

# 8 TIPS

to eliminate email  
stress & take back  
control of your inbox



**FREEBIE**

# ELIMINATE EMAIL STRESS

Remember when the smartphone came out? Remember how life changing it felt to be able to check your email anywhere? Talk about freedom!

Fast forward to today - do you still feel that same freedom?

Can I be honest for a second? Sometimes I think I was born in the wrong decade. I remember when I was a kid how the phone would ring and someone would yell, "I'll get it!"

I miss those days.

Email can overtake your life if you let it.



I read a book called *Manage Your Day-to-Day: Build Your Routine, Find Your Focus & Sharpen Your Creative Mind* by Jocelyn K. Gleib. The advice I took away from the book was this: Don't start your day with email.



**“I don’t check my  
email until the  
afternoon because  
email is allowing  
other people to come  
into my time and  
creative space.”**

**Jessica Zimmerman**

# ELIMINATE EMAIL STRESS

8 tips

1

Don't let other people dictate your work day.

I used to think checking my email first thing meant I was working hard. It meant I was being productive! I think most of us think this way. We have clients or coworkers or bosses who need to hear from us. Sound familiar?

You know the phrase, Ignorance is bliss - well it's especially true when it comes to email! When I became ignorant to what was going on in my inbox - guess what happened? I actually had time to focus on my own to do list which led to productivity which led to profitability.

I'm not denying the fact that, yes, it is important to check my email. However, by checking it first thing in the morning I was making one crucial mistake: I was letting other people dictate my work day.

You know why I think most people start their day with email? Because it's easier to be reactive than to be proactive. It's easier to feel as if we are working by checking email first thing, but guess what that does? It distracts you from actually doing your actual work. You are procrastinating the job that actually needs to get done because checking email is easier.

I never thought this when I was in the thick of it, but now I realize that treated my email as if it was my to do list. Even if I was simply replying and giving information, I was still doing the task for someone else instead of myself. Remember to make your work hours count!

2

Set up an away message so people know when they can expect to hear back from you.

I talked about setting clear expectations more in depth in the [work at home moms blog](#).

3

Schedule specific times to check your email.

My husband once went to a seminar where the speaker said, "You get 90% of your work done before noon."

I usually schedule to check my email from 1:00pm - 1:30pm. This gives me the entire morning to get MY work done, check off MY to do list, tackle MY tasks. I work hard in the morning being proactive. I eat lunch (refuel!) and then I look at my email.

4

Set a time limit.

I'm a big fan of setting time limits for my tasks - including email! Staying on task takes discipline and practice. One of the best ways to train your productivity concentration is to set time limits. This provides a singular focus, blocks interruption, and ultimately drives productivity.

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5

Keep anything that you are still working on in your inbox.

If you have completed it and it no longer needs your attention - delete it or move it to a folder.

For example, I may have an email from a client. I don't have time today to answer her question, but I definitely want her to know I received her email so I'll say something like this: "Hey! Just wanted to let you know I received your email. I really want to be able to sit down with your proposal and give your questions the time and thought they deserve. I'll respond again with all the answers no later than Friday!"

Then I leave that in my inbox because it isn't "done" yet. It still needs my attention, but instead of my client thinking I'm ignoring her or I'm irresponsible, she knows what to expect. She has no need to worry, because she'll hear from me Friday.

On Friday, once I've responded and answered all her questions, then I'm officially DONE with that email. So I'll delete it or move it to a folder. It no longer needs my attention so I don't keep it in my inbox.

6

Always see the white space.

You know when you have three emails in your inbox and the joy you get from seeing that beautiful white space at the bottom? This is my goal. Some experts say try to keep your inbox at zero. I have found that simply isn't feasible, although I do love it on the rare occasion it happens! I am perfectly content when I close my computer at the end of my work day if I see white space at the bottom of my inbox.

7

Create a POSITIVE VIBES folder.

I created this folder last year. Anytime someone writes me something really nice or encouraging - I move it in this folder. I definitely have days where I think, "What am I doing? Am I even any good at this job?" Those are the days I open up the emails in my Positive Vibes folder - it's a great way to lift my spirits and keep me going in the right direction.

