about how our listeners can get the most out of this

call. I used to listen to interviews and teleclasses, and even watch TV, while doing something else at the same time.

I realized that I wasn't getting anything out of either activity. I didn't get the benefit of relaxing and enjoying myself if I was watching TV, and I didn't get the benefit of full attention to whatever else I was doing, whether it was email or anything else.

For our time together, I'd like everyone to commit to creating a distraction-free environment so that your time can be truly here with us.

One of my favorite mantras is, "I don't have time for anything I'm not fully committed to" because it's simply a waste of my time. I would love for you to not waste your time in listening to this. Be here, fully present, with us so you can get the most out of this call.

How did I become a time management expert? The short story is that I sucked at it. It was a huge problem for me. At the same time, one of my favorite questions that I frequently asked myself was, "What does the world most need that I'm uniquely qualified to provide and that I will actually love doing?"

It's an intersection of three things. First, it's what I see that the world needs because I only see what comes to me. Second, it's what I am really qualified to do. Third, it's what I love to do. Somewhere in the middle is an intersection of those three circles. In that intersection is what I choose to do with myself, my projects and my business.

As I was pondering this question, I kept hearing my entrepreneurial clients complain about not having enough time for everything they wanted to do. I didn't even know how much of a problem it was for me until I started seeing myself in my clients. I thought, "Wow! How can I possibly help them if I don't have this handled myself?"

I started doing more research on it. There were some staggering statistics. A lot of them shocked me, but there are a couple of them that I want to share. First, 18% of the people polled admitted to doing their work in the bathroom. When I heard that statistic, I thought, "Nothing is sacred."

**Robert:** In other words, we're working all the time, everywhere, on everything.

**Bill:** Yes. Then 100% of the people said it was worse now than it was a year ago. At that point, it became very difficult for me to continue sitting on the sidelines. I thought, "I need to handle this for myself," and I fully committed myself to time mastery.

I read everything I could possibly read, and not just reading it but also experimenting with it. I would take someone's body of work, get deeply into it, practice and find out what worked. Then I started working with my clients on some of these practices and found out what worked with them. I was able to distill everyone's body of work and synthesize it to create something of my own.

As I did this, I realized that I needed to do it in a bigger way to make a real difference, but not just for my clients. If this is one of the biggest problems that entrepreneurs have, and if my mission in life is to allow entrepreneurs to

be much more successful in a conscious way, then this is a perfect way for me to do that. I needed to figure out what that is and go at it.

That's how the Time Experts Telesummit was born. I got all of these experts, from whom I'd already learned and whose work I already loved, to agree to participate in this telesummit. We had 4,000 people participate. It was a huge success, and I still get emails every day from the ripples of the transformation that occurred.

Now, miraculously, I'm a time expert. It's interesting because I never set out to do this.

**Robert:** You're becoming the info guru of time management. The thing I like about your story is that it's a lot like mine. I didn't know how to market so I did all the study and became an expert.

Time management aside, it's a useful story for all the independent professionals listening to this. One often becomes an expert by not knowing something, being frustrated about not knowing, studying very hard, implementing, being one's own guinea pig and then starting to teach it to others. It expands outward. You've given us a great model of how to become an info guru.

**Bill:** It's an interesting model because I am very conscious of it and am now using it all the time. Nothing is wasted. If I'm working on myself and if this personal work I'm doing is later going to become part of my professional body of work, I'm suddenly allowing two things to happen at the same time.

If I can then get my family, friends and community involved in that same thing, I'm now handling three parts of my life with one area of responsibility.

**Robert:** Let's get into some of these great ideas that you've learned over the years. Since you've distilled this down from so many people, we're going to get some great information. Because of that, you're exactly the kind of person I like to interview! You have a very wide perspective.

We all have a relationship to time which often doesn't work for us. What is our relationship to time? Why is it important to change that? How is it even possible to change it?

**Bill:** Time keeps on ticking regardless of what we do. By becoming much more aware of time and our relationship to time, we find that the big answer is contradictory.

By actually allowing time to totally be in the background and not affect us, by just truly being present with whatever it is that we're doing and allowing ourselves to truly know what it is that we need to be doing at any given moment, we have achieved advanced time mastery. Time slows down and we are able to be truly in the zone.

As I'm telling you this, I'm walking around. My body has slowed down. I have this image from "The Matrix" when the bullet comes at Keanu Reeves. He is so in the zone that he is able to slow time down so he can take the bullet and throw it on the ground. High-performance athletes say that that's what it feels like when they're in the zone.

**Robert:** You're so on top of and aware of things, and so much in the present moment about what you have, your priorities,

commitments and tasks. All of that is swirling around you, but you're the calm person in the center of the cyclone who can, in that moment, handle what needs to be handled which will give you the most leverage.

**Bill:** Absolutely. There is also one more element. When people come in and say, "I have a time management problem," it's never a time management problem. The pain is not around time management. The pain is around "My business is not doing as well as it can. I am not doing the things I really want to be doing. I'm not producing. I'm making wrong choices." There are so many other things.

That's why I often don't call it "time management." I call it "time mastery" because managing time is impossible.

**Robert:** We all have the same amount of time, 24 hours in a day.

**Bill:** There are all these other things, and time mastery is a convenient umbrella.

**Robert:** That's the ultimate state. We all want to change our relationship to time so it's like that. Let's get into some of the things that will enable us to do that.

What's the biggest challenge for entrepreneurs regarding all this?

**Bill:** That's a good question, and if you ask me on a different day, I'll tell you a different answer! I put challenges into two categories: micro and macro. The macro challenge for most entrepreneurs is playing small. That may not sound like a time issue, but it is because we don't have time for playing small.

We all see opportunities. Often, we don't go for those opportunities, and then we play it down. We really need to understand that, at the end of the day, if you see an opportunity and go for it in a big way, you're not going to feel like you have a time problem.

