

THE ART OF GOING SLOW

HOW TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE,
CALM YOUR MIND, AND FOCUS ON
WHAT TRULY MATTERS TO YOU!

DAMON ZAHARIADES

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ARTOFPRODUCTIVITY.COM

CONTENTS

[Other Books by Damon Zahariades](#)

[Your Free Gift](#)

[Notable Quotables about Going Slow](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What You'll Learn in the Art of Going SLOW](#)

I. [The Case For Slowing Down](#)

[Improve Your Mental Health and Emotional Balance](#)

[Boost Your Productivity and Efficiency](#)

[Strengthen Your Relationships](#)

[Elevate Your Joy and Sense of Fulfillment](#)

[Top 5 Misconceptions About Going Slow](#)

II. [Master The Art Of Going Slow](#)

[Step 1: Reflect On Your Nature](#)

[Step 2: Examine Your Goals And Interests](#)

[Step 3: Determine How You Currently Spend Your Time](#)

[Step 4: Reduce Your Commitments](#)

[Step 5: Practice Calming Activities](#)

[Step 6: Adopt A “Slow Living” Habit](#)

[Step 7: Scale Down Incoming Digital Noise](#)

[Step 8: Practice Intentional Communication](#)

[Step 9: Cultivate An Attitude Of Gratitude](#)

[Step 10: Perform A Weekly Review](#)

III. [How to Embrace The Art of Going Slow Across Your Life](#)

[Your Career](#)

[Your Interpersonal Interactions](#)

[Your Learning Strategy](#)

[Your Health and Nutrition](#)

[Your Decision-Making Process](#)

[Your Routines](#)

[Final Thoughts on the Art of Going SLOW](#)

[May I Ask You a Small Favor?](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Other Books by Damon Zahariades](#)

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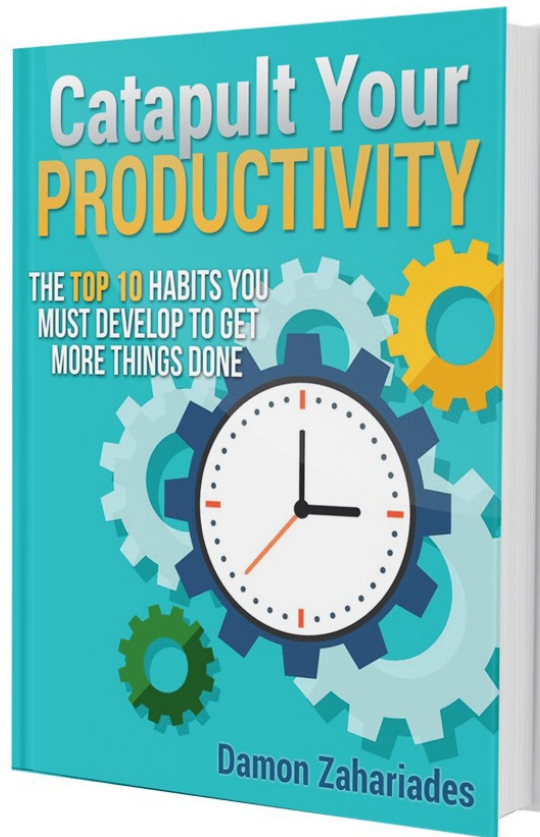


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In the following pages, we will do a deep dive into creating a slower-paced lifestyle. We'll discuss the reasons to embrace it, the challenges you'll encounter, and how to overcome them. Much of what we'll cover will seem counterintuitive at first. But if you stick with me, I promise the journey will be worthwhile.

Onward.

NOTABLE QUOTABLES ABOUT GOING SLOW



“

Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.

— LAO TZU

“

When we rush, we skim the surface and fail to connect with the richness of the present moment.

— CARL HONORÉ

“

Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast.

— U.S. NAVY SEALS

INTRODUCTION



I was wrong about productivity.

In the 1990s, I became interested in productivity. True to my addictive personality, this curiosity soon turned into an obsession. Everything I did became an exercise in living productively. I tracked my time like a scientist conducting an experiment. I treated *wasted* time like a leaky faucet; it was an irritating problem that needed to be fixed ASAP.

I fixated on getting more done and doing so at any cost. The longer my to-do list, the greater the challenge, and I looked forward to it each day.

But I got it wrong. *Entirely* wrong. And this mistake severely undermined my quality of life. I unwittingly shed personal attributes that were important to me and replaced them with attributes that were improper and even shameful. I went from being welcoming and patient with others to being

dismissive and impatient. I went from being contemplative and calm to being impulsive and easily agitated.