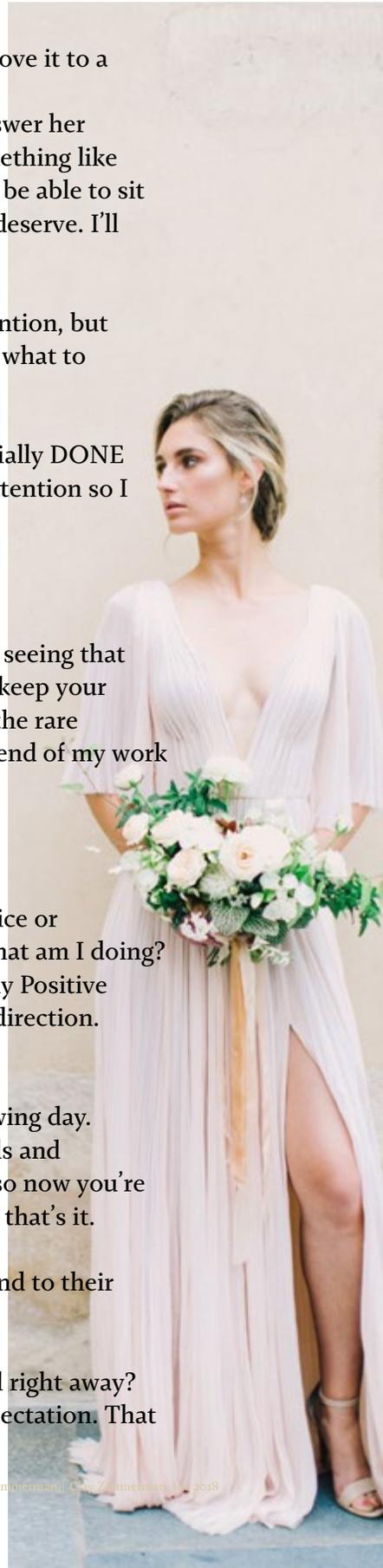
8

When you've reached your quit time, don't look at email again until the following day.

It does you no good to check your email when you're in bed. Your client emails and something is wrong and there is nothing you can do about it until tomorrow so now you're up all night worrying. Only check your email during your designated time(s) - that's it.

I had a mentoring client of mine once say, "But my clients expect me to respond to their email right away."

My response, "Yeah - you know why they expect you to respond to their email right away? Probably because you have ALWAYS responded right away. You built that expectation. That was all YOU so don't blame it on your clients."





**“Stop believing the priorities in your inbox match your actual priorities for the day.”**

**Jessica Zimmerman**

# ELIMINATE EMAIL STRESS

my challenge for you

## MY CHALLENGE FOR YOU...

Last but not least - the biggest challenge of all. I would like to invite you to do this starting today (because you will never break a bad habit unless you force yourself to start) and do this for one week, just one little week. Seven days. If you miss it, put it back on.

### DELETE EMAIL FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE

1

#### Three BIG reasons to give this challenge a try:

**True mental time away from your work:** It does you absolutely no good to receive an email from a client at 10 at night. There is nothing you can do about it at 10pm so why go to bed restless worrying over the unhappy client who you can't help until the next morning when you are back at work anyway. This alone will take care of a huge part of your work/life balance struggle.

2

**Being present in your own life:** By not having email on your phone, you won't be notified, therefore distracted from what you are presently doing. Wouldn't you rather read the book to your kids? Wouldn't you rather enjoy a glass of wine with your spouse? Wouldn't you rather BE PRESENT and not constantly be looking down at a little screen?

3

**Keep your future self happy:** I say this a lot - I don't ever want my future self to be mad at me. I don't ever want to look back and think, "Why did I not watch my baby as he learned to eat his applesauce with a spoon all by himself? Why did I not watch every single attempt? Why was I looking down at my phone? What could have possibly been so important? I would do anything to have that time back and do it over."

I'm not ever going to get that time back and neither are you. Take it off your phone. Cut out the distractions. Look back on your life and remember it took six attempts before your baby boy carried an entire spoonful of applesauce from his bowl to his mouth. Look back and know with confidence it took him six tries - you know this because you were looking up and you saw each one.





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