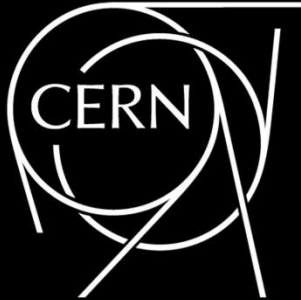


Timeboxing, in 60 minutes





Exercise

Change your life.
Right now.

Exercise

Change your life.
Right now.

- ❑ Think of a relationship you think you could and should develop

Exercise

Change your life.
Right now.

- Think of a relationship you think you could and should develop
- What would quality time with that person really be?

Exercise

Change your life.
Right now.

- Think of a relationship you think you could and should develop
- What would quality time with that person really be?
- Right now, set a recurring monthly appointment, at a time and day of week that makes sense, to make that happen

Exercise

Change your life.
Right now.

- Think of a relationship you think you could and should develop
- What would quality time with that person really be?
- Right now, set a recurring monthly appointment, at a time and day of week that makes sense, to make that happen
- Do it and keep to it

BELIEVE ▪ PLAN ▪ DO ▪ OWN



BELIEVE ■ PLAN ■ DO ■ OWN





My timeboxing story

My timeboxing story

2001

Disorganised mess



My timeboxing story

2001

Disorganised mess

2003

DWP



My timeboxing story

2001 — Disorganised mess
2003 — DWP
2013 — Calendar x to-do list &
5 years doing it

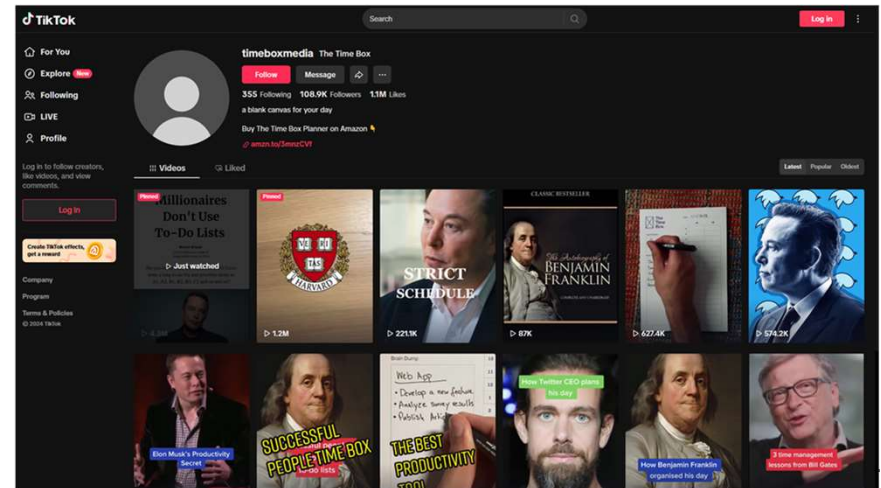


My timeboxing story


2001 — Disorganised mess
2003 — DWP
2013 — Calendar x to-do list &
5 years doing it
2018 — **My HBR article**

My timeboxing story

- 2001 — Disorganised mess
- 2003 — DWP
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- 2018 — My HBR article
- 2022 — Viral TikTok



My timeboxing story

- 
- 2001 — Disorganised mess
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 - 2023 — Penguin Random House deal
4 months, 45k words,
30+ languages

My timeboxing story

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- 2023 — Penguin Random House deal
4 months, 45k words,
30+ languages
- 2024 — UK launch (Jan), US launch
(March). Many others...

What's the most frequently used noun in the English language?

Occurs once every two pages



The top-30

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|------------|
| 1. | time | 11. | world | 21. | place |
| 2. | year | 12. | school | 22. | case |
| 3. | people | 13. | state | 23. | week |
| 4. | way | 14. | family | 24. | company |
| 5. | day | 15. | student | 25. | system |
| 6. | man | 16. | group | 26. | program |
| 7. | thing | 17. | country | 27. | question |
| 8. | woman | 18. | problem | 28. | work |
| 9. | life | 19. | hand | 29. | government |
| 10. | child | 20. | part | 30. | number |

