

January (2020) key points from Proffee with Audrey Giles

- 1. Work smart and use the time you have efficiently:** If you don't want to work through the night or on weekends, take those 10-minute pockets (i.e., time spent on a bus or train, waiting for class or your next meeting) that you have throughout your day to get things done. Time adds up and you'll realize that you've gotten everything done that you wanted to.
- 2. Track your working hours:** Curious as to why you aren't being productive? One tip is to physically track what you are doing (and for how long) to see if there are any areas in which you could improve on. For Audrey this means giving herself a gold sticker every day she writes for at least an hour.
- 3. Know your priorities & values and shape your life around those:** Pick your top 3 priorities and make sure you intentionally take the time/space to promote those in your life. At the same time, try to eliminate things that distract you from them. Remember, these don't need to be work/school priorities – Audrey fits her work around sleep, running, and her dog!
- 4. Match your energy levels throughout the week:** When you know you're going to be productive, try to choose tasks that require more energy. On the contrary, when you know you'll have little energy choose smaller tasks, or those requiring less concentration. You can use this to schedule your week, too. Maybe Monday mornings and Friday afternoons are when you are the most distracted so don't try to get all your writing done during those times.
- 5. Hold yourself accountable by sharing your goals with a buddy:** If this means meeting or emailing once a week with a friend, share your progress (or lack thereof) to keep you on track. It's okay if this person is not in your 'field', they don't need to help you find ways to accomplish your goals but simply listen and encourage your goals.
- 6. Enhancing your writing will help you greatly in grad school:** So much of what we do as grad students involves putting pen to paper (metaphorically). It will be easier for everyone (i.e., yourself, your supervisor, the journal editor) to understand your work if the grammar makes sense. Start off by picking your top 3 weaknesses in writing and work on them by reading about them or asking for help. When you've improved, do the same with the next 3. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor what you need to work on or *why* they keep correcting your comma usage – sometimes we don't know what we are doing wrong.
- 7. Celebrate the little things:** Every step along the way deserves a celebration, not just the 'big' milestones. Did something you're proud of? Acknowledge it by sharing with others and doing something celebratory.
- 8. Do grad school your way:** "Comparison is the thief of joy". Only you know what you can handle and how you work best. Explore and learn what you need to thrive and stick with it.