



OVERVIEW

Ferriss was unhappy with his life. He had a high-paying but stressful job at a tech company, and then he quit to start his own stressful business. He worked twice as hard for himself as he did for his boss, but he felt no joy or satisfaction. He was burned out.

Then he discovered the Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 rule. It says that 80% of your results come from 20% of your efforts, and the rest is wasted. Ferriss decided to apply this rule to his business and his life. He cut out the unnecessary and the unproductive, and he automated and outsourced the rest. He freed up his time and his energy, and he started to enjoy life more. He traveled, learned new skills, and pursued his passions. He also wrote a book to share his secrets of “lifestyle design”, how to create a life that blends work and play in the best possible way.

The 4-Hour Workweek is the book that shows you how Ferriss did it, and how you can do it too. It is a practical guide to the 80/20 rule, and how to use it to optimize your personal and professional life. It is also a collection of stories, tips, and insights from Ferriss and other people who have achieved the same kind of freedom and fulfillment. The book is like a blog, with short and engaging chapters that cover different aspects of the 4-hour workweek philosophy.



The 4-Hour Workweek shows you how to design your life according to your own terms. It has four sections, each covering one of the key elements of lifestyle design:

- Define your objectives. Figure out what matters to you. Make a plan. Ask yourself, “What do I really want?”
- Eliminate distractions to free up time. Learn to do more with less. Concentrate on the 20% of stuff that’s important and forget the 80% that isn’t. Reduce your information intake. Learn to avoid interruptions, and learn to say “no”.
- Automate your cash flow to increase income. Delegate your life — hire a virtual assistant to handle trivial tasks. Create a business that can run by itself. 75
- Liberate yourself from traditional expectations. Customize your job to increase mobility. This could mean working remotely, or it could mean using geographic arbitrage to take mini-vacations in countries with cheap living costs.

The book starts by telling you that you should choose what works for you from the material inside, and that’s an essential disclaimer for any personal productivity book - but especially this one.

D.E.A.L.

STEP 1: D IS FOR DEFINITION

This section is about letting go of the idea that you have to work hard all your life for a reward that may never come. Instead, you should question some of the beliefs that hold you back, such as retirement as a final goal and that total income is the most important thing (relative income - i.e., the amount you earn per hour of work - is the most important thing in this book). These are myths that are challenged by books like *Your Money or Your Life* and the voluntary simplicity movement.

Here’s one key exercise from this section that illustrates what he means. Take about five minutes and define your dream. If you had no obligations, what would you be doing with your life right now?

Then, take another five minutes and define your nightmare in as much detail as possible. What is the absolute worst thing that could happen if you pursued that dream?

If you compare the dream and the nightmare, is that potential nightmare worth giving up your dream?

After that, the book explains how to turn that dream into reality and measure how close you are to achieving it - and prepares you for the rest of the book, which shows you what actions you can take to make that dream happen.

STEP 2: E IS FOR ELIMINATION

This section is about how to improve your day-to-day life with some simple techniques that eliminate most of the boring and unnecessary activities that fill your professional life. Here are seven examples:

- Make your to-do list for tomorrow before you end today. When you add an item to this list, ask yourself if you would consider a day as productive if that's the only thing on the list that you did. Then, when you start in the morning, just tackle that list with enthusiasm knowing that all the stuff is valuable.
- Quit all multitasking right away. This means when you're trying to write, close your email program and your instant messenger program and your web browser and just focus on writing, nothing else. This helps you to finish the task much faster.
- Make yourself end your day at 4 PM or end your week on Thursday. Even if you must come in on Friday, do nothing (or, even better, focus on something to improve yourself). The aim here is to learn to squeeze your productive time.
- Go on a one-week media fast. Basically, avoid television (other than one hour a day for fun/relaxation) and nonfiction reading of any kind (including news, newspapers, magazines, the web, etc.). By the end of it, you'll realize that the media and information overload was causing you a mild attention deficit.
- Check email only twice a day. Combining this with the "no multitasking" rule allows email to only take up a fraction of my time when it used to slow down everything.
- Never, ever have a meeting without a clear agenda. If someone proposes a meeting, ask for the specific agenda of the meeting. If there isn't one, ask why you're meeting at all. Often, meetings will become more efficient or, if they were really time wasters to start with, they'll disappear altogether.
- Don't be scared to put up a "do not disturb" sign. This was something that felt very natural to me, but for many people it's not. If you're being interrupted frequently by people dropping in, you're effectively multitasking and multitasking is a time waster, so if you have a task that needs your attention, literally put up a "do not disturb" sign. People will understand.

STEP 3: A IS FOR AUTOMATION

This section is a detailed explanation of how to become a low or zero-value-added entrepreneur - that is, a middleman. The idea is that if you set up being a middleman correctly, you can generate a stream of passive income that allows you to earn money with very little work.

While this is appealing to some people, the reality is that it's not as simple as the author claims it to be. It depends a lot on salesmanship (the skill to persuade people you have a product that they need) and luck (finding a niche). If you have both (and the examples he gives have both), you can do very well, but such things are never a certainty.

STEP 4: L IS FOR LIBERATION

This section is about how to put the puzzle pieces together into a big picture. Basically, it takes the dreams you set in the first part, the improved productivity of the second part, and the passive income of the third part and makes that four-hour workweek happen.

The first step is to make your job remote-friendly. You can do this by being efficient (as explained in the second step), then showing your efficiency during sick or vacation days, then asking for some time off from the office as part of your routine, then slowly moving to a fully remote life. This way, you can do the work from anywhere on your own terms. Of course, this may also make you leave your job if you can create new opportunities (like those from the third section).

What do you do with the extra time? That's the whole point of this book, that time is the most precious thing we have in our lives, not money. Time lets you follow your dreams, and this whole book's goal (at least steps two and three) has been about shifting more and more time into your own personal life so you can do these things.

