

## Huge Culver 2

Jaime: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire Builders. I have Hugh Culver on the show. He's been on my show twice, I adore him. He helps experts grow their business – bigger, better, faster. He's an author and a speaker and has done amazing things. I'm so excited to have him on the show. Thank you so much for coming on again, Hugh.

Hugh: Thanks, Jaime. It's always fun.

Jaime: So you are like the productivity guy and I go to you and many people go to you to try to find out the best ways to deal with their productivity. Today, I've asked you to come in and talk about what the heck is Friday 15 and how can business owners implement it in their business to make things more productive for themselves?

Hugh: It's kind of a cornerstone to my work when I'm helping entrepreneurs because one of the things that we know about being an entrepreneur now is that things have really changed. We're overwhelmed; we have all sorts of responsibilities. Some repeat but most of them are brand new, so they're being thrown at us all the time. What we need is a triage to get everything organized but we also need to get rid of all the stuff that accumulates during the week. So the first way of thinking about time is in one week blocks – every week is a natural division of time and so rather than thinking 'Wow, I've got to get this book finished,' or 'I've got to change my website,' or 'I've got to make more money,' you start looking at those goals in one week chunks and every Friday you dedicate 15 minutes. Of course, what we want to do on Friday is pack it in, chill out, do something completely different, but this discipline will save you and will get you set up for success. So 15 minutes, and the first thing that I do is look at my plan for the week and I see this disaster that started out so beautifully organized. I got a lot of stuff done but a lot of times my list is longer than when I started. So I look at that and I decided what it is that I can just finish in a couple of minutes. Because sometimes I just need to return a phone call, I need to pay a bill, I need to change something on my blog. Get it done! The second thing I look at is what it is that I want to move to next week or I want to either delegate to the people that I outsource to or that I want to get rid of. So it's do it, delegate it or dump it. Then the third thing, finally, is I want to create a new plan for next week. One of the mistakes that we often make when we create a plan or a list is we put everything in there that we hope to do and our expectations are too high. What I encourage people to do is keep it down to about a dozen things that are really critical for next week and that's what I call your flight plan. So, just like a pilot taking off, I now know where I need to land. So by Friday those need to be completed. The last thing that I do is I clean up my area – I put stuff away, I get rid of clutter, I get rid of these Post-It notes, those three felt pens, two pens and a pencil, because when I come in, I want to feel successful and I never feel successful if I'm surrounded by clutter. Because clutter is not only a distraction – I look at it and I think about it, now I'm distracted – clutter

reminds me I have not completed something. So the last thing I do in those 15 minutes is I clean up my work area, I might even wash it down so that when I come in on Monday I feel successful, I've got my flight plan and I'm ready to go. So that's why I call it your Friday 15.

Jaime: I have a bunch of questions to do with that, but I'm going to be honest with you for a second and show you my horrible, not clean desk. It's Thursday so I have my shake from lunch, I have a thousand cups, and just random things over there. So I agree with you about cleaning up – usually by Monday morning I have a clean and at least things are better. I'm showing you all the dirty secrets right now. But I think that's a key piece – sometimes when I come in and I have a thousand things all over the place I don't even know where they're from. So that is so important, thank you for reminding me on that. But the questions I have for you in general are – 15 minutes? Is that enough time to do all the things that you just told me?

Hugh: You could schedule more time but you probably won't do it.

Jaime: You know me well, Hugh!

Hugh: Well it's true. If you think 'I really need half an hour,' yeah, sure, but you're probably unlikely to have half an hour. I think there's something magical about 15 minutes – I can afford 15 minutes. I do think you should put it in your calendar as a recurring appointment that you should do, and it's just enough time so that it doesn't feel like a big burden and it's not perfect but you'll get enough done so that it will feel different. A lot of people tell me they love going to cafes and working at a coffee shop, like I do, or like our friend Jay Baer wrote his whole book in a library. Why is that? It's because it's uncluttered. It's an organized feeling. They feel successful and they can actually focus. So that's what the 15 minute is for – so that I have a game plan, I feel like I'm on top of what I need to be looking at, and I've also gone and looked at my long term goals and I've looked at the projects that I haven't looked at in a couple of weeks and I've moved that in there and I've cleaned up my work area and now I'm ready for success.

