

biorhythmic awareness

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Extension agents, like many other professionals, suffer from the “too-many-irons-in-the-fire” syndrome. The very nature of Extension work dictates that, in a given day, a multitude of decisions must be made on a wide range of subjects. This diversity can be extremely frustrating, especially if we’re not aware of the relationship between our personal energy curves and productive work.

Time management experts have been telling us about energy curves for many years. Recently, however, the term biorhythms has come to the forefront and has been widely publicized by the media.

Body Clock

Biorhythms are the flows of energy that change periodically. The key to using our personal biorhythmic pattern or “body clock” lies in plotting our pattern of highs and lows. Begin by analyzing the blocks of time in which you’re most productive. Determining your particular prime times means taking notes over a period of several days or even weeks.

You can make this biorhythmic awareness theory work for you by following these steps:

1. Chart your mood swings on a graph for a period of 2 weeks—using a rating scale of 1 to 10.
2. Keep a notebook, carefully listing your activities, including accomplishments and failures. Record times and activities during a two-week period.
3. Analyze results and adjust your work habits and patterns accordingly.

My personal analysis led me to conclude that the time slot from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. produced more constructive results. This helped me see the need for restructuring my working patterns. Now, I use this prime time for creative thinking and major decision making whenever practical. I also try to avoid wasting it on trivial tasks.

System’s Flaw

The obvious flaw is that the system can’t *always* work. Major decision making can’t always be postponed until your

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body clock says it's O.K., and a phone call invariably interrupts your creative thinking. The real secret to success is making the biorhythmic theory work for you.

Learning to anticipate your best and your worst times will help you alleviate some of your frustrations and will increase your efficiency and productivity. Conscientiously applying the biorhythmic principles will give you greater job satisfaction. It will help you feel that you're in control of the situation.

Bonus

An added bonus is the potential improvement in your relationships with clientele and co-workers. Heightened awareness of their biorhythmic cycles will help you sense when your comments may be favorably received and when it's best to remain silent.

Biorhythmic awareness can't perform miracles, but it can help you combat the "too-many-irons-in-the-fire" syndrome.