**Robert:** One of my issues is that there are so many opportunities. If I try to go for them all, then I do start having a time problem! There's a balance in there, right?

These days, I'm creating opportunities and a reality around them. Then I have to find a place to put them so they can live while I do other things that I've committed to. Otherwise, with 20 balls in the air, I'm going to drop a lot of balls.

I don't want to undermine your point. The point is to go for big things instead of having reasons not to, right?

**Bill:** Now we're getting into bigger infrastructure business discussions, and I can only tell you how it is for me. I understand my purpose and my company's mission.

In the last three weeks, I've probably spent 50 to 60 hours by myself, with one or two members of my team, or with my whole team, mapping out and committing to the year that is in line with our mission as a company and that is going to create a platform for me to at least double the revenue of this company.

**Robert:** You've put a lot of time and energy into that focus and planning, just like an architect spends a lot of time designing the building. He doesn't just say, "Build the building."

**Bill:** Up until this year, that's the way that I've done it. I've just built buildings. I realized that I don't want to have buildings all over the city. Instead, I want to have a city. In order for me to have that city, I can't just continue to build buildings. I need to have some city planning.

In order for me to get to a seven-figure business, it requires city planning. For me to stay where I am, in the mid-six digits, I don't need it. I can do it organically, and I've mastered the organic way of doing things. "Here's the project. I'm passionate about it. Let me go for it."

Now, in order for me to get to the next level, I can no longer do that. My personal theme this year is "Freedom through focused commitment."

For entrepreneurs, little projects and things we get excited about are like candy. "Let me go to the candy store and pick this, this and this." It's great, but it can only get you so far.

**Robert:** In the end, you dissipate your energies and don't really have momentum.

**Bill:** Exactly. I'm now looking at everything from a more systematic approach, and this will allow my company to carry out its mission in a much bigger way.

**Robert:** The thing to think of first, then, is not time management but what you want, where you want to go, what is really important to you and how you can make your contribution real this year in a really big way, at least as big as you can see right now. There is no judgment as to what "big" means for you.

For instance, you might want to write a book, create and fill a new program, get four or five big corporate clients, or fill your coaching practice with the best clients you've ever had at a higher rate than they've ever paid you.

You want to do something where you're stretching, as opposed to "hoping for just enough to get by" which doesn't inspire you to plan, create and figure out how to make it happen.

**Bill:**

When you stretch yourself in that way, it's often good to reverse engineer. For example, you're a coach who wants to have a full practice with a certain level of clients paying you a certain amount of money. That's your goal. Now reverse engineer your action plan to achieve that. Then plan your year around that action plan. Put it on your calendar and commit to carrying it out.

More often than not, if you're truly committed to it and have gotten rid of all your internal mental and emotional blocks to having it happen, it happens.

We've covered this biggest challenge from a lot of angles. I talked about not playing small but playing a bigger game. I like the way you framed it as stretching yourself. The interesting thing about the stretching analogy is that when we stretch too much, it snaps back like a rubber band.

I like to suggest that instead of stretching your current paradigm, you get into a different paradigm with a completely different set of rules and mindset. Then everything looks very different. That's some of the work I do with my clients.

**Robert:** Just creating a yearlong plan with big goals, committing to them and planning them is a shift in paradigm for a lot of people. They don't normally do that.

At the beginning of the year, I sat down and looked at what I wanted to accomplish this year. I had four major goals. I thought, "That's enough." I want to do certain things with my Marketing Club and my Marketing Mastery Program. I want to do a particular product launch on a product I haven't even invented yet. I also want to get my book started.

**Bill:** Let's hold Robert accountable!

**Robert:** I was thinking about my book in the shower this morning, so I'm definitely thinking about it. It's churning. The whole plan isn't there, but the beginning idea is.

Those four big things are a start for me. Now I have to look at what the next step is. For me, a big issue is prioritizing. How do we know what the most important thing to do at any specific time is, given our goals, plans and strategies that we've created? How do we get it happening and keep on track with this so we are pursuing our priorities?

**Bill:** Any question you ask me literally has an unlimited number of answers. That's the interesting thing about personal mastery. First, you need to understand who you are and how you operate, and then come up with your own way of doing things.

All I can give you is a glimpse of what I know, a fraction of my experience. The only thing you can do is try it on for size, experiment with it, see what works and what doesn't,

keep what works, get rid of what doesn't and continue to experiment until you create mastery in anything.

Today, we're talking about time. We can even expand it to be time as it relates to you being an entrepreneur or business owner. How do you know what you need to be doing at any given moment or any given day or week ?

Most of the time, people don't know what they're doing. If I were to ask, "What are you doing right now?" a lot of people don't know. They think, "Am I answering an email? Am I completing this task?" We're doing multiple things at the same time which results in our not knowing what we're really doing at any given moment.

**Robert:** You might say that we're just trying to catch up. A lot of our time is spent doing that, but to what purpose?

**Bill:** Exactly. One of the first things I have my clients do is start this practice. Before starting on any task, ask yourself, "What am I committing to doing right now?" It's really simple, but shockingly enough, it's one of the most difficult things for people to learn. Sometimes it takes three, four, five or six months to get this down. "What am I currently doing?"

Once you can answer that, you then ask, "Is this what I ought to be doing right now?" If yes, then you commit to completing it or consciously saying, "I'm going to put this aside and put it on the calendar for when I will next get to it." Then ask yourself the question again. When you can get into a groove of doing this all the time, everything shifts.

**Robert:** This sounds like something you should print out and stick up near your computer, or you'll just forget it.

**Bill:** Most of my clients do that. The first week, they're shocked by how difficult it is. Across the board, I've never had one person say, "This is easy."

After shock, you start to realize so much about yourself in this process. Fears start coming up. Not knowing what to do comes up, which gets to the main part of your question. We have forgotten the art of intuition. As entrepreneurs, it's key. When you work for someone else, it doesn't really matter too much.

