

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, reflecting a bright, overcast sky. The water's surface is covered in gentle ripples, creating a textured, shimmering effect. The reflection of the sky is a pale, hazy blue, while the water itself shows deeper blues and greys. The overall mood is serene and minimalist.

The Creative Entrepreneur's Guide to:

WORKFLOW & ORGANIZATION

THREE KEY TIPS:

The key to a sustainable business that empowers you to live the life you love lies in having strong systems. Whether you're a hobbyist dreaming of launching your first business or a seasoned veteran with a steady six-figure revenue stream, improving your workflow should be an ongoing effort.

1

Automation is your friend

If you find yourself doing the same tasks repeatedly, ask yourself if there is a better way. Streamlining your workflow will save you hours each day and allow you to reallocate your efforts to doing those tasks which dramatically grow your business.

Ways to do this: Create email templates, invest in a client management system, outsource tedious tasks.

2

Quality over Quantity

Rather than adopting a dozen new programs and habits to hodge-podge your way towards a sustainable workflow, make purposeful choices to create a holistic system that runs smoothly. Invest in quality tools and feel empowered to make your own choices to find the right fit.

Research tools before investing and assess whether they meet your needs. Listen to the advice of trusted mentors and make informed choices that set you up for success in the longrun.

3

Drive towards your purpose

The goal of developing strong systems is to increase efficiency so that you can get your life back. Every decision you make in business should drive you closer to your purpose.

Ask yourself: What is my ideal day, month, or year? Where do I see myself at 80? Am I making intentional decisions that drive me closer to that vision of the future?

APPS + PROGRAMS:

Below are a few of the tools that we know and love!



HoneyBook
Contracts, Invoices
& Client Communication

bit.ly/RTSplusHB
(20% off)



MileIQ
Automated
Mileage Tracker

bit.ly/rts-mileiq
(20% off)



CoSchedule
Blogging Calendar
& Social Scheduler

coschedule.com



Trello
Organization +
Workflow Tool

trello.com



Creating Life Rafts for Your Business

We all know the feeling of getting started. It's like this amazing, giant rush... and then the panic sets in once we realize that there are so many things to do that we never studied or prepared for. Starting a small business can feel a lot like trying to drink out of a water hose. We flip on the metaphorical open sign and then we just try our very best to keep up. But it doesn't have to be that way. Establishing effective systems early on in your business can be a game changer. Our systems and workflow become these amazing Life Rafts for our businesses when things get crazy. They can ensure that you are able to not just keep up, but to thrive and have more margin to do the things that you really love – the things that, more than likely, are why you got into this whole entrepreneur thing to begin with (Are you nodding your head in agreement? Amen hands emojis? Let's keep going!).

Friend, you chose an interesting career. Creative entrepreneurs are one of the only jobs that we can think of where the professional spends most of their time doing things other than what they are actually named for. Doctors are usually doctoring. Farmers are usually farming. Bankers are usually banking. Creatives, on the other hand, are only photographers/ painters/ designers for about 10% of their working hours (if they're lucky). The rest of the time they are focused on clients, marketing, editing, book-keeping, and just about everything else. You do a lot. Hats off to you!

So, the question that we want to answer is: How can we create as many life rafts for our business as possible?

Tim Ferris, in *The Four Hour Work Week*, talks about the ideas of efficiency and effectiveness:

- 1) **Effectiveness** is that which you do that gets you closer to the goals you want to achieve
- 2) **Efficiency** is how quickly you can get things done, whether it is important or not. We want you to take these ideas and use them to define the ideas of shortcuts and time-sucks



Shortcuts – Choosing Efficiency over Effectiveness

Time-sucks – Choosing Effectiveness over Efficiency

Time-savers – Increase the Efficiency of an already Effective task

In our small business, the goal is to create systems (life rafts!) that are as efficient as possible without sacrificing their effectiveness. We want them to work fast and work well. If they aren't doing both of these things, then we need to try and rework them.