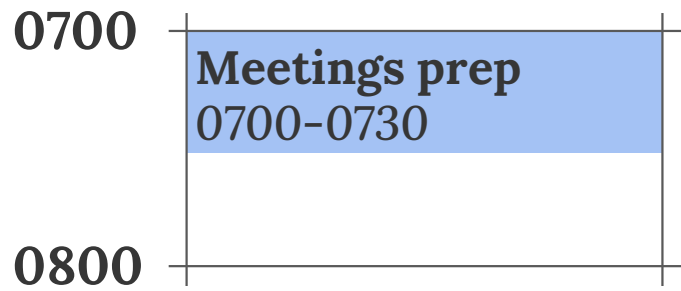


The top-30

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|------------|
| 1. | time | 11. | world | 21. | place |
| 2. | year | 12. | school | 22. | case |
| 3. | people | 13. | state | 23. | week |
| 4. | way | 14. | family | 24. | company |
| 5. | day | 15. | student | 25. | system |
| 6. | man | 16. | group | 26. | program |
| 7. | thing | 17. | country | 27. | question |
| 8. | woman | 18. | problem | 28. | work |
| 9. | life | 19. | hand | 29. | government |
| 10. | child | 20. | part | 30. | number |



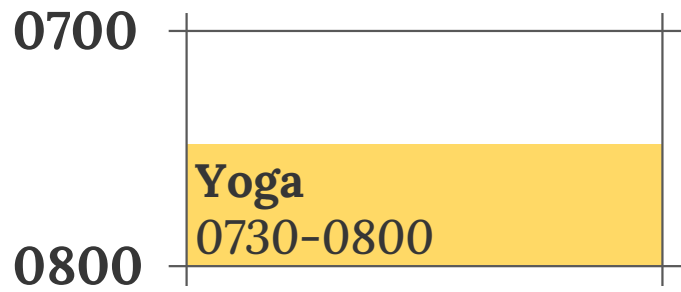
A single timebox



Just an entry in a calendar



Another timebox...



That adds up to a week...

The screenshot shows the Outlook calendar interface for the week of May 13-19, 2024. The interface includes a navigation pane on the left with a calendar grid, a search bar at the top, and a main calendar area with a list of events. Several 'timebox today' events are highlighted with red boxes across the week.

Day	Mon 13	Tue 14	Wed 15	Thu 16	Fri 17	Sat 18	Sun 19
7	posn + company Kids ready	read HGTTG w Luka timebox today	Read HGTTG w Luka timebox today	timebox today skills framework LI post	timebox today mtgs prep LI post (+board, ops, team)	timebox today 7 days - feedback & adjust	timebox today 100 skills intro Kids ready
8	susan note / doc emails (60-??)	Kids ready	mtgs prep prep for parliament OTAAT edit	Kids ready prep for parliament adam p note mtgs prep swim!	dht-mzs monthly Marc Zao-Sanders	IM	
9	work out	emails (41-??)	sunil-marc Marc Za	swim!	brief tamsin on both LI emails (60-??)		
10	travel in // OTAAT	mtgs prep Marc / Cath 1:1 cath@fi		emma-> marc book, pro Marc Zao-Sanders	Catch up before TimeBox	Kids ready	
11	slack updates B2B Weekly clare.hartle	trading update	Filtered - New Maven fun newsletter actions	kirsty TTRO note Ops Team Meeting cath@filtered.com	amanda-marc fortnigh	read 15 pages of HGTTG	
12	Weekly Deal Review	Board / Ops assistance on lunch	sales actions strat email draft	Pa cat Pa cat Pa cat	swim	growth x HBR x AI x EY chess (2200)	take Luka (&Lewis) to Iris bday
13	flore-> marc Marc Zao-Sa	Marc / Greg monthly Google Meet greg@filtered.com		Timeboxing Reunion de M lunch (see yest)	Content Intelligence - Pro https://filtered.zoom.us// chris@filtered.com	fix 7 days chris edits to IM OTAAT bullets	100 skills
14	james-> marc lunch franca manca Marc Zao-Sanders	OTAAT plan work out!	lunch	emails (55-??) take out chicken!			lunch w ma
15	7-day trial ended - thx & v	Newsletter catch-up ce	LI Tb post	break top-100 skills report	chris-> marc Marc Zao-Sanders		
16	susan-marc weekly Marc Zao-Sanders	OTAAT - tip!	send OTAAT	email aya about door!	Toby / Marc 1 - 1 https://		
17	lawyers	ASML pitch doc	list spendesk chris draft story		LI Tb post	100 skills - data sources	run!
18	stephen-> marc call Marc	thinking / walking	thinking / walking	canva for LI // also:	100 skills - compile		100 Skills (pics?)
19	tesco shop Papaya	epic walk in Hamstead Heath w Olya + Dave		Reading Hitchhiker	thinking / walking		
20	Reading Hitchhiker		Reading Hitchhiker Luka	thinking / walking	park with aya + tara	flask w Iola 2 ciders	yoga!
21							bath!!!