Think about the animal kingdom. When the earthquake is coming, the animals know. We're part of that kingdom, yet we don't know. When animals see an opportunity, they know. Why don't we?

**Robert:** We have these little minds that seem to get in the way.

**Bill:** Exactly. That's the interesting thing about intuition. It's not mind-based. This is a huge topic, and it's a huge topic of interest for me.

**Robert:** Do you cover that at all in the Time Experts Telesummit?

**Bill:** I covered it a little bit in my own personal presentation. I was one of the 10 experts.

**Robert:** A lot of this is expanded in Bill's program which you might want to check out.

**Bill:** Getting back to priorities, another great practice is something I do nightly. Before going to bed, I look at two categories, life and business, even though it's sometimes

hard to separate those two. I ask myself, “At the end of tomorrow, if I do these three things, will I be truly satisfied with my day?” and I prioritize those three things. It literally takes me between one and five minutes to do this.

Just this practice makes life so much simpler because the following day, before opening email or doing anything else, those are the three things I handle first. It makes a huge difference.

It’s much more difficult when you’re inside your busy day to really check in with yourself, understand and reflect. However, if you do this outside of your day, it makes all the difference. Additionally, this is one of the best sleep-aid tools you can find.

**Robert:** You write down what you need to do. You think it is 20 things, but when you write it down you find it’s three. You think, “Yes, I can do those tomorrow. If I do those, I’ll feel good.” Then you feel calm.

**Bill:** If you have an impulse to make it four, don’t do it. There have been a ton of psychology experiments done around people’s capacity for choice. It tops out at three. If you give people too many choices, you’re leaving money on the table. Most people will say, “No, thank you.” If you give people only three choices, it’s optimal.

If you give only one choice, you’re asking, “Yes or no?” If you give people two choices, you’re asking, “Which one?” If you give people three choices, you’re asking, “Which one really works best for you?” If you give them four or more choices, it’s overwhelming.

**Robert:** Are the three things big things?

**Bill:** Sometimes it could be a tiny thing. If you have a client who's been bugging you to call him back about something, that phone call might only take five minutes, but if you don't do it that day, you won't be happy with yourself. Sometimes, it is two hours spent writing your book outside of the shower.

**Robert:** A lot of people have a to-do list of a zillion things, and they look at it all the time. All that does is put them into overwhelm so instead of tackling the highest priority one, they tackle the simplest one because they haven't really thought it through.

It is fine to have a master list, but you should transfer from your master list onto your daily list so you have some sanity.

**Bill:** Often, our master lists are on our computers. I find that it's great to separate even the medium used for our lists. Put something on an index card. Use one index card a day, and start out with those three things, crossing them out as you complete them.

When I say to myself, "What am I doing right now?" I put it on that index card. I'm very conscious of it. It's right there, and it's the only thing on there because everything else is already crossed out. The only way I can cross it out is by completing it or by putting it on my calendar to schedule when I'm going to do it.

The harder and more complicated the systems we create, the less likely we are to follow them. We have to find the

simplest possible systems for our workflow and productivity that actually work for us.

**Robert:** I have a saying: “What’s the best time management system? It’s the one that works for you.” You can have the greatest system in the world, but if you don’t use it, it’s useless.

I have a day-at-a-glance system. On one side, it’s my calendar for appointments and things like that. The other side contains my to-do items and calls. I usually list three, or perhaps a few more, but it’s always a small list. If I think of a little thing I have to do that I don’t want to forget, I just jot it down. There are a lot of systems.

I’ve recently been studying Stephen Covey’s four quadrants. That has a lot to do with priorities and what things are important and urgent. Do you work with that at all?

**Bill:** I work with that from a mind frame perspective so that we really begin to understand how we operate with things. I often ask, “When the phone rings, what do you do? When an email comes into your inbox, what do you do?” If you have a tendency to jump on all those things right away, it actually tells you something about yourself.

You’re much more inclined to put out what you think is a fire but isn’t, and do what seem like urgent things but really not take care of the big picture. These are some of the clues.

It’s much more that you need to understand yourself and come up with an optimal way for you. You want to do

anything you can to understand more of who you are and how you operate.

I'm a coach. I know how often people want to change themselves. I say, "Great! I have a lot of tools to help you with transformation, but I don't want you to change yourself. I want you to know and accept yourself, and come up with ways you can work within the framework of who you are. Then if there are certain things you want to transform or be masterful at, let's work on those."

**Robert:** A lot of my business is writing, and I want to write even more, but I find it hard to write in short bursts. I need one to three hours of uninterrupted time. As a result, I often used the excuse, "I just never have time."

Now I schedule that time. I've been writing in the mornings, even before checking email. I might not check email until the afternoon, which is really different for me. If the phone rings, I look at the Caller ID. If it's a junk call, I don't pick it up. If it's somebody I know and I can handle it, I do pick it up. Then I get back to writing.

**Bill:** I would even suggest to you that unless it's the President of the United States you don't answer it.

**Robert:** Sometimes returning calls is a lot harder than just handling them then and getting on with it. We have to find our way. Finding a way to fit in those priorities that we *know* are priorities is the key. If we can knock off some of those, if I can write a couple of hours every day, there's no end to what I can accomplish in our businesses.

I can write a book based on that. I can write articles and endless things. However, if I keep saying, “I don’t have time,” it’s just not going to happen.

**Bill:** There are things you can do today to make a positive impact on your business now. There are also things you can do today that, over a long period of time, will create a huge positive impact on your business.

We wind up choosing the short-term gratification. “I want that result now.” From a psychological perspective, we need to detach ourselves from the high of getting results, look at our company’s mission, determine the best ways to fulfill this mission in one-year chunks and then really commit to that time,

One of the things I suggest to my clients and customers is that they schedule their playtime first, schedule the big things second and then take care of everything else. Those energy boosters like playtime, free time, creative time and vacations are the things that fuel you. Schedule them first.

