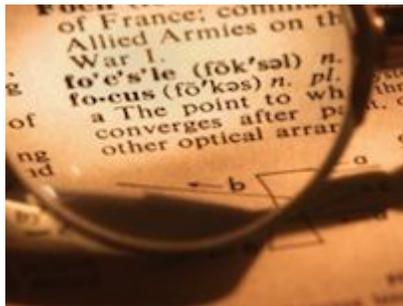




## Leadership, Dogs, and Twitter

Mary Kelly, PhD & Productive Leaders  
Keynote Speaker | Business Consultant | Author

### 21 Tricks to Maintain Focus, Motivation, and Deadlines During the Holidays for Busy Leaders



The holidays are right around the corner. This is the time of year where time accelerates. We often feel as though there is just too much to do and not enough free time to accomplish everything we think we should do. Some of us just give up and do nothing. Others fall hopelessly behind, then transform into frenzied Tasmanian Devils and whirling dervishes of disjointed project management.

How do we remain happy, balanced, and productive during the holiday season? How can we carve out the lack of focus, bake up some motivation, stuff in an extra helping of efficiency, and be ready before the timer signals that we are ready for the holidays?

If all else fails, do we have a back up plan? What happens when the turkey isn't fully

(...continued)

The holidays are a time of joy and chaos and celebrating with people we care about. Being more efficient on the projects that are important to us reduces stress and alleviates anxiety. This holiday season, let's focus on what matters, accomplish what is important, and worry less about what does not.

Please make comments on [my website!](#)

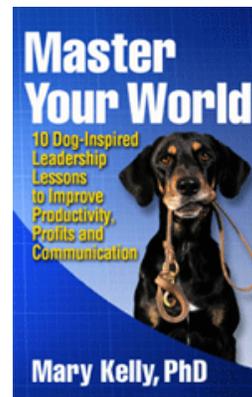
#### Mary's Updates

#### Happy Holidays!

I know everyone is getting busy for the holidays. I will keep posting updates and photos to my Facebook page, and I would love you to stay connected with me [there!](#)

We are celebrating with a special holiday promo on the Master Your World Kindle book. During December it's just \$2.99! You can find it [here](#).

Thank so much for your support!



cooked and everything else is ready? How to we manage when we fall behind?

Our holiday To-Do lists can spiral out of control, causing us to feel overwhelmed. Here are some ideas for staying focused, motivated, and on schedule.

Techniques for regaining focus:

1. Take a shower. (I know, it sounds crazy, but have you ever noticed how many great ideas you get in the shower?)
2. Turn off all online distractions such as Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, etc. Close all computer windows.
3. Turn off both the TV and radio.
4. Get away from anything that might give you something else to do. (I go to a diner or a coffee shop and just force myself to sit and work. I have no distractions – I cannot get up to put in a load of laundry or clean a bathroom or play with the dogs.)
5. Do a quick workout. Run or walk, or lift a few weights to get the endorphins going. This allows the subconscious mind to sort out priorities.
6. Eat jalapeños or something spicy. Spicy food, research shows, releases endorphins, so you feel better, allowing you to focus.
7. Use a white board and a large wall calendar. Seeing what is coming up helps us mentally allocate the time we need to get things done.

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed and just don't feel like being productive. What then?

Techniques when we are tired and lack of motivation:

1. Make a list of everything you have to do. Tackle the easiest, fastest ones first. Cross items off the list to get a sense of accomplishment.
2. Physically get together with other productive people and work at the same time. (This is like a school study group which keeps people focused and motivated.) Try it as a fun way to write Christmas cards.
3. Have a work "cookie swap." The advantage of group work is that sometimes (not all the time) you can find someone to trade work. Cookies swaps work much the same way. You bake your cookies and then you trade with others to get a variety.
4. Tell yourself that you really, really, really need to get this task completed. Promise yourself a reward when you are finished. (Ex: As soon as I grade 10 papers, I get to play Words With Friends.)
5. Remind yourself how good it feels when you are finished so you don't

## Mary's Book Ideas of the Month

Here a few ideas to read over the holidays. They are either free or almost free. Merry Christmas!