Jaime: Okay – many, many more questions! I have things in here that are weekly that I know I need to do – that's the first thing I ignore when things get overwhelming, so how do we actually pay attention to that and carve it out, even if it's in our calendar?

Hugh: I read recently that people have as many as 13 different ways to keep track of things and they still forget stuff. I think there should be three areas you hold your reminders in – one is the plan for the week, so that's what I plan on doing, I've carved that out, those are identified. The second is a holding zone – these are great ideas, like just before you and I started this interview you gave me a bunch of great ideas – well, they are not going to go into my plan for the week, they're going to go into a holding zone and I look at that holding zone, which in this case is for this month, and I will pull from it every Friday when I look at it. Then the third place is my calendar.

Jaime: I do the exact same thing and I recently interviewed David Allen so now mine's all online, on my phone. It gets mad at me and turns black when I don't go into it, which is always fun! But it's just a holding place, because before I had sheets of paper and things and I didn't know where things were, so I think that's hugely important.

Hugh: You know that you've recorded it – it's out of your mind but you know where to go and get it. I think that a really important change that people should make is get all of these reminders and little popups and reduce them down to three different areas that they're in and then you know where they are. I personally don't use popups because I find that they pop up when I'm doing something else, so I have a discipline to check those three areas to see what I should be working on.

Jaime: Okay, so then I have another question – the way I structure things is I do action plans, so I have a huge whiteboard over here and it shows like what my goals are for September and I am an over-packer, I think I can do more than I can actually do. So in my To Do list I have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and that works really well but I realize that I can't get everything done that I've put on the day so I do at least three things every day that are important but Tuesday and Thursday are my interviewing days so I can't them done on those days and then it starts to be a mess. So do I clean that up on Friday or should I be putting less on my weekly calendar? Give me some tips on that.

Hugh: Both. One of the tricks that I use that people really get a lot of success out of is to identify what I want to do this week and then create blocks on my calendar and that will, right away, tell me where I have a problem. So today I started off with interviews for a speech I'm giving next week and then I moved into interviews for a speech that's two weeks away and then I moved into strategy calls for a live event. So each one of those was blocked but I have to admit that yesterday I didn't get around to one of those so had to move it forward but because it's a block, when I moved it on my calendar I can start to see how I'm going with my time. When we have things that are just on a list there's no tike associated so it looks like it's not very long but when you do it, in reality, each one of those things, you know what it's like – 'I'll just change that on my blog,' you log in, you change it, you see something else, you change something else. So blocks on your calendar will really help you to be much more organized but also what they do is they tell you when you need to stop and move on. That's it – you've had 25 minutes, you need to stop and move on. It's a really good discipline to get into because everything can get bigger and bigger and bigger and suddenly your time evaporates. So start with a plan for the week, block your calendar and get used to stopping when the time is done.

Jaime: So do we block everything? Is your calendar full, 9 to 5, everything that you have to do?

Hugh: That's a great question. No, I block anything with clients and I block anything that's going to require quite a bit of time for me to think about or work on. So, for example, if I need to write an invitation e-mail for a campaign, that will be a block

of time because I'll probably need 30 minutes at least and I might leave the office, go across the street to a coffee shop, work on that, wrap it up and then come back. So it's client work or anything that requires a lot of my time or thinking.

Jaime: I do that in a different way but I like the way that you're talking about. I use the Pomodoro technique, have you heard of that one?

Hugh: No.

Jaime: Well this is extra – you're not interviewing me but I'll tell you this anyway. I have an app that's a timer for 25 minute and the Pomodoro technique is you do something so focused, nothing else, for 25 minutes and then you take a 5 minute break, and then 25 more minutes. So that's what I do but I think it makes more sense if I actually have it put in my calendar that that's what I'm going to.