**Robert:** At the beginning of the year, my wife and I looked at the whole year and what vacations we’d have. I then worked some of my schedules around that.

**Bill:** Next, you schedule the big things. For you, Robert, it would be something like, “From 7:00 to 9:00 in the morning, every morning, Robert is writing.”

**Robert:** At the very top of my list is to exercise first thing in the morning. That’s a high priority because it takes care of my well-being. Well-being things are very important as well. If we work like maniacs, never exercise, eat wrong and don’t get enough sleep, everything else will fall apart. I

make it a priority, and then I shower and get dressed. Then I write.

**Bill:** Since you work at home, when you start writing is when you've gotten to work. Another thing about these big projects is understanding the various work environments you need to set up that are optimal for those particular tasks.

I'm writing a book right now. I know that the chances of me doing that in my home office are slim. Instead, I find a really busy coffee shop that has comfortable chairs and a plug for my computer. That's where I go. Somehow, that puts me in the zone.

There's enough noise that allows me to not pay attention to anything other than what I am doing. Two hours pass and I've gotten so much done. I couldn't do that at home.

It's really a matter of understanding how you work best.

**Robert:** Let's tackle what in some ways is the biggest time management issue for many people. It is procrastination, just putting things off, not getting them done and avoiding things. What can you tell us about procrastination and how to combat it?

**Bill:** For the people who come to me with procrastination issues, this seems to be a painful point for them. It actually hurts. I don't know why this particular thing hurts more than others.

**Robert:** We feel like we're wasting our time away. We know we could do it, yet we're suffering. There's a gap between where we are now and getting it done. In that gap, we

tend to not do anything of real significance because we are unable to until we do that thing that we're procrastinating about. It just drives you crazy, and then nothing is productive.

**Bill:**

I actually think that procrastination is something that, if not handled, gets worse and worse. By the time the clients come to me to deal with this particular issue, they are pretty far gone. They can't get anything done, and then they begin to worry about themselves. They think, "Is my business going to completely self-destruct?"

Even if you don't think you have a huge procrastination problem, this is still something that could help you. Literally, on some level, we're always procrastinating because procrastination is simply avoiding doing something.

There are two reasons why we procrastinate. The first is "I don't wanna." The second is "I'm scared." Both of those could be either conscious or unconscious. You first have to understand which of the two categories your particular procrastination falls under.

Let's talk about "I don't wanna." If it really does fall into this category, there are only a few things you can do. You can ditch it, pitch it or accept it. To ditch it, you say to yourself, "Okay. This is gone. I allow myself not to do this, and I allow myself to take this off every to-do list and get it out of my mind."

For some bigger things, it requires some work. Sometimes, clients have to do a burning ritual to totally let something go. It's not always easy to let go of some things.

I remember my first client ever. The biggest breakthrough he had in the first couple of months of coaching was letting go of this screenplay he'd been working on for a long time but wasn't able to finish. It wasn't happening, and it wasn't his true passion and talent. He just thought it'd be cool. It was not easy for him to let that go.

You have to understand that either you ditch it and completely get rid of it, or you say, "This is really important for my business. It's really important for me. However, I'm not the one who's going to be doing it. It's not my passion. It's not in my area of expertise. I just don't want it," and you figure out to whom and how to delegate it.

**Robert:** Basically, you need to find a way to give it away to somebody else.

**Bill:** The third option is to truly accept the fact that this is something you *are* going to do. In doing that, you've reached the next level. First is the decision. You've decided that it is something you're going to do. Second is the commitment. After deciding to do it, you commit to doing it. Third is figuring out a plan to do it.

That doesn't necessarily mean the procrastination ends. It simply means that you've handled the first piece, the "I don't want to" piece.

The other piece is "I'm scared." It could mean that you're totally aware. For example, you're not writing a speech that you need to make to your organization because you're fearful of public speaking. It's not the writing that you're afraid of. You're afraid of making the speech.

That is why this can be a complicated thing. We often procrastinate on something not because we fear Step 1, but because we fear Step 3.

**Robert:** There can be underlying fears that we're not even aware of.

**Bill:** Exactly. I like to assign a practice that I call, "The Worst Case / Best Case Practice." It gets you into the space of being with the worst thing that can happen.

I'm going to give you a personal example from when I was putting together the Time Experts Telesummit. I did this for weeks and weeks, every day.

I was in the space of thinking, "The interviews are really going to suck. I'm just going to stumble. I'm going to look like a fool. The experts are going to think I'm a fool. My business is going to go down the drain because my reputation will be gone. No one is going to sign up. I'm going to have six people on a call."

By allowing yourself to sit with that, all you're doing is allowing your body and system to acclimate to this negative thing. Then you have to turn it around. I often recommend doing the worst-case scenario first.

**Robert:** Are you saying that you let yourself feel that way consciously instead of automatically feeling that way by default from some trigger? You let yourself go someplace that is down there somewhere, but you may have been suppressing.

**Bill:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** Barbara Scherer called it “the power of negative thinking.” This sounds similar. You look at all the negatives and face them.

**Bill:** This is what I assign clients to do on their own. When I’m working with clients directly, we can actually work through and quickly release some of those negative experiences.

I would love for people to do the worst-case scenario first. You don’t want to have that linger for the rest of your day if it’s not fully released and processed. However, you still want to desensitize your body to experience those thoughts. That’s how you get through.

First, you take all of these unconscious fears and make them conscious. When they are conscious, they have less power over you.

Then you move into the best-case scenario. The best-case scenario often has its own set of charges. For me, with the Time Experts Telesummit, it was, “This event is going to be huge. We’re going to get 10,000 people participating.

