



SLAYING THE EMAIL BEAST

Today was a quiet day. I received only 156 emails and sent only 25. If every day was like today, I'd have only 780 incoming emails to process each week and only 125 to send. If I spend at least 30 seconds on each, that's an entire workday.

The Email Beast is very real. If I allowed the Beast to run wild, I'd sit at my desk all day fighting it.

You must understand two truths. The first is that, to be successful, you must be able to engage in deep work. By deep work, I mean work that moves you toward your big goals. (On this topic, read "Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World" by Cal Newport.) The second truth is that the Beast's sole objective is to destroy deep work. In short, you must slay the Beast to succeed.

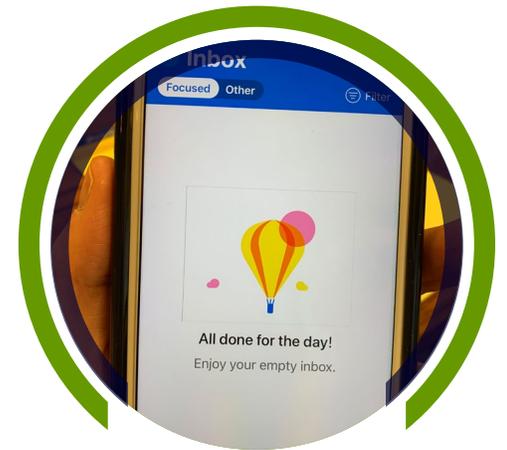
I'm sure you have your way of doing things, and I don't mean to give the impression that I've "figured it all out." I haven't. But if you're like me, you never get enough of trying new things. In that spirit, I offer my tactics for slaying the Beast, all of which I've shamelessly stolen from others.

1. HAVE SET TIME BLOCKS TO PROCESS EMAILS. During the workweek, I have three daily "time blocks" when I process emails: 5:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. (On the weekend, I seldom read email.) The first block is a quick "triage" of my inbox to see if any emergencies exist that I can quickly extinguish before I go to the gym. (This approach is stolen from W. Mark Lanier, a Houston, Texas, trial lawyer.) I often do not open

Outlook again until 11 a.m. Outlook stays closed so I can use the best hours of my day to work on the most important things. (This idea is stolen from Tim Ferriss, author of "The 4-Hour Workweek.") The 4:30 p.m. time block is just like the 11 a.m. one.

2. USE THE 2-MINUTE RULE. In David Allen's "Getting Things Done," he espouses the two-minute rule. The rule says that if an item can be dealt with in under two minutes, you must do it now. I have found that this one little hack allows me to blast through my inbox. I've also found that most emails can be dealt with in under two minutes because they are garbage. By "dealt with," I mean either deleted, responded to, or filed away.

3. USE FOLDERS TO ORGANIZE WHAT'S LEFT. If an email cannot be dealt with in under two minutes, you need to put it where it can be found later when you're working on the project to which it relates. I have created folders in Outlook to serve this purpose. (This is also stolen from David Allen.) The biggest is "@Action." The @Action folder is where I drag and drop any emails that'll take longer than 2 minutes for me to "deal with." I have the "@Read" folder for unimportant emails to read in my downtime. Another is "@Waiting," where I put emails that don't require me to do anything except wait. An example would be an email from a hotel confirming my reservation. When I check into the hotel, I delete it.



4. AGGRESSIVELY UNSUBSCRIBE. I am an "unsubscribe" fanatic when it comes to unsolicited email. Related to this, my newest approach is to politely ask my team members not to include me in emails unless they require action on my part.

5. SET UP RULES IN OUTLOOK. When I open a new matter here at the firm, I create "rules" in Outlook to automatically capture and file emails relating to the matter. It's very easy to set up; you just need to get into the habit of doing it.

There you have it. The core of my program to slay the Email Beast. Good luck in your own fight to win the battle.

-Kevin W. Mottley

BEWARE THESE RETIREMENT SPENDING MISTAKES

COMMON FINANCIAL PITFALLS

The bulk of retirement planning is spent discussing how you will save money in the years leading up to the end of your career, but that's only half of the picture. Once you enter retirement, your focus shifts to the smartest way to divest your money for both your own enjoyment and your continued financial security. There are countless ways to wisely spend your nest egg, such as taking trips, providing for the education of your grandchildren, and more. However, this article isn't about good ideas. Instead, let's talk about some of the worst ways to spend your retirement funds.