That
adds
up to
a week...

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Outlook calendar interface. The main view is a weekly calendar for the period of 13-19 May, 2024. The interface includes a search bar at the top, navigation tabs for Home, View, and Help, and a sidebar on the left with a monthly calendar overview and 'My calendars' section. The main calendar grid shows tasks and events for each day. Several 'mtgs prep' tasks are highlighted with green boxes, indicating they are the focus of the image. The tasks are distributed across the week, with some appearing on multiple days. The interface also shows various other tasks like 'timebox today', 'Kids ready', 'work out', 'travel in // OTAAT', 'slack updates', 'B2B Weekly', 'Weekly Deal Review', 'Board / Ops assistance on', 'lunch', 'fiore<->marc Marc Zao-Sa', 'james<->marc lunch franca manca Marc Zao-Sanders', '7-day trial ended - thx & v', 'susan-marc weekly Marc Zao-Sanders lawyers', 'stephen<->marc call Marc', 'travel back // xUnlocked note', 'tesco shop', 'Papaya', 'Reading Hitchhiker', 'epic walk in Hamstead Heath w Olya + Dave', 'Reading Hitchhiker', 'Luka', 'In Person Working Day', 'Read HGTTG w L', 'timebox today', 'skills framework LI post', 'Kids ready prep for parliament', 'OTAAT edit', 'sunil-marc Marc Za', 'gareth-r', 'swim', 'emma<->marc book, pro Marc Zao-Sanders', 'kirsty TTRO note', 'Ops Team Meeting cath@filtered.com', 'swim', 'Project LIFT - Weekly Call Microsoft Teams Me', 'chess (2200)', 'lunch', 'Content Intelligence - Pro https://filtered.zoom.us// chris@filtered.com', '100 skills', 'take Luka (&Lewis) to Iris bday', 'lunch w ma', 'break', 'top-100 skills report', 'email aya about door!', 'Toby / Marc 1 - 1 https://', 'Li Tb post', '100 skills - data sources', 'run!', '100 skills - compile', 'thinking / walking', 'park with aya + tara', 'flask w Iola 2 ciders', 'yoga!', 'bath!!!', and '100 skills intro'. The interface also shows a 'Welcome back to the new Outlook (1/5)' message at the bottom right.

That adds up to a week...

The screenshot shows the Outlook calendar interface for the week of May 13-19, 2024. The calendar is displayed in a weekly view, with tasks and events listed in a grid format. Several items are highlighted with yellow boxes:

- Thursday, May 16: "In Person Working Day" (top of the day), "swim!" (10:00 AM), and "swim" (1:00 PM).
- Friday, May 17: "swim" (1:00 PM).
- Saturday, May 18: "run!" (10:00 AM).
- Sunday, May 19: "yoga!" (10:00 AM).
- Monday, May 14: "work out!" (10:00 AM).

The interface includes a search bar at the top, navigation tabs (Home, View, Help), and a sidebar on the left with calendar controls. The calendar is filled with various tasks and events, many of which are highlighted with yellow boxes.

That adds up to a week...