“I’m going to have to create a whole new structure for my business. My time is now going to be stretched because emails are going to start coming in. More people are going to want to talk to me.” I went on and on, and then realized that my body was going into overwhelm because of the positive stuff!

**Robert:** People often talk about the fear of success. That’s a reason for procrastinating as well.

**Bill:** Exactly. Often, a subset of the fear of success is the fear of change. When you're successful and do things in a bigger way, things have to change. When things change, you grow. When you grow, there's pain. That's why it's called "growing pains."

Anything you can do to mitigate that works really well. You wind up realizing that the worst thing never happened. Often, the best thing doesn't happen either. I didn't get 10,000 people to my telesummit, but I did get 4,000. A technical glitch actually did happen on the first call, but I was okay. I was so Zen about it.

In the middle of my interview, I could see my team running around everywhere yet I was totally present with the call. I know that I couldn't have done that had I not been okay with the technical glitch from having already experienced it 25 times in my mind. It was perfect. This exercise was the best thing that I ever did for the Time Experts Telesummit.

**Robert:** That helps you shift your whole mindset into one of reality. The reality is that I'm just here, now, doing this thing.

**Bill:** Neil Fiore, a procrastination guru on the Time Experts Telesummit, advises that we shift our minds from finishing to starting. We procrastinate because we fear the end result. If we can change our mind frame to, "How can I start this? What's the smallest piece I can take on? When can I do it?" that's another shift.

**Robert:** We've covered a lot of good stuff in this first part of the interview. Next, we'll talk about some smaller techniques: energy, multitasking, motivation, information overload,

email, idea management, delegation and a daily habit. We'll get into some specifics of how we can make time work for us and how we can master time.

## **Part 2**

**Robert:** So let's get into the next part of the interview. This is really great stuff. This is the kind of interview I recommend people listen to a few times, take notes and really think of the implications. The small amount of time that you take to listen to this interview, the hour or two that you put into it, will ultimately save you hundreds of hours and help you accomplish amazing things.

My Marketing Club is a month-to-month membership. If you don't want to continue after a number of months, you're free to discontinue. I want to make that available to people and not force them to be in this club. However, I get emails saying, "I love the club. The information is the best. There's nothing better. It's wonderful, but I don't have time to do it."

It's so dismaying because I know if people studied this more, this interview and others, ultimately they'd get a leverage that got them doing more of the important things, less of the less important things, change their whole relationship to their business and accomplish a lot more.

As we said at the beginning, "I don't have enough time" really isn't the truth, and it's not the issue. Nevertheless, it's useful to learn some tips and ideas that will help us save time, and be more efficient and effective overall.

We could talk about these things for hours because there's so much depth in all of them, but we have about six main ideas that we want to cover.

**Bill:** We need to change our mind frame to thinking about investing in our business. We can invest our time, resources, money and energy, and we have to. If we don't, things don't grow. Invest your time into something that can reap benefits.

I believe that if people followed even just a few of the tips in this interview or took the Time Experts program that we have going on, that investment of time would create 10, 50 or 100 times more time for them in their lives.

If I came to you today and said, "Give me a dollar and I'll give you \$50 in five years," would you do it?

**Robert:** I'd do it!

**Bill:** That's how we need to think about our business, energy, time and money. Let's invest it in things that will give us the biggest return.

**Robert:** There are so many aspects to this. One of the biggest time-wasters is not completing important tasks. If I put 10 hours into a project and didn't complete it, I've essentially lost those 10 hours because I never got the result out of it.

If we can learn to combat procrastination, delay and all of these things, and actually bring important tasks to completion, the benefit is impossible to measure. It's invaluable.

Let's talk about energy. What role does personal energy play in how we manage our time and our business?

**Bill:** It's not how much time we spend on anything. It's much more about how fully engaged we are with that time. That's where energy plays a huge role.

This happens in the corporate environment all the time, and it happens with business owners. They've already spent 10 hours being sort of productive in their day, and stuff still needs to get done. They're tired, unmotivated and uninspired.

As a result, they spend two more hours being half-assed engaged in whatever they're doing and do it sort of okay, but what happens at the end of the day? They don't really feel good about their day, and they're exhausted.

That's why some of the practices you talked about, like really paying attention to food, exercise and when your body needs rest, are so important.

One of my business partners, the co-producer of the Time Experts Telesummit, is amazing at this thing. We had a meeting a couple of days ago, and right after the meeting, he went to sleep, in the middle of the day! He said he was tired and went into the room. I thought he was working, but he was sleeping.

**Robert:** He did it intentionally.

**Bill:** A half an hour later, he was raring to go. In 30 minutes, he got something done that would have taken anyone else two hours to do.

**Robert:** That's called "power napping!"

**Bill:** That's the thing. Personal energy plays a huge role. If we were able to use some of the practices that we've talked

about, did this for four hours a day and were fully engaged in what we're doing, we would get more done than most people get done in a whole day, and then we'd have time to go play or take on something else.

That's why energy is really important. There are a lot of things that bring down energy level besides food. I'm a huge nutrition nut, and I'm on a 30-day cleanse which I believe we all need to do at least once a year to get all the junk out of our system. We need to know how we need to eat for our own body, and we need to follow that diet. We need to eat often throughout the day.

**Robert:** Again, we have to find the way that works for us. It's all about energy. If you don't have energy and aren't feeling alive, what's the use anyway? What's the purpose of doing all this stuff?

Many things can be done the next day. There is a whole culture where I live in Silicon Valley that believes we have to work our workers to death. The attitude is that if you don't work a 12-hour day, shame on you.

Someone who is totally efficient and effective could work a six-hour day and get as much done as a 12-hour day person. I think that's a lot better. They'll have more longevity in their productivity.

**Bill:** One of the things that many corporate environments lack is the entrepreneurial spirit throughout the organization. There are ways to create that spirit. People on your team know what they need to get done.