When your systems are efficient and effective, that's really when they become a life-raft that will keep your business above water even in the busiest, most hectic of times. That's when they are falling into the Golden Mean of being time-savers – and that's exactly what we want more of!

We know that it can be a challenge to commit to creating effective, efficient systems, but the time you will be putting into establishing these Life Rafts is time well spent. It will require effort on the front end that will reap real, meaningful rewards at the end. You owe it to yourself to set your business up to be as exceptional as you are. You can do this, friend!!

When you are establishing these effective systems, you want to make sure that they are:

Replicable: When we edit, we follow the same process over and over (and over) again which means that every time we edit, we are getting better and faster at doing it.

Scalable: The client management system that we use is the same one that we started using in year two of our business. This system is amazing because it was able to support 10 clients a year, and it has been able to support more than 50 clients a year. A good system will be able to grow with you so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time your business changes.

Teachable: The best systems are ones that are easy to pass off to someone else. When we hired our studio manager, it was easy to teach her how we designed albums because we had defined that system so well.

*Our systems and workflow become these amazing **Life Rafts** for our businesses when things get crazy.*

They can ensure that you are able to not just keep up, but to thrive and have more margin to do the things that you really love – the things that, more than likely, are why you got into this whole entrepreneur thing to begin with!

Once we have effective systems in place, we can get to the fun part: automation. So many of our daily tasks are ones that we do over and over again. We answer the same questions for clients, import and export our images the same way, send contracts and invoices, post to social media, design albums, and even follow up with potential clients using the same sequence of emails. We can automate each of these tasks, saving seconds, minutes and hours every time we do them. It's like conjuring time out of thin air! Amazing! Our favorite time saving tools save us minutes every day. Those minutes add up to hours, and the hours add up to days that we can spend doing things that make us feel alive, like spending time as a family in the mountains or having kitchen danceoffs (you're welcome to join anytime, just bring your best moves!).



Ashley Scobey
Educator + International Photographer
thescobey.com + [@thescobey](https://www.instagram.com/thescobey)

“

Success is the sum
of small efforts,
repeated day in
and day out.

—*Robert Collier*

”





TOMAYIA'S TAKE

Three Workflow Hacks for Parents on the Go!

As a mom of two, sometimes being a full time photographer and bestselling author can be a little chaotic! Luckily, I've found some balance with a few "parent hacks" as I call them!

1

Create a Comprehensive Calendar

Create a Family Schedule of events with practices, recitals, game days, play dates, and family activities. Color code your events by kid and sync with your Google Calendar, iCal, and Outlook calendar for a quick and easy way to keep everyone on track.

I use an app, Tiny Calendar, for iPhone that syncs both my iCalendar and Google Calendar, keeping them both in one place.

Parent Hack: Assign one of your children to manage the calendar and review it each week for updates and last minute add-ons.

2

Save Your Email Templates

Tired of retyping and replying with the same response over and over? Create email drafts through Gmail Canned Responses and quickly respond to clients and inquiries in less than three minutes.

Parent Hack: Set up workflows and email responses in your client management system.

3

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

I know we gleam with joy when we have our superhero cape on, but there is nothing wrong with enlisting help this year! Maybe it's time to outsource your images for editing, hire a virtual assistant, or share carpool duty with another parent. Don't be afraid to ask for help—even it's just for one night per week!

And don't forget to: schedule time for YOU! You can't serve from an empty vessel. Take the time to care for yourself.