TIMESHARES

The appeal of a timeshare seems obvious. It's a space of your own for a few weeks of the year, and you get to enjoy a nice change of pace from your regular environment. The problem is that these properties are full of hidden costs and have been outpaced by other vacationing options. In a world where you can book an Airbnb with just a few clicks, timeshares are poised to become a relic of a past age.

ONLINE SCAMS

Hackers and cyberscammers love to prey on the elderly. As gross as it may sound, they know that older generations tend to be less tech savvy than their younger counterparts. You should be wary of online offers that look too good to be true. If you have even the slightest doubt, have a loved one take a look at the offer to ensure you're not being scammed. Never provide your private financial data to a source you don't absolutely trust.

TCHOTCHKES

Many of us have walked into the house of an older relative to find a room full of American Girl dolls or a display case of Candlewick glassware. Collecting can be a rewarding hobby when done in moderation, but amassing junk simply for its own sake is a waste of money and space. Make sure you're acquiring objects because you truly want to treasure them.

RUSHED RELOCATIONS

In general, real estate-based purchases can be extremely beneficial for retirees. The exception to this rule is a spur-of-the-moment relocation in order to be closer to your family or a retirement community. Because real estate transactions are so expensive, it's best to approach them with extreme care and due diligence.

BONUS RECIPE FROM KEVIN'S PERSONAL FILES

CRAB CAKES WITH LEMON RÉMOULADE, AKA THE BEST CRAB CAKES EVER

Each summer at the beach or for an important night like an anniversary or birthday, I make this recipe for the family. It is, hands down, THE BEST crab cake recipe ever. Enjoy it and pair it with your favorite side. For me, it's usually a cheesy summer squash casserole and a nice sauvignon blanc.

Servings: 4 (2 cakes each) **Prep. Time:** 20 minutes **Chill Time:** 1 hour **Cook Time:** 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tbsp butter, divided
- 1 large red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup saltine cracker crumbs finely crushed
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tsp Old Bay seasoning
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 3/4 tsp dry mustard
- 1/4 tsp Texas Pete hot sauce
- 1 lb fresh lump crabmeat, drained and picked
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Lemon Rémoulade Sauce:

Makes 2 1/4 cups

Prep. Time: 10 minutes

Chill Time: 30 minutes

- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup Zatarin's Creole Mustard
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp paprika
- 3/4 tsp ground red pepper
- Sea salt and pepper, to taste
- Lemon wedges
- Parsley sprigs

Garnishes:

- Mixed baby greens
- Olive oil, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Melt 2 tbsp butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, add bell pepper and onion, and sauté 10 minutes or until tender.
2. Remove from heat; stir in cracker crumbs, mayonnaise, egg, Old Bay seasoning, Worcestershire sauce, dry mustard, and Texas Pete hot sauce.
3. Gently stir in crabmeat. Shape mixture into 8 patties; cover and chill for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.
4. Make Lemon Rémoulade sauce by whisking all ingredients until blended. Cover and chill for 30 minutes to up to 3 days.
5. Melt 1/2 tbsp butter with 1/2 tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook 4 crab cakes 4–5 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Repeat procedure with remaining 1/2 tbsp butter, 1/2 tbsp oil, and 4 crab cakes.
6. Just before serving, toss mixed baby greens with olive oil, sea salt, and pepper to taste. Make a bed of greens on each plate and top each with a hot crab cake. If you are cooking for two, cook only 4 of the cakes and refrigerate the other 4 to cook the next night. If you're cooking for larger groups and are increasing the ingredients, you can mix in some back fin rather than lump crab meat to cut costs a bit.
7. Serve with Lemon Rémoulade; garnish with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs if desired. Serve with a vegetable. A good choice is green beans seasoned with thyme, salt, and pepper.

This entire dish can be made a day ahead of time and put together the day of. The Rémoulade may be used as a dip or a spread for sandwiches for about 3 days after preparation.



ARE RELEASES OF LIABILITY ENFORCEABLE?



When signing up for any “extreme” experience, have you ever looked at the release forms? A few years ago, I did just that. Terms of the release forms for these recreational businesses vary, but the forms can sometimes get to the point of releasing the company from their own negligence.

My son once wanted to go with his friends to a local trampoline arena called Jumpology, where they could jump around as much as they wanted. As most parents would do, I signed the form. Even as a personal injury attorney, I blindly signed the form and quickly shuffled him off to spend time with his friends. After signing it, though, I decided to read the form more carefully.