The number-one rule for happiness in the workplace is to know explicitly what's expected of you, by when it's

expected, the quality of work you're to provide and what resources are at your disposal to help you along the way. This is straight from books on managing your people and your team.

Think of it from this perspective. If we all were able to say, "Everyone in our domain knows all of these things," then they can figure out the most efficient ways for themselves to get things done. If it takes you three hours to do this, spend five hours playing! I wouldn't mind if all my employees did that. Wouldn't that be great?

**Robert:** It's about results, not just about activity. Speaking of activity, let's talk about multitasking. Does multitasking work, or is it a bad thing?

**Bill:** Don't ever do it. It's a huge myth. We can never multitask. We can't place our attention on two things at the same time. It's impossible.

**Robert:** We trick ourselves into thinking we can. For instance, you're on a call with somebody and checking email at the same time. You sort of can do it, but you're going to lose the thread of both, and neither will be focused.

**Bill:** If we break down what we're doing to a second or microsecond level, at any given moment our attention is on either one or the other. At any given moment, we are losing depth into the one that we're not paying attention to.

We can do mindless things at the same time. I presume we can walk, chew gum and talk on the phone at the same time. However, I believe that when you're walking and talking, you're not really paying attention to the walking.

When you're chewing gum, walking and talking, you're probably not getting the flavor of the gum. You're really wasting so much of your life by multitasking.

**Robert:** A related thing is interruptions. Let's say I'm writing and get a call. If I can handle that call, put it down and get back to writing, that's great, but that usually isn't what happens. Instead, when we have an interruption, it spills into other interruptions and distractions. All of a sudden, we don't get back to the writing for half an hour or an hour.

There's a cascading effect when we let ourselves multitask. We've done this and that, but where's the focus on the most important thing? We've lost it.

**Bill:** There's one more element to the interruption and multitasking. It's not instant, zero to 60 in three seconds, and then I'm back to where I was before. We've lost our train of thought. We may have lost our energy for that task. It takes three to five minutes to get back to the same speed where you were before.

We don't even know how much time we're actually wasting by not staying focused on one thing.

**Robert:** Don't multitask. Just work on that, if nothing else. For a day, try to not multitask. You might find it's tricky, but it will really wake you up to new possibilities.

Let's move on to motivation. How do you stay motivated to do all these things? Motivation is one of those odd words. What is it really?

**Bill:** I'm going to combine this with our first topic of energy. When we have energy, motivation comes a lot more naturally. Pay attention to your energy and what brings it down. Uncompleted tasks are an energy drain that lowers your motivation.

The other aspect to motivation is really understanding what your purpose and mission are, and really committing to them. Whenever I'm feeling unmotivated, I go back to my mission and purpose. I reread it and get in touch with it. I get inspired and go back to work.

**Robert:** It seems that the businesses that are most successful and most inspired have that very clear mission, and everybody gets it. We're talking about independent professionals, but we can learn from that.

If you ask the average entrepreneur, "What's your mission? What's your direction? What's the big thing you want to accomplish?" how many can really answer that?

**Bill:** By the way, Robert, you changed something in your positioning for your business, and I really like the new positioning.

**Robert:** It's very motivating to me. My business is about making a contribution to other people. It's also teaching people how to make a contribution and to use that as a primary component in their marketing. The contribution factor is an exciting idea, and it's a theme.

A purpose can become a theme which can become something you draw energy from. There is always something new with that. I think about it all the time. Sometimes you have to revisit it and rethink it. I found

that I needed to rethink my direction and vision, and that is very motivating.

I used the time over the holidays to work on that. That's a great time for me to reassess my whole business because it's quiet.

I think some people would agree that information and detail overload is the biggest problem. We get more information than we've ever gotten before, primarily because we get email in vast quantities. We get magazines. We have to learn things in our business.

For me, it's like a guy who goes into a buffet. I think, "I'm not successful unless I eat every single thing in this buffet." That's our mindset, which obviously could kill us! We're a little more sensible about buffets. We pick four or five items, and that's what we have.

With information, we think, "If it came across my desk, I have to handle it, read it, look at it." Then I get emails that say, "I don't have time to do something important" because we have information overload.

**Bill:**

There's a huge reason for it. One staggering statistic is that it takes a fraction of a second now for more information to be created in this world than you can consume in your entire life. More and more, that information is coming at us from all kinds of places.

Some is permission-based information because we gave people permission to communicate with us, and some is interruptive information, like junk mail, where we didn't give people permission to do this but they do it anyway.

I believe that the Information Age is over. It's done. We're finished.

**Robert:** Really? That's good news!

**Bill:** It's not what you think. It used to be that information was power. It used to be that the person who had the most information was the one who won. Things have changed. You can find any piece of information you need, legally or illegally. There's software, music and movies. It's at the tip of our fingers any time.

Because of this, the greatest filters are going to be the ones that are the most successful. That was my mission with the Time Experts Telesummit. I wanted to be the greatest filter for time management.

Yes, I want to synthesize and create something on my own as well, but if I can be the greatest filter, if I can distill all the information around time management through me and present it to people, that's huge.

**Robert:** That's what I do with marketing. There's a definite analogy there.

**Bill:** This is what's really important for us to understand. We don't need to be squirrels hoarding all the nuts because there will be famine in the winter around information. We don't. Whenever we need it, we can get it.

That's the way I look at information and time as far as business is concerned. If I have a particular area of interest because it's going to make an impact in my business or relates to a project I'm doing, that's when I'm

going to get the information. Otherwise, I let it bounce off me. I don't need it.

Having that focus is really important. It's really a matter of knowing if I need it or not. It's learning how to say, "No, not for me," or getting into a place and organizing your systems where those things don't even come to you.

**Robert:** They get filtered out.

**Bill:** That's really important. This paradigm has to shift for our society, or we're going to go nuts.

**Robert:** If we're not the Information Age anymore, what is the age?

**Bill:** It's the age of synthesis.

**Robert:** Tell me more about that.

**Bill:** I just came up with that on the spot! It's where we need to synthesize everything that comes to us and to make use of it, but only when we need it.