Outlook

Home View Help

Day Work week Week Month Saved views Split view Time scale Filter Reminders Calendar settings

May 2024

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30 31 1 2

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Add calendar

My calendars

Calendar

Show all

Today 13-19 May, 2024

Mon 13	Tue 14	Wed 15	Thu 16	Fri 17	Sat 18	Sun 19
timebox today ops team weekly email posn + company Kids ready susan note / doc emails (60-???) work out travel in // OTAAT slack updates B2B Weekly clare.hartle Weekly Deal Review	read HGTTG w Luka timebox today Kids ready rest emails (41-???) mtgs prep Marc / Cath 1:1 cath@fi trading update Board / Ops assistance on lunch Marc / Greg monthly Google Meet greg@filtered.com	Read HGTTG w L timebox today OT notion page mtgs prep prep for parliament OTAAT edit sunil-marc Marc Za gareth-r Filtered - New Maven fun newsletter actions sales actions strat email draft	In Person Working Day timebox today skills framework LI post Kids ready adam p note mtgs prep swim! emma-> marc book, pro Marc Zao-Sanders kirsty TTRO note Ops Team Meeting cath@filtered.com Pa cat Timeboxing Reunion de M lunch (see yest!) emails (55-???) take out chicken!	timebox today mtgs prep Kids ready dht-mzs monthly Marc Zao-Sanders brief tamsin on both LI emails (60-???) Catch up before TimeBoxi amanda-marc fortnigh swim Project LIFT - Weekly Call Microsoft Teams Me chess (2200) lunch Content Intelligence - Pro https://filtered.zoom.us//chris@filtered.com	timebox today 7 days - feedback & adjust IM Kids ready read 15 pages of HGTTG growth x HBR x AI x EY chess (2200) fix 7 days chris edits to IM OTAAT bullets 100 skills	timebox today 100 skills intro Kids ready take Luka (&Lewis) to Iris bday lunch w ma 100 Skills (pics?) flask w Iola 2 ciders yoga! bath!!!

Reading Hitchhiker'
epic walk in Hamstead Heath w Olya + Dave
Reading Hitchhiker'
Luka
Reading Hitchhiker'

Welcome back to the new Outlook (1/5)

Definition

Timeboxing ('tīm, bāksiŋG)

noun

The practice of:

- selecting what to do before the day's distractions arise;
- specifying each task in a calendar, with start and finish times;
- the method of focusing on one thing at a time (single-tasking);
- doing each task to an acceptable standard.



Definition

Timeboxing ('tīm, bāksiŋG)

noun

The practice of:

- selecting what to do before the day's distractions arise; **WHAT**
- specifying each task in a calendar, with start and finish times; **WHEN**
- the method of focusing on one thing at a time (single-tasking); **ONE**
- doing each task to an acceptable standard. **ENOUGH**

Very many benefits...

Timeboxing is logical. Timeboxing is proven, scientifically in multiple controlled trials across a couple of decades. Timeboxing is agnostic and flexible. Timeboxing is acknowledged by experts, bosses and Gen Z as the preeminent time management technique. Timeboxing gives you a log of all you've done. Timeboxing provides a sanctuary from the stresses and strains of modern life. Timeboxing helps us to collaborate openly and efficiently with others. Timeboxing helps us to think clearly and more deeply. Timeboxing doubles our productivity. Timeboxing helps us, ultimately, to lead a more intentional life. Timeboxing is easy because we all already do it, to some extent. Timeboxing is the one habit to rule them all.

...But I'll pick out just one

Timeboxing is logical. Timeboxing is proven, scientifically in multiple controlled trials across a couple of decades. Timeboxing is agnostic and flexible. Timeboxing is acknowledged by experts, bosses and Gen Z as the preeminent time management technique. Timeboxing gives you a log of all you've done. **Timeboxing provides a sanctuary from the stresses and strains of modern life.** Timeboxing helps us to collaborate openly and efficiently with others. Timeboxing helps us to think clearly and more deeply. Timeboxing doubles our productivity. Timeboxing helps us, ultimately, to lead a more intentional life. Timeboxing is easy because we all already do it, to some extent. Timeboxing is the one habit to rule them all.





Time check: is it before or after 2.20pm (CET)?

BELIEVE ■ PLAN ■ DO ■ OWN



15/15

❑ 15 minutes for 15 hours.



15/15

- 15 minutes for 15 hours.
- First thing, recurring appt. Most important.



15/15

- 15 minutes for 15 hours.
- First thing, recurring appt. Most important.
- Take pride in this piece of work.



15/15

- 15 minutes for 15 hours.
- First thing, recurring appt. Most important.
- Take pride in this piece of work.
- Order: dependencies, energy. Curate your experience.