[49 Quick Ways to Market Your Business for Free: An Instant Guide to Marketing Success](#)

[How to Use Facebook for Business - Your Quickstart Guide for Getting Customers Fast](#)

[How to Write a Non-Fiction Book in 3 1/2 Days](#)

## Twitter and Social Media



(From Mashable.com)

“Though it is actually a marketing vehicle for Microsoft, [ExecTweets](#) is a great resource for finding executives on Twitter. The site categorizes executives who use Twitter and lets users vote on their favorite tweets from those corporate leaders. The [WeFollow](#) directory is another good resource, just search for tags like “CEO” and “executive” to locate executive tweeters.”

## Pet Tip: Toxic holiday plants

My dogs will try to eat anything, so this is a hot topic for me.

**Poinsettias** are considered to be mildly toxic/irritating, and will probably cause nausea or vomiting.

**Mistletoe and Holly:** A couple of holiday plants, specifically Mistletoe and Holly, are considered to be moderately to severely toxic.

**Lilies and Daffodils:** Plant bulb kits featuring amaryllis and other plants in the lily family, narcissus and other plants in the daffodil family, are popular gift items at this time of year. Pet owners should be aware that these plants are very toxic for cats, and sometimes with severe symptoms of gastrointestinal signs, cardiac arrhythmias, kidney failure, convulsions and death. Daffodils are toxic to both dogs and cats, especially the bulbs.

**Christmas trees** are considered to be mildly toxic. Fir tree oils can irritate the mouth and stomach, causing excessive drooling or vomiting. Tree needles are not easily digested, possibly causing GI irritation, vomiting, gastrointestinal obstruction or punctures.

- have to think about it anymore.
- Set deadlines. We are hardwired to work to deadlines. Productivity is often directly related to how soon a project is due. (Did you ever write a paper for school the night before it was due?)
  - Set a timer. Tell yourself that you are going to work on that one project for the next 20 minutes. If your mind wanders or you get distracted, you have to reset the timer.



Don't use the holidays as an excuse. "It's the holidays." The holidays show up every year. They should not be a surprise. "What with the holidays an all..."

Consider for a moment about what happens if some chore isn't finished. What are the consequences? Can you live with those consequences? If so, maybe it really doesn't have to happen. If it really does, then you are still managing several projects at one time.

How to meet multiple deadlines:

- Assign deadlines. Put projects on the calendar that a project is due three days earlier than really needed. Deadline creep by your boss is irritating, but it can work when we are managing many individual tasks.
- Reorganize. Spread everything out on a table and start by getting the work needed in order, filed, cleaned up, and ready for your attention.
- Get help. When we promise something to someone else, it keeps us accountable.
- Be accountable to yourself, with consequences. "If I procrastinate on this project I won't be able to go out with my friends because I will be here working."
- Schedule blocks of times to work on specific projects. For example, from 9-10 am I am going to work on the report due Friday. From 10-10:15 I will check email and Facebook, then back to work from 10:30-11:30.
- Don't count on last-minute solutions. Plan for delays and disasters. Realize that computers break, people get sick, and appointments are missed.
- Just start. Oftentimes, the biggest struggle is just getting started. Once we start, it may be easier to finish than we thought.

*(Continue to the right column...)*

Thank You for Reading this Newsletter

Know anyone planning a conference who needs a motivational leadership speaker, or a business that needs a push forward? Please [contact me](#). I greatly appreciate your referrals!



*Mary C. Kelly*

Connect with Mary




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Would you like to use any of these articles in your newsletter or website? You can, as long as you include this at the end: With over twenty years of leadership experience and a diverse background leading teams in the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Mary Kelly makes leadership a reality for all levels of an organization. Register for her free newsletters at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com)

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