There's a great book by Daniel Pink called *A Whole New Mind*. He talks about the six qualities, six mind frames and six ways of being that are going to be the ones that work in the 21st century. Synthesis is one of those. Empathy is another.

Synthesis is the one that got to me because I thought, "Wow! Look at all this stuff! How do we synthesize all this, make use of it and make it work for our business and our lives?" That's the quality that's most important, and that's the new age.

**Robert:** What I like about that is, with my orientation around the contribution factor, I can gather information, ideas and interviews from people that will focus on that, and synthesize it to give something of real impact. It's not just another random piece of information but something that people can really use. It's more than just a lot of information. It's synthesized information.

**Bill:** It's synthesized in such a way that the people who you most want to talk to can use.

**Robert:** We could do a call just on this. Maybe we'll do that in the future.

You have to find a way to filter that information, not pay attention to it if you don't need it now and feel all right. You're not going to miss anything that's going to kill you. If it's not important right now, move on to something that is.

This brings us to email. Do you have some specific email tips that are real time savers?

**Bill:** I have a system that's a combination of three or four things that I learned from various people. Again, here comes synthesis!

David Allen's *Getting Things Done* is the one-touch system. When you get an email, only open it when you're ready to actually do something with it. When you open it, you've actually committed to doing something with it, which is deleting it, answering it or, if it becomes a to-do item, putting it on your to-do list for a particular time. Your email inbox ought to be empty most of the time.

It seems daunting. However, it's really possible when you change your mind frame from checking email to *handling* email. We check because we think, "I want to know what it says." You don't want to know what it said. You want to be able to use what it said to actually help you handle a task or create a relationship. That's really important.

One way to do this is to have two slots in your day when you handle email. "What am I doing right now? I am handling email."

**Robert:** That is opposed to checking it every 10 minutes, which we get into the addictive habit of doing.

**Bill:** The other thing we do is check our email, read what it says and then leave it without doing anything with it.

**Robert:** That's like procrastination. It's left hanging over your head.

**Bill:** Those incomplete cycles drain energy from you, and you lose motivation.

**Robert:** If you're not going to handle it, don't even open it.

**Bill:** Have you noticed how one thing, like not handling your email, has an effect on three or four topics that we've already spoken about?

**Robert:** Absolutely. What I keep getting from this is that it's about clarity, intention, focus, knowing where you're going and then dealing with the things that are coming through your life with that top-of-the-mountain view, as opposed to being buried by the rubble and trying to sift out all the time. These are power tools that we can use.

Another one is self-generated information. I saw a TV show, and as a result, I created a whole project out of it. I created the “Yes You Can!” workshop where I raise money for charity. It was a fun thing to do.

I get a lot of ideas. I see a movie and get an idea. I’m in the shower and get an idea. I’m doing whatever and get an idea. Sometimes, I think, “What do I do with that?!”

If I jump on it too impulsively, it could get in the way of another priority thing that I’ve already made a commitment to. All of a sudden, I find I’m buried and behind. This has happened to me many times. However, if I don’t jump on it, it sometimes gets forgotten.

If you’re an entrepreneur, you probably are an idea-person, or you wouldn’t be an entrepreneur in the first place. It can lead to overwork. We lose our perspective.

Michael Gerber, who wrote *The E-Myth*, says that as an employee, you discover pretty soon that you have a madman as a boss because he’s always coming up with ideas. We’re our own boss, so we also have a madman for a boss. We’re always thinking of new things and going in new directions. Can you relate?

**Bill:**

I can certainly relate. I’ll tell you a story from my past. Before I was a coach and in the transformational space, I was in the music industry and had a pretty big company. At one point, I had 85 employees. I always had a lot of ideas. Because I had so many employees, I was able to implement a lot of these ideas.

At some point, the number of ideas became too many. All of my ideas became items on my to-do list. As I started

working 18-hour days, I started being afraid of ideas because an idea meant, “I’m going to have more to do, and I’m already at capacity!” For a long and depressing time, I stopped generating ideas because they hurt too much.

**Robert:** You swung from one end to the other.

**Bill:** As I got out of the music industry, sold my companies and decided that I wanted to do something else, it took me a while to be able to get back to a place where ideas are actually joyful, fun, creative and expansive. I’m still generating a ton of ideas, but I don’t want to ever be in the position where they hurt me.

I have, and advise most of my clients to create, an “idea bucket.” Every time I have an idea, I throw it in there. I use a Google doc which is like a Word document that you can share with a lot of people. All of the people on my team have their section of this idea bucket.

I have it on my calendar to look at that idea bucket once a month from the perspective of “Is there something on here that I want to take off the list because it was just something impulsive, keep on the list because it may work later, or implement and put into action?”

It happens only once in a while that an idea is something I want to actually implement. This frees me up to have all kinds of ideas.

**Robert:** You could put it in a Word document or a notebook. The differentiation is that it is not on your to-do list yet. It’s in the wings. I like that.

**Bill:** It's not even in the same universe as a to-do list. That's the message.

**Robert:** A to-do list is something we've committed to do. It might be a long list of things that we bring into our daily list. It's very different from our idea list. There was a movie about that, wasn't there?

**Bill:** Yes. This is the second interview in a row in which this movie somehow came up!

**Robert:** You might have some big dreams of things you've wanted to do, and they go on that list. At some point in your life, it might be time to roll with one of those. Sometimes ideas sit around for a long time. I've had my book on that list for a very long time, stewing and growing tendrils, but it's not quite on my to-do list yet.

**Bill:** The ideas that stay on the longest and seem to not go away are meant for you. Whether or not you're able to take them on at this moment is a different question. If they keep staying, there's something to that.