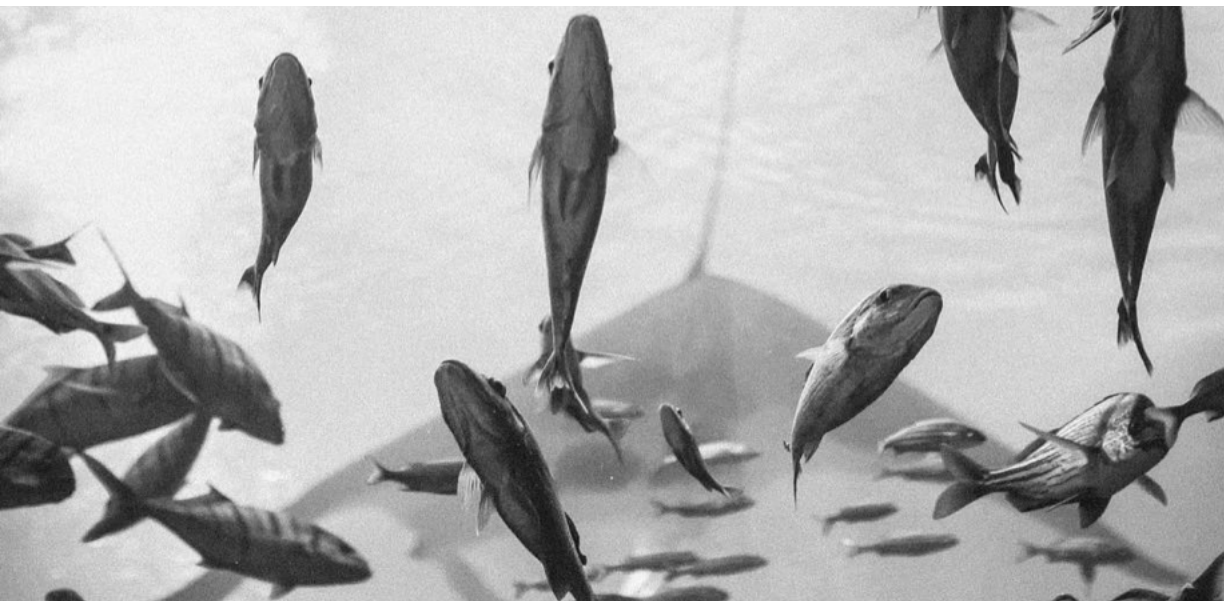
Parent Hack: Schedule a monthly massage at a local spa!

BY: TOMAYIA COLVIN | AUTHOR + PHOTOGRAPHER

tomayiacolvin.com + @tomayiacolvin

Act Like the Business You Strive to Be

ARTICLE + PHOTOGRAPH BY: JEANNINE STEINKUHL



I want to say I first heard this working for a startup company in the city of Chicago four years ago, “If you want to be a successful business someday, you have to start acting like one now.”

At a recent TuesdaysTogether meeting, a fellow member chimes in, “I have to be more like Apple, not an orange.” In response, I giggle but the gears sure are churning. The whole concept is similar to faking it, until you make it. However, I don’t propose we fake anything. I propose we do the total opposite and genuinely treat every move and goal as part of a strategy, geared toward the bigger picture. Throwback to my college years studying event management: we need to begin with the end in mind.

With this, two words come to mind: structure and accountability. I had developed an immense understanding and awareness of both while working for a major office supply corporation. Who knew that a few years in the corporate world would pay it forward to my creative one.

On Structure:

Your To-Do list may be the elephant in the room, but Structure is the room. In the corporate world, this room is predetermined and everyone is given an elephant. In the creative world, we all develop elephants but sometimes forget to build the room. How’s that for a metaphor?

There are three things you can establish to start building that room, before you should address the elephant:

Time:

- Give yourself working hours
- Establish a Start time and End time
- Don't Forget to take Vacation days

I don't propose we fake anything. I propose we do the total opposite and genuinely treat every move and goal as part of a strategy, geared toward the bigger picture.

Daily:

- 45min of uninterrupted work, 15min break: stretch, take a walk, grab a coffee, use the bathroom, check your e-mail
- Kickoff “call” (review the day’s to-do list and make adjustments if necessary)
- Recap “call” (review the day’s performance and productivity, prepare a to-do list for next day, including any meetings or sessions lined up).

On Accountability

In the corporate world, you have a boss to hold you accountable for your performance and assigned tasks. *In the creative world, who do you have but you?* If you don't seem to be cutting it in accountability, find someone or something else that will help.