Hugh: What it does on the calendar, because, again, I only want to go to a few places to get my instructions, so when I looked at my calendar this morning I went 'Okay, great, I've got to get those interview calls done and then I've got to move to the next one, then the next one,' and it tells me, in a visual way, that's all the time you've got, so be really efficient, get on with it and move on to the next thing. But not everything is blocked – I also have a list that I'm working from, but I keep everything in a few basic places that everything is on.

Jaime: This stuff in your list, is it duplicated on the calendar and on the list, or is it only the little things that are on the list?

Hugh: There is one more piece to this whole puzzle and that is that every night I make a short list of what I need to do for the next day. So I have my flight plan for the week, I look at that, and then I make a list for the next day and that is what informs me of what I need to get done. So during the day I'm really only looking at that list for the day and I'm looking at my calendar and that's it – I don't have any popups or anything. I look at those two and my job is to cross those things off.

Jaime: I love that. How long did that take you to implement? You work with clients and teach people how to do this – how long does it take someone to really implement this? Because I know people will go 'That's a great idea! I should do it. I'm going to try it for a week,' and then it drops off the face of the Earth.

Hugh: It takes about a week. It took me months, probably, but it takes about a week because what you have to do, and this is true of all change that we're going to make as entrepreneurs, is, first of all, you've got to have a big enough reward. There has to be a reward. Why would I bother changing it if it's not that bad? So as entrepreneurs, if you look at your current situation and say 'You know what? I go home frazzled every night, I feel like I'm not keeping up, every day there's more stuff coming at me, I've got Post-It notes all over my wall,' then the reward is to get back to sanity and to start acting successful. That's the trick – you need to act successful. So that's the reward. The second thing is to just start implementing one discipline at a time, so the first thing would be to get rid of all of these little reminders, get rid of all of them and put them into one place and call that your

holding zone. I like to organize it month by month. If someone says 'Hey, here's a great book to read,' I go 'Great, thank you – holding zone.' I'm not putting it anywhere that's current; it's in a holding zone. If someone says 'Wow, you should check out this website,' or 'You should watch this movie,' 'You should listen to this guy's recording,' I go holding zone, holding zone, holding zone. So I have a holding zone, I have my flight plan, I have my calendar and I have my plan for the day. So get everything organized and then the next thing would be to start the Friday 15. Every Friday, you've got 15 minutes, what can you do? At first, you'll notice, you won't get a lot done – it won't be enough time. You can't reorganize your shelves, you can't reorganize your filing, but you'll feel better on Monday for those 15 minutes. It's really all about acting successful and having a reward for that extra work that you're going to put in, because that's what motivates us.

Jaime: I love that. Sometimes entrepreneurs don't even realize how much they're getting done – like on Friday you think 'Wow, I did get actually get all that stuff done.' There's a great website called [idonethis.com](http://idonethis.com) that I signed up for, so every day I talk about what I got done instead of all of the stuff I still have to do, which, if you look at my whiteboard, is a little bit ridiculous. So that's huge, having that on Friday, and going through what worked and what didn't work is really important.

Hugh: It's a double edged sword – we're entrepreneurs because we like to start things but most entrepreneurs will admit they're not good at the rest – they're good at the start, but they're not good at the systems and the habits. But what I've discovered is, using the fact that you're an entrepreneur as an excuse won't serve you. 'I'm an entrepreneur, I'm self-employed,' won't help you. What you have to do is you have to start thinking successfully – you have to think 'What would it be like if I was the CEO of a company? Would I be allowed to get away with this?' No, because people would be coming into your office, they'd be looking at this, they'd be going 'Oh man, did a bomb go off?' So you need to act more successful and have a reward for doing that – and the reward for me is I can go home and I know everything's in place, I know I have a home for things. If I need to work at home, I've identified one or two things I'm going to work on when I go home and that's it. I'm not playing around, searching, and all of that stuff.

Jaime: Trying to figure it out, because then time escapes you. Awesome, this is great, Hugh, I really appreciate it. Where can we find out more about you online?

Hugh: [Expertsenterprise.com](http://Expertsenterprise.com). There are videos, there are resources, they can learn a lot more.

Jaime: You have an awesome podcast, everyone should check it out. I really appreciate it, Hugh, thank you so much.

Hugh: Thanks Jaime, my pleasure.