**Robert:** You could look at these things and think, "That was an exciting idea, but it's so off-purpose. It really won't help me in my business." In that case, relax and let it go. It's okay. We cannot do everything in the world, even though our crazy mind sometimes thinks we can.

Here's one that is a particular issue for me and has been for years. I've been exploring it and talking to people about it. It's the practice of delegation and giving things away. I discovered that I have some pretty interesting underlying beliefs around this. There's stuff around

control. “I have to do it myself. No one else can do it as well as I. If I give it away, it will be done wrong.”

There are also things about self-esteem. “If I do it, then I’m the hero. I’m the guy who can do everything.” All of those seem to drive my lack of delegation.

I do now have a virtual assistant who I give certain things to, but it seems that there are so many things that are not that important or high leverage that I could give away. What are some of your ideas about delegation?

**Bill:** The first thing that comes up for me is something I learned from Rich Schefren. I interviewed him for the Time Experts Telesummit, and this came out of that. He says to change your thinking around your business from “How am I going to do this?” to “What do I need to do, and who is going to do it?”

I was already doing that to some degree, but that was really instrumental for me to change my thinking completely. Now I break down every project and everything I do into “what needs to be done and who is going to do it?” It’s become my mantra.

**Robert:** Sometimes it does need to be you. If you’re an independent professional, there are a lot of things you need to do. Yesterday, I told someone, “I can’t have someone else write my book.” Then I thought, “The truth is that I really could because some people do. I just don’t want to.”

**Bill:** I’m writing a book with my partner Patrick called *The Art of Green Business*. We are figuring out how to involve our tribe and community to help us write and put this book

together. It's been working incredibly well. That came as a result of asking, "What do we need to do? We need to pick a book cover. Who is going to do it? Not us."

That was interesting. Our community is going to do that. We created a poll, posted three of the covers on our blog and sent out one email to our Facebook group. We had 487 people vote. We received 70 extensive blog comments around so many different things which we learned a tremendous amount from.

It came as a result of saying, "Who's going to do that?" The answer was, "Our community." We can do that with absolutely everything. If you ask, "Who is going to answer my email?" you can break it down into who is going to answer each particular kind of email.

You realize, "Perhaps I can have my virtual assistant shadow these emails. I can even set up a different email address so I don't have to do them. Eventually, I won't even look at them."

**Robert:** That's the one thing I actually did with customer service emails.

**Bill:** You did it with customer service email, but I would challenge you to see if there is any other kind of email that you don't need to deal with. It makes a huge difference.

I've identified four areas of responsibility that I want to do and, in my perfect world, do nothing else.

**Robert:** Now you're getting to something good! I should determine the four areas, or whatever that small number is, that I want to do.

**Bill:** I'm not there. I'm a long way away, but I know where I'm going. One area is strategic planning. I love it. That's what I want to do in my business. Another area is curriculum and content creation. I love it. That's one I want to do for my business. The other is coaching, training and anything of that nature. I love it. I want to continue doing that.

**Robert:** I changed my business about five or six years ago. I stopped working with people individually because I didn't want to do that. I liked working more in the dynamics of a group. Within that, I do individual appointments with people, but it was somehow different. I got clear on that. This is very useful.

**Bill:** We can talk a little bit about limiting beliefs, control issues and all of the things that get in our way of allowing someone else to have control over our life or business.

**Robert:** When delegating, there's the fear that they won't do it right. My next task is to write out a list of all those beliefs I can find and work on them. I use Byron Katie's Work. For people in the Marketing Club, Module 2 is "Marketing Mindset." Using the tools in that can be very useful.

The Work doesn't work unless you have some ideas to work on. When I find the limiting beliefs, I say, "Whoopee!" I'm like a kid in the candy store because now I can actually work on these until they're visible. Delegation is the big thing I'm going to work on. It's almost unthinkable to me. I just freak out.

The flip side would be to write out a long list of things you prefer not to do.

**Bill:** I actually believe that what's really important is knowing what you do want to do. Everything else is automatically a thing you don't want to do.

**Robert:** It will fall away.

Our last topic is the daily habit. In your experience, what is the most important daily habit for an entrepreneur to cultivate to help handle all this stuff?

**Bill:** I feel like we've already talked about so many important daily habits. I would probably have a different answer on a different day, but today it feels like the most important daily habit is knowing what it is that you're doing at any given moment and committing to it.

There is nothing more important from a time mastery or productivity perspective. If that's what you're committed to for that particular time and you know what you're doing, it becomes easy to deflect any and every distraction that comes your way, including thought distraction.

We can allow our thoughts to go in a completely different direction, like, "Here's this cool idea! Let me see what I can do." No, that's not what I'm doing right now.

This is also a great tool for meetings with a team or one team member. You can ask, "What are we doing at this moment? What are we talking about right now?" and not let yourself get distracted and go on tangents.

**Robert:** It comes back to focus, clarity, being and consciousness. All of those things are really important. It's not about do, do, do. You have to take some time to be, be, be.

Those questions you talked about earlier, “What am I doing right now? Is this what I want right now?” are good ones to write out on a big piece of paper and stick somewhere so you can see them all the time as a reminding factor.

We’ve covered a lot of great stuff. It looks like this could have been a three-hour interview. Maybe we’ll do something else at another time. It’s been fun.

It’s been very illuminating to me and, I hope, to the people listening. This is one I think you should listen to again, take really good notes, read the transcript, think about and look at how you can implement one of these at a time.

You can’t do them all at once, so find the one that sticks out for you and work on that. It might be stopping multitasking, working on your energy, figuring out those big priorities, planning for the year or doing things to combat procrastination.

If I find one thing to really grasp and work on, everything else seems to come along with it. It’s not that I’m necessarily working on all of them, but that pivotal point, even it’s just procrastination, can make a huge difference.

**Bill:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** Thank you very much.

**Bill:** Thank you.