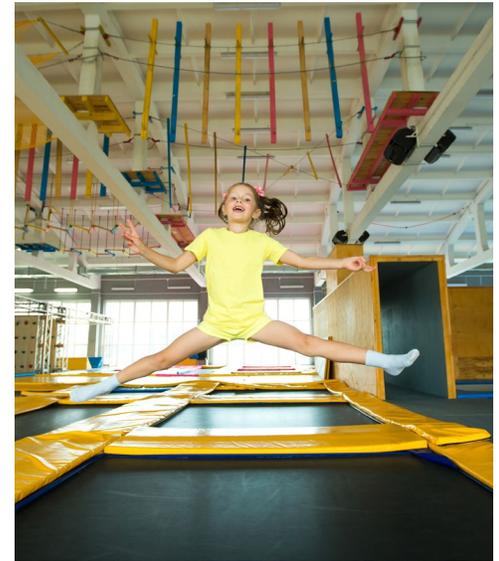
I found that the form releases Jumpology from essentially anything you could think of. This includes Jumpology’s own “negligent

acts and/or omissions” and any “personal injury” or “death” that could come as a result of Jumpology’s misconduct. So in essence, the company can do something “negligent” that may result in the “death” of a young child and be able to walk away from the situation without any legal ramifications, simply because a parent signed a form.

What would happen if an employee left a tripping hazard on the floor? They would have absolutely no liability. As a parent and as a lawyer, I found this really hard to believe. The form is clear, but I don’t believe it would hold up in a Virginia court.

For the last 100 years, the Supreme Court of Virginia has refused to enforce forms like this that prospectively waive liability for negligence. They are considered a violation of public policy. The law on this topic varies state to state, though. In Maryland, preinjury releases are generally enforceable. Of course, as with anything, there are

exceptions. Before you sign up your child or yourself for an activity that requires a release form, be sure to read it thoroughly so you know what to expect in the event of an injury.



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SOLUTION

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1	7	6	4	2	8	9	3	5
5	8	1	7	9	6	2	4	3
6	4	7	1	3	2	5	9	8
2	9	3	5	8	4	6	1	7



IMPOSSIBLY SILKY MASHED POTATOES

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 lbs. medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and halved
- 6 sticks cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a stockpot or large saucepan, submerge potatoes in just enough water to cover them. Bring to a boil, add 2 tbsp of salt, and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Drain potatoes and let cool for 3 minutes.
3. Using a ricer, grate potatoes into the original saucepan over medium heat.
4. With a wooden spoon, stir potatoes until they begin to stick to pan and steam, about 2 minutes.
5. Add butter in four equal batches, stirring constantly and adding each batch only once the last has been fully incorporated into the saucepan.
6. Stir in cream, season liberally with salt, and serve immediately.



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GONE TO THE DOGS

HOW CAN A THIEF SUE THE FAMILY HE ROBBED?

Have you heard the story of Terrence Dickson? Even if you don't know the name, you might have heard his strange tale. Dickson was a burglar in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. One day, after breaking into a house and helping himself to some valuables, Dickson decided to leave through the garage. After discovering the automatic garage door was stuck closed, Dickson turned around and was horrified to realize he'd locked himself inside.

To make matters worse, the family he was stealing from had just left for an extended vacation, so Dickson lived off of soda and dried dog food for eight days. When the family returned and found the unlucky burglar, a lawsuit was filed — by Dickson! He sued for mental anguish, and the jury awarded him \$500,000.

There's nothing that shakes our faith in the justice system quite like injustice being served. When Dickson's story first gained notoriety in 2001, thanks to an email circulated by the now-defunct Stella Awards newsletter, which highlighted "outrageous lawsuits," people were

rightfully enraged. There was just one problem: Terrence Dickson never existed.

In 2002, a reporter from Pennsylvania contacted the Bucks County prothonotary's office, where all records for civil cases in the county are kept. He discovered there was no record of any cases involving such a burglar. It's worth noting the original email where this story first appeared ended with a call for tort reform from a made-up law firm in Ohio. Likely, this hoax was an attempt to manipulate the public perception of the justice system.



Despite being debunked 17 years ago, this tall tale still makes the rounds and often appears on lists of "outrageous lawsuits," many of which are featured on the websites of legitimate law firms!

There are plenty of wacky legal cases, but when a story is too ridiculous, there's a good chance a few important details are being left out or the readers are being lied to. Don't believe everything you read online!