15/15

- ❑ 15 minutes for 15 hours.
- ❑ First thing, recurring appt. Most important.
- ❑ Take pride in this piece of work.
- ❑ Order: dependencies, energy. Curate your experience.
- ❑ **Sizes: 15-30-60**



15/15

- 15 minutes for 15 hours.
- First thing, recurring appt. Most important.
- Take pride in this piece of work.
- Order: dependencies, energy. Curate your experience.
- Size: 15-30-60
- Where from?
 - Your head
 - Your to-do list
 - Your calendar.



BELIEVE ■ PLAN ■ DO ■ OWN



Rabbit holes

- ❑ Internal vs external distractions



Rabbit holes

- ❑ Internal vs external distractions
- ❑ That helpless feeling



Rabbit holes

- ❑ Internal vs external distractions
- ❑ That helpless feeling
- ❑ What to do
 - ❑ Notice the distraction / your reaction
 - ❑ Control the response (OTAAT mantra)





Rabbit holes

- ❑ Internal vs external distractions
- ❑ That helpless feeling
- ❑ What to do
 - ❑ Notice the distraction / your reaction
 - ❑ Control your response (OTAAT)
- ❑ **When do you get distracted? When are you vulnerable?**

BELIEVE ■ PLAN ■ DO ■ OWN



Build the habit

- ❑ If you timebox tomorrow or next week and stop, you haven't achieved a thing



Build the habit

- ❑ If you timebox tomorrow or next week and stop, you haven't achieved a thing
- ❑ BJ Fogg, story and Behaviour = $M \times A \times P$





Build the habit

- ❑ If you timebox tomorrow or next week and stop, you haven't achieved a thing.
- ❑ BJ Fogg, *story and Behaviour* = $M \times A \times P$
- ❑ And with timeboxing all three are tiny:
 - ❑ Motivation - you're here! Six benefits
 - ❑ Ability - administratively easy - remember OTAAT
 - ❑ Prompt - just your calendar

Let's stay connected!

marczaosanders.com/newsletter

Sign up now!

There's no time like...
the present.

A screenshot of the 'One Thing at a Time' website's 'Archive' page. The page has a white background with a dark header. The title 'One Thing at a Time' is centered at the top. Below it are navigation links: 'Home', 'Archive' (highlighted in green), and 'About'. A secondary navigation bar contains 'Latest', 'Top', and 'Discussions' buttons, with 'Latest' selected. A search icon is in the top right. The main content area lists several articles:

- Forget-me-not**: How to hold onto the thoughts you need. 24 HRS AGO • MARC ZAO-SANDERS. Includes a painting of a landscape with a figure.
- MAY 2024**: A section header.
- Not forgetting: 6-part series**: The kinds of things we forget, and how to remember them. MAY 29 • MARC ZAO-SANDERS. Includes a photo of a woman and a 'FAP' logo.
- 7 Days of Timeboxing**: A micro-course delivered to your inbox, for free. MAY 22 • MARC ZAO-SANDERS. Includes a vertical stack of colored boxes for 'TUESDAY' (orange), 'WEDNESDAY' (green), 'THURSDAY' (purple), 'FRIDAY' (red), and 'SATURDAY' (orange).
- This can help you, literally forever**: Six priceless, recurring timeboxes. MAY 15 • MARC ZAO-SANDERS. Includes a screenshot of a calendar.
- 94% voted for...**: Your feedback and ideas were invaluable — thank you. Includes a photo of colorful lights.

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Sign up now!

There's no time like...
the present.



By Marc Zao-Sanders

NINE ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO TAKE A BREAK FROM WORK

Science & common sense tell us we need regular breaks. But we're not great at choosing when or how to take them. We don't schedule (timebox) them and so we end up taking them when we're exhausted and not able to use them well. Try...

