



CHECKLIST

— PRODUCTIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH UNEXPECTED FREE TIME TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS OR CAREER —

Got an unexpected chunk of **free time**?

Maybe an international trip got postponed, a slew of appointments just got rescheduled, or a lucrative project got cancelled (yikes), and suddenly your calendar is wide open.

This can feel really stressful, especially if money is tight. (I've been there, and I know how stomach-dropping and anxiety-spiking this situation can be.) But instead of panicking and frantically puttering around your home, try to use your free time purposefully.

With the right attitude, this free time can be an opportunity to strengthen your business or career in so many ways.

Time is the most precious resource we've got. Your time is literally...your life. Most people feel like they "never have enough time" and always crave "more time." Right now, like it or not, you've got plenty of time. How will you choose to use it?

While your circumstances may be far from ideal, you can choose to view this free time as both a *challenge* and a *gift*.

I hope this checklist helps you feel a little calmer, more optimistic, and more empowered as you decide what to do with your newfound freedom.

A few suggestions for using this checklist:

- If possible, print it out. Check things off as you go along.
- Please don't feel pressured to complete the entire checklist in one day. Maybe you want to check off three items today, then another two or three tomorrow. Go at your own pace.
- Know that everything on this checklist is a gentle suggestion, not a command. Trust your "**hut**" (heart + gut) to make decisions. Different things work for different people, so please do whatever feels right for you.

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FREE TIME TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS OR CAREER —**

[] Make a list of your “wins.”

What are your top professional victories from this year, thus far?

For instance: Clients you served. Results you achieved. Sales you earned. Projects you completed. Problems you solved. Lives you improved. Contributions you made. Etc.

Write down your top 5 “wins” of the year, big or small. Remind yourself: “I’m doing a great job.”

When you put your victories in writing, it bolsters your confidence, plus it’s always smart to share your accomplishments on your website (or in your résumé) too.

[] Choose a goal and find your motivation.

Write down your #1 professional goal. Something you definitely want to accomplish before the end of this year.

Why is this goal so important? Write down 5 reasons why it matters strongly to you. (Keep this list somewhere visible where you’ll see it often.)

You might have a variety of reasons, including financial reasons (“Because I want to earn an extra \$10,000 and pay off debt”), personal reasons

("Because I promised myself I would do this and I want to keep that promise"), emotional or spiritual reasons ("Because I feel called to serve in this way," "I want to help others," "I want to set a good example for my child"), and other kinds of reasons, too.

[] **Spruce up your website or résumé.**

...Or any other important materials. Update anything that's out of date. Delete old sections that aren't relevant anymore. Add new accomplishments.

Not super tech savvy? Need some help with your site? Hire a freelancer using [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) or [upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) to help you out.

[] **Create tons of content and get ahead of schedule (for once!)**

If you're a blogger, podcaster, run a newsletter, or create any kind of content, now is the time to hunker down, create a whole bunch of new material, and get ahead of the game.

It will feel so good to know you've got plenty of beautiful things ready to roll out...weeks ahead of schedule!

Need a photographer to do beautiful photos of your products, photos for inside your next book, or stylized lifestyle shots for your website and social media? [Talk to Danielle](#). Looking for a graphic designer? [Joanna is excellent](#).

[] **Tackle that big list of “loose ends.”**

You’ve probably got a big list of things you’ve been meaning to handle for...a long time.

Emails to answer. Receipts to scan. Spreadsheets to update. “Thank you” cards you should have mailed out months ago (whoops).

Tackle that list and tie up loose ends. Ahhhhh. Instant relief.

[Here’s a “loose end” checklist to help you get organized and dive in.](#)

Looking for a project manager/virtual assistant/productivity angel who can help you tackle that big list and get everything done? [Kate is awesome.](#) She’s got about 1,000 different skills. Pretty much anything you delegate to her, she can handle for you.

[] **Do something unexpectedly generous.**

Check in with people in your community (“Are you doing okay? What do you need right now? How can I help?”). Do something unexpectedly generous. Go above and beyond to help others.

More generosity ideas: Nominate a colleague for an award. Mail a gift to your mentor. Record a supportive “you got this!” video message for a client using [BombBomb.com](#). Help a friend find their dream job.

When you establish a reputation as someone who is consistently kind, caring, and generous, this strengthens your career immensely. Your generosity will return to you tenfold—often, in the form of job leads, client referrals, career-changing introductions, big opportunities, and beyond.

[Here's a true story](#) about a tiny act of generosity that unexpectedly led to a big, lucrative project.

[] **If you're looking for work, let people know.**

Don't assume your friends, family, and colleagues "already know" that you're looking for work. They may not. (Even the most caring, loving people get busy with their own lives and miss things, or forget things.)

And don't assume that "nobody" in your community has the power to help you find work. You might be wrong about that.

Reach out and let people know what type of job, client, or project you're looking for. Ask them to keep you in mind and/or pass your information along to others. You never know. Someone might be able to make a fantastic introduction for you!

If asking for help makes you feel overwhelmed, start small. Begin by sending one personal email to one friend. [Not sure how to write this kind of email? Or maybe you feel awkward asking people for help? Here are some suggestions.](#)

[] **Finally write that book.**

...Or record that podcast, create that video series, paint your office walls a fresh color, jump into any project you've been "meaning to do" for a while. If not now, when?

[This special workbook can help you get organized and get it done.](#)

[] **Take a much-needed break.**

I've been working since I was 14 years old. I worked all throughout my teens, throughout college, and have been working full-time ever since. How about you?

Maybe you've worked your entire life. Maybe you're pretty darn tired. And maybe it's time for a well-deserved break.

Use some of your unexpected free time to take a sabbatical.

Unplug. Reset. Recharge. Spend quality time with people you love. Make banana pancakes with your kids. Talk to your grandma and ask her to tell the story of how she met grandpa. Walk in nature. Gaze into the night sky. You'll return to your desk refreshed and ready to do your best work yet.

[Here are some suggestions on how to unplug from technology and create a healthier relationship with your phone, tablet, and other devices.](#)

Research confirms: [three days in nature can change your physiology and literally reset your brain.](#) It doesn't take a huge amount of time to create a huge shift in how you feel.

What else?

What are some other steps you could take to use your free time purposefully...feel a little more calm, organized, and optimistic...and strengthen your business or career?

Write a few of your own ideas.

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You're going to be okay. You will get through this. And the irony is, one day—possibly very soon—you may suddenly find yourself very busy once again, wishing you had more free time. So, enjoy the time while it's here.

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"Every situation in life is temporary. So, when life is good, make sure you enjoy and receive it fully. And when life is not so good, remember that it will not last forever and better days are on the way."

—Jenni Young (livelifehappy.com)

THANKS FOR DOWNLOADING THIS CHECKLIST.

This is a free checklist. Enjoy. Share it with friends, family, and students.

If you'd like to publish this worksheet in a book, magazine, on a website, or any other platform, or if you'd like to use this worksheet in a commercial/for-profit context (with clients, customers, etc.), please email hello@alexandrafranzen.com to request permission first. Thank you.

ABOUT ALEXANDRA

[Alexandra Franzen](#) is a writer and entrepreneur based in Hawaii.

Her writing has been published in places like *Time*, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Lifehacker*. She's been mentioned in places like *The New York Times Small Business Blog*, *The Atlantic*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *Inc.*

She's the author of several books, including [The Checklist Book](#), [You're Going to Survive](#), and [So This Is the End: A Love Story](#).

She teaches classes on writing, communication, creative marketing, productivity, setting intentions and goals, and simplifying life and work. She has led classes in 18 cities around the world—and online, too.

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