Establish Metrics:

- Set goals and ways to attain them
- Order goals by probability
- Reflect monthly/quarterly/annually & adjust when or where necessary
- Find someone or something else to hold you accountable, if you cannot
- Networks (i.e. The Rising Tide Society)
- Hold recognition “calls” with those that hold you accountable
- Review your accomplishments and performances with Family or Networks
- Write them down or print them out, then place in a binder or hang on your wall

To become consistent and avoid the big “P” (Procrastination), engrave this acronym into your creative brains: B-A-T, Behaviors-Attitudes-Techniques.

Believe you can make it happen and use any resources or tools necessary to make it so. Techniques will help you improve, but attitudes and behaviors will help you grow. So grow, dear Apples, grow!



Jeannine Steinkuhl
Photographer from Augusta, GA
jeanninerae.com + [@jeannineraes](https://www.instagram.com/jeannineraes)

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS:

Prioritize What Matters Most

As a mother of two little ones, I learned that quickly as I grow my family. My #1 tip is to always start your day with what's most important, and for me, that's family - breakfast and story time with my kids. When you put what's most important first, you will stop feeling guilty throughout your workday, and you'll feel as motivated as you needed to be, and most importantly, you'll always remember why you do what you do.

—Wynona Benson | @wynonab



Make a List Every Night

I think where people have trouble with this, is they either don't set enough goals that will launch them into the right direction to take action or they set way too many goals, not prioritized, and then become overwhelmed and take little to no action.

Every night before you go to bed, take the time to list out in a notebook all of the things you need to take care of the next day and separate them by category for business and then personal matters. Then, take that list and make another list of the top 5 things in each category that absolutely must be done no matter what, and then when you wake up the following day, discipline yourself to start the day with only those things, and do not procrastinate. There is something called the 80/20 rule where most people procrastinate on the top 10 or 20 percent of tasks that are most valuable for their goals and instead spend 80% of their time with the many and menial least valuable tasks that contribute very little to their overall success.

—Myles Berrio | @myles.berrio

Create a Daily Workflow Strategy

It's easy to waste time when you're not sure where to start. But it's even easier to succeed when you know exactly what to do. Creating a daily workflow is just as important as a client workflow, project workflow, editing workflow, or even blogging workflow. Starting and ending your day well allows you to be more intentional with your time and ultimately increases your productivity overall.

—Alexandra Beauregard | @heartlovealways



Take Care of Yourself

Making sure my mind, my body, my soul is healthy is important because it is from there that stems my inspiration and creativity. Some days that means getting out of bed and getting dressed on a "day off" and spending hours in a coffee shop and other days that means grab In-N-Out Burger and sit on the beach for two hours. Your work flows from you but it has to be flowing from a healthy, content and full you for it to be beneficial!

—Arielle Estoria | @ariellestoria



Try the Pomodoro Technique

I have found through lots of trial and error in my first full-time year of business that I do best with time blocking or “block scheduling,” also called the Pomodoro Technique. If I tell myself I have 30-45 minutes to complete a task and then move on to the next, I will be much more productive. When I am working alone, emails, texts, dishes, and other distractions can wait! My theory is that my time is very precious and I owe it to myself to fully focus and do the best work I can when I am working on a new painting, writing an email to a dear friend, working on shipping paintings, or working with my Honeybook and Rising Tide Society family.

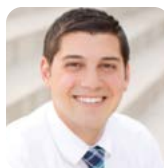
—Megan Elizabeth | @artbymegan

Ask Yourself Why

Our key to a consistent workflow isn't one silver organizational bullet, it's more of a constant refinement. Every time we start a new task, we stop and ask ourselves why. *Is this necessary to move us closer to our goal? Is there a faster, more efficient way to accomplish this task?*

Just because we've been doing something a certain way for a while doesn't mean it's the best way. Our workflows aren't like set-it-and-forget-it rotisserie chickens, they're developed and refined one small decision at a time.