1. CLOSE YOUR EYES  Reducing what you can see just for a few minutes provides respite, consolidation and insights.	2. STRETCH  Yoga / stretching reduces muscle tension, improves flexibility and decreases cortisol levels.	3. COLD SPLASH  Cold exposure boosts circulation and helps to energise you by stimulating the vagus nerve.
4. SHORT WALK  Walking, especially outdoors, can improve cognitive function and creativity by as much as 60%.	5. GAZE OUTSIDE  Just looking at nature (animals, parks, hills) reduces stress and improves mood.	6. READ A CHAPTER  Reading is positive, educational and a stress-relieving. Reading one chapter really doesn't take long.
7. TIDY DESK AREA  A clean, tidy workspace reduces distractions, enhances focus & makes us feel better & do more.	8. DOODLE  Doodling is a stress reliever. The repetitive motions activate the brain's relaxation response mode.	9. SHOW GRATITUDE  Gratitude practices are linked to improvements in mental well-being & preventing depression.

 [Marc Zao-Sanders](#) | Newsletter: marczaosanders.com | Book: *Timeboxing – The Power of Doing One Thing at a Time*

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Sign up now!

There's no time like...
the present.



THE SUBTLE ART OF
SAYING NO
FOR BUSY PEOPLE

marczaosanders.com

We struggle to decline meetings, tasks & projects, usually because we want to people-please. But those that set boundaries by saying 'no' create clarity and focus for themselves & their teams.

- 1 It's unaligned with goals**
How to say no: "I don't think that work aligns with the project's overall goals, so I'm going to say no."
Why it works: Ties your decision to the broader objectives of the project / firm, showing strategic thinking rather than personal refusal.
- 2 You're already at full capacity**
How to say no: "I'm currently at full capacity with other projects and wouldn't be able to give this the focus it requires, so I'll need to pass."
Why it works: Demonstrates that you're realistic about workload and prioritize quality & professionalism. Show, don't tell, with a timeboxed calendar.
- 3 The ask is unclear**
How to say no: "I'd need more clarity on the scope of work. As it's currently described, I couldn't take this on. Happy to collaborate on this."
Why it works: It values clarity and avoids committing to something undefined, ensuring you make informed decisions.
- 4 The task should be done by someone else**
How to say no: "This task falls more within [person's] responsibilities & expertise, so let's ask them to take it."
Why it works: It redirects the request to the right person, maintaining proper roles and avoids overstepping boundaries.
- 5 The deadline is unrealistic**
How to say no: "That deadline is too tight. I'll need until [DATE]. Does that work for you?"
Why it works: Shows you value delivering high-quality results and are proactively offering a realistic solution. Suggesting this alternative timeline keeps the conversation constructive and focused on finding a workable path.
- 6 It's not such a great idea**
How to say no: "I don't believe this brings enough value to justify the time and effort. Here's a better way to do this..."
Why it works: Frames the No in terms of value & suggests an alternative solution.

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Sign up now!

There's no time like...
the present.



8 WAYS TIMEBOXING CAN TRANSFORM YOUR WORKDAY

By Marc Zao-Sanders

- 1. You're In Control of Your Schedule**
Choose the time slots for your tasks. You make the decisions, you set your intentions, you feel in control.
- 2. Break Down Large Projects**
Segment big tasks into smaller, manageable chunks (15-, 30- or 60-minute units) to get yourself going & make progress more visible and achievable.
- 3. Enhance Concentration**
Create dedicated timeboxes in which distractions are banished for deep focus, deep work, high performance and less stress.
- 4. Incorporate Regular Breaks**
Schedule short breaks to recharge. They will help you maintain energy and productivity throughout the day. Be creative about how you take breaks too – don't just default to snacking!
- 5. Reflect and Adjust Daily**
End each day by briefly reviewing what you got done and looking ahead to tomorrow. Helps you appreciate your efforts & build a positive feedback loop.
- 6. Choose Work-Life Balance**
Being intentional about when you're working simultaneously enables you to be intentional about when you're not working. Be proactive there too, for friends, family, yourself, etc.
- 7. Manage Meetings Efficiently**
Limit meeting times and attendance so you're only there when you really need to be.
- 8. Encourage Continuous Learning**
Set a recurring weekly timebox to learn for 60 mins. The urgency of work will always trump the luxury of learning unless you make it happen.

LinkedIn icon | Marc Zao-Sanders | Newsletter: marczaosanders.com | Book: *Timeboxing – The Power of Doing One Thing at a Time*

Let's stay connected!

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the present.

...or on LinkedIn...

