

In this lesson, you'll learn how to quickly conduct an effective monthly review that will tell you exactly where to focus your time and attention in the coming month.

After learning about daily and weekly reviews, you might be thinking that a monthly review looks exactly the same and takes even longer.

If that's what you were hoping for (probably not, right?), I have bad news. A monthly review is actually a very quick process that takes only a few minutes. And its only purpose, in this case, is to help you make some high level plans for where to focus your attention specifically on system building and improvement.

So, in my review process, the weekly review and the annual review are the real workhorses of the system. During the annual review, you set your major priorities and then, during the weekly review, you figure out the tactical steps you'll take to actually pursue them.

I like it that way because a week is a really manageable amount of time to make concrete plans for. When you go beyond that, there are just too many variables that can get in the way and mess up the specifics. With a weekly plan, you get to learn and make course corrections 52 times each year. That's a lot of opportunities to improve and really get things right.

So, what do you do during a monthly review?

Well, you do two things: First, you make sure you're staying connected to your major priorities. And second, you look for opportunities to build or improve your systems.

So, staying connected to your major priorities. How do you do that? The best way is to take about two minutes and re-read your executive summary and ask yourself if the projects you're working on are aligned with it.

Hold on a second! Executive summary? What's that? We haven't talked about that yet. Don't worry! The executive summary is something you're going to create in the next lesson during your annual review. We'll talk about it then. For now, you just need to know that you'll be using it during your monthly review.

Now, about system building.

Like I just said, the second purpose of a monthly review is to look for bigger opportunities to build or improve your systems.

You're going to look over your weekly reviews from the last month and make a note about where you ran into situations where you used a system, but it was clunky and needs improvement or where you could have used the support of a system or routine but didn't have one at all.

And that's basically it.

You don't actually need to make any grand plan to build anything. This is more of a self-awareness campaign to remind you where your effort in system-building will be the most rewarded.

Now, you might find this quick exercise motivating and start working on something right away, but you don't have to.

Your weekly report is where you set your immediate priorities and tasks, so the monthly report is just a way to bring all of the most recent weeks together into one place to help remind you what you might want to make a bigger priority starting now.

It's just a way to make sure that big, important things don't get totally lost in the day to day or the week to week. Especially things that aren't necessarily goals in and of themselves, so they probably won't make it into your annual review.

More or less, it's a time to identify the support systems you still need that will help you reach those bigger goals.

And that's really all there is to it. You can probably do your whole monthly review in about 5 minutes once you're familiar with the process.

It's so simple we don't even need a recap... but we'll do one anyway.

So, here's what we just learned. First, we learned that a monthly review is a very quick process that only takes a few minutes to complete. And we learned the two purposes for it, which are to make sure you're staying aligned with your bigger priorities and to identify any systems you need to build or improve in order to meet those priorities.

The monthly review is so simple that you really don't even need to write it down. It's just for awareness.

So all you need to do today is put a reminder on your calendar for some time in the final days of this month or maybe the first few days of the next one to spend five minutes running through it.

And when you do, I'll see you in the next lesson.