Worst of all, I didn't notice these changes as they happened to me. I became aware of them years later after they had established a foothold in my temperament. After the damage had been done.

What was the cumulative result of these unfortunate changes? My relationships were in shambles. My business was on life support. And most disastrously, my headspace was in a tailspin. I was constantly anxious and short-tempered. I lived on a razor's edge emotionally; the slightest inconvenience would cause me to erupt. And moments of contentment and joy were short-lived, forgotten almost as soon as they happened. My long-suffering friends and loved ones walked on eggshells around me.

This was the price of getting productivity wrong.

Hindsight is a humbling mentor. With some prudence and mindfulness, I could have avoided the heartache and stress. With a modicum of self-awareness, I could have avoided the frustration and despair. But I had sacrificed these qualities on the altar of productivity.

I got a lot done in those days. But the price was far too high. And I'm still feeling the effects today, decades later.

This is the reason I wrote *The Art of Going SLOW*. First, I hope to demonstrate how easy it is to fall into the trap of living a busy, frantic lifestyle focused on getting things done.

Second, I want to throw you a lifeline. If you're feeling constantly stressed, under pressure, and burnt out, I want you to know you can change your circumstances. Of course, I'll show you how to slow down, but that's

just the beginning. I'll also show you how to truly *embrace* slowness so that your quality of life improves for years to come.

This is more difficult than it sounds because we'll need to unravel a lot of internal programming. Our bad habits run deep. I'll give you the step-by-step process that changed everything for me. I'm confident it will for you, too.

Along the way, you'll discover something fascinating. Shunning the workaholic lifestyle and slowing down can paradoxically — and dramatically — *improve* your productivity.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. We'll get to that later.

That's a promise.

Damon Zahariades

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WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THE ART OF GOING SLOW



If you've looked at the table of contents for this book, you'll have noticed that we're going to cover a lot of material. It might seem intimidating. Rest assured that we're going to move through it quickly. We're not going to waste time with semi-relevant anecdotes.* Nor will we get bogged down by research that offers limited *practical* value concerning your everyday life.*

I want this book to be inspiring, thought-provoking, and enjoyable. So, we'll keep a fast pace. We'll address every topic thoroughly, but we won't dilly-dally.

With that in mind, here's a quick overview of what we're going to cover in *The Art of Going SLOW*:

Part I

It's easy to overlook the many rewards of slowing down. Likewise, it's easy to brush aside the consequences of living in a constant rush. I made this mistake for years. In **Part I**, I'll make the case for embracing a slower lifestyle. We'll explore how living mindfully and intentionally will improve every aspect of your life.

Part II

I'll describe the step-by-step process I used to slow down my life. There are ten core steps, and we'll discuss each in detail. You'll learn how to apply each step in *your* life and why you should. **Part II** is a mini workshop. The priority is application. So, each step is accompanied by a quick exercise designed to help you to take action.

Part III

Slowing down might seem to clash with setting and achieving your goals. It might seem to conflict with the notion of getting ahead and making things happen. In **Part III**, we'll investigate how going slow will help you accomplish everything you want while creating a rich and rewarding lifestyle.

How to Get The Most Value From This Book

Everyone reads self-improvement books differently. Some skim. Some focus exclusively on chapters that seem relevant to them at the moment and disregard everything else. Some read every chapter thoroughly and move on to another self-improvement book when they finish.

I suggest using the following approach with *The Art of Going SLOW*:

1. Read each chapter with a small notebook at your side. Jot down notes as they occur to you. Review your notes after you finish a chapter before moving on to the next one. Ask yourself how to apply what you've read to your daily life.
2. After reading each chapter in **Part II**, create a small plan to implement the material. List five simple things you can do effortlessly in your daily

routine. I'll give you plenty of ideas in each chapter to prompt your creative juices.

3. Do the exercises in **Part II**. They're quick and easy, and they'll help you adopt the practices outlined in each chapter.
4. After you finish reading the book, practice the small plans you created while reading **Part II**. Life transformation occurs through *application*.
5. Revisit select chapters as a refresher down the road on an as-needed basis.

That's enough preliminary stuff. Let's dig in.

* It is considered a "best practice" to include dozens of anecdotes when writing a self-improvement book. While a few stories can help demonstrate ideas, including more is primarily a way to increase the book's word count. I believe the best self-improvement books help the reader take purposeful action as quickly as possible. To that end, I won't include needless stories.

* I've found that very few readers care to read research papers. I don't blame them. Many studies are expensive to access, and most are a chore to read. Most importantly, the insight they offer is difficult to apply to real life.