—Jordan Demos | @jordan_demos



Plan Out Your Week on Sunday

Having a bird's eye view before the craziness of your week begins is critical in being productive all week long. Having an objective view, before the last-minute emergencies and regular life gets in the way, allows you think clearly and zero in on what is really critical to a week well spent. Try spending at least an hour every Sunday creating your week + see the amazing results!

—Tiffany Toliver | @theemmaroseagency

Leverage Slower Seasons

In my experience, goal setting is where many small business owners stop—we set grand goals, then get overwhelmed and let them fall through the cracks when we don't have a roadmap to put those goals in motion. My advice would be to take the slower seasons in your business, the “lulls,” and use them to your advantage with a schedule and system to reach the next level in your business growth.

—Laylee Emadi Smith | @laylee_emadi_photography





Remember to Intentionally Reflect

Burnout happens when we take on too much and don't stay connected to how we feel. Instead of worrying about what you don't get done each day, reframe your perspective to reflect on what you DID accomplish, the great things that happened during the day or ideas that came to mind. You can even go digital by using the app [idonethis.com](https://www.idonethis.com) to record your wins of the day.

On the flip side if things didn't go so well, reflect on what could have been done differently, how you feel and your commitments for the next day. Checking in with yourself is an important way to stay connected to your purpose and not get lost in planning overwhelm.

—Chivon John | [@chivonjohn](https://twitter.com/chivonjohn)

Automation Is Your Friend!

When it came down to constructing a workflow that helped grow our business and fit our lifestyle, we knew our number one priority had to be saving time in the tedious and time consuming areas of office hours in order to be able to pour more heart into other aspects of the business.

Utilizing canned responses, detailed online magazines for pricing guides, outsourcing editing and scheduling tools for blog posts and social media are all wonderful examples of shortcutting the hard work to stay on track as much as possible when things inevitably will get harder during some seasons of life...it's good to know you're still doing the best you can when you have systems like this in place!

—Amanda Hedgepeth | [@amandahedgepeth](https://twitter.com/amandahedgepeth)



Write It Down

I write everything down in a spiral notepad. Ideas for clients, outfits, projects, quotes, etc. all goes in this one notebook. I have one of those “is that a squirrel over there” attention span so I have to deliberately allocate my time. In order for me to do that I have to get all the stuff/ideas in my head out somewhere else, and writing, pen to paper, allows me to get to that clutter free space.

It's such a simple thing but it does a few really important things for me: It gives me mind time—moments where I'm not absorb in a tech object; Journal ideas—I'm able to journal or log ideas so that I can reference them when needed; Focus—it allows me to let go of what's inside my head so that I can deal with my priorities of that day.

—Laura Tully | [@lauratully](https://twitter.com/lauratully)

LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS:

Set aside ten minutes to walk through a quick reflection + analysis.

1. What are your biggest struggles in business organization and efficiency?

2. What tasks do you dread doing in your business?

3. What would you do with one more hour each day?

4. What choices will you make today to organize and systematize your business?

5. How will creating systems drive you towards your greater goals this year?

QUICK SYSTEMS CHECK:

1. List all of your daily business tasks and items on your to do list.
2. Circle all of the things that only YOU can do in your business.
3. Put a * next to all of the things that someone else could do, but you love.
4. Put an X next to all of the things that someone else or a software could do, and you hate.
5. Research ways to eliminate or outsource any items that you marked with an X.

OUR STORY:

The Rising Tide Society began as a conversation with dear friends about the loneliness that entrepreneurship can bring and has transformed into an international movement for creative entrepreneurs and small business owners built on a foundation of community over competition.

In 2016, The Rising Tide Society welcomed the opportunity to join hearts with HoneyBook, a values-driven software company reimagining the way creative professionals work with their colleagues and clients.

Our marriage has empowered us with the resources to continue rapidly bringing local TuesdaysTogether meet-ups, accessible education, and affordable tools for small business creatives to thousands more across the world!

