

The Work Diary of Derrius Quarles, Million-Dollar Multitasker

Questions--

What did you learn about Mr. Quarles from reviewing this week-in-the-life profile?

I looked through all of the articles before I chose this one. Mr. Quarles had quite a few obstacles in his way that could have easily lead to failure. I admire his perseverance even with one of the toughest upbringings.

What are your initial observations?

My initial observations of him is that he's a fighter. He didn't want to give up on himself. He wanted a better life than what he was given.

What does Mr. Quarles' use of time reveal about his priorities?

Mr. Quarles values his personal time just as much as he values his professional, business time. He's great with time management. He understands it's important to leave some time in the today for himself. He meditates. That wouldn't quite work for me but he knows it works for him to clear his mind. He has a schedule and routine to ensure he keeps on track with his four different emails, meetings, commute, cooking dinner and spending time with his future fiance.

What values do you attribute to Mr. Quarles? What specifically from the article leads you to your assessment of his values and priorities?

Mr. Quarles is obviously extremely intelligent. He received high honors in his academics at his high school to obtain scholarships to go to college. He had enough self-discipline to do well when he didn't have the family support or mentors at home. He understands reading is very important to gain knowledge. He's also determined. He was determined to get out of the bad neighborhood of Chicago to be a better human. He did everything he could to ensure it happened for himself.

Decision-making: What decisions are reflected in Mr. Quarles' work diary?

In Mr. Quarles' work diary, he methodically works out his day to ensure he has time for his commute, meetings, meditation and responding to emails. He has a weekly meeting to speak to one of his mentors to check in and be held accountable of his actions from the previous week. He chooses to learn more and to grow as a designer by reading books. He genuinely seeks improvement for himself and his colleagues.

What does he reveal about what informs those decisions?

He and Brian Williams have a weekly meeting to check in on his week and to hold him accountable for his actions. They also talk about future business events and how to grow as an

owner. Sometimes they just talk about life and how exhausted they are. That's a great mentor. I believe this weekly conversation helps set the tone for his decision making for the rest of the work week.

How would you describe his process of decision-making?

I think he has a great process in place. He has a mentor, he meditates to clear his mind, he ensures he makes time for himself and his personal relationships, all while still staying on top of his emails and meetings.

In what ways does that align with your own decision-making process?

I really could take a cue from his decision making. I should set aside some time in my day to clear my mind. Sometimes I am just going, going, going until it's time for bed. Between having two small children, working full-time, our extracurricular activities, now online school work, I am an extremely busy person. I try not to make any decisions so quickly. I like thinking things through before I give a solid answer. Sometimes I do not take the time to do so. I need to prioritize my time and ensure I stay on track with balancing personal and business.

Consider the role Mr. Williams plays as an accountability partner for Mr. Quarles. What value does Mr. Quarles derive from that relationship? Do you have anyone who regularly holds you accountable to the decisions you make, or goals you aspire to?

Mr. Quarles shows integrity by having a mentor who holds him accountable every week. I say integrity because Mr. Quarles follows through with the feedback from Mr. Williams. He's not there to sugarcoat everything. He's there to let Mr. Quarles know if he thinks he's doing well, making poor decisions and to help him through some problem solving opportunities. Mr. Quarles follows through with his leadership advice and doesn't just blow him off. He really takes in Mr. Williams advice and applies it to his life. He's also showing humility. He's not beyond getting feedback from a peer. He wants the feedback to help him be a better leader.

Values audit: How one spends time or invests energy reveals much about what they value and how they set priorities. Think carefully over your last week or two of activities. What would a week-in-the-life article say about you and your values?

I've actually had a fairly unique week including spending the night with just my husband and I, apart from our children, to celebrate our 18th wedding anniversary. We realized quickly we didn't have our priorities straight because we hadn't spent the night by ourselves since our eldest son was born, 8 years ago. That's absolutely ridiculous. We agree, our children are our world and our number one priority. We also agree we need that time together to ensure we maintain the bond as father, mother, partners in crime and best friends. Our typical week consists of getting up at 5am to get the kids and ourselves ready for school. My husband and I get their breakfast and lunch together. I head out to work as he does the drop off. On days he has to go to lecture or the hospital (He's in Nursing School) I do all of the above so he can get to class in San Diego

on time. When we all get home, it's a norm to head out to basketball practice, gymnastics, baseball or I have a board meeting for an organization I volunteer with. We also try to cook dinner at home as often as we can. We do find the time to do this all as successfully as possible for our family. Sometimes it's overwhelming. Especially since I have my homework now. We balance as well as we can between our family, our professional lives and the fun stuff.

If that reflection does not line up well with the values you believe you have, does that alter your understanding of your values? Or does it suggest changes to how you invest your time that might better reflect the values you hold?

Family is number one. Our kids are happy, thriving human beings. They love us and they love each other. Everything we do in our busy lives is for our family. These values definitely line up with our priorities and a potential week-in-a-life article. We work hard so we can play hard. Working also shows our children you can have both a professional, outside of the home profession and still balance the quality time we have with our family.