

## AM and PM Rituals

My morning and afternoon rituals are things I do that help me stay on track every day. They are things that help me provide a sense of balance and/or a sense of well-being. I find that for me, inside my personal world, certain things can easily throw my mental state into a feeling of agitation. Some people call it “drama” for lack of a better word. When I find myself in that state it is very easy for me to lose money from my trading. Usually, I don’t have an actual execution that ends up a losing trade—but what is often the case is I will miss moving a stop to protect something, I might miss an entry completely because I am distracted, or I might break a rule “just this once” and we all know what happens then.

After learning more about myself and asking good questions of myself, I learned that I could reach my best focus earlier in the day. Not everyone will be like this—and that is OK—but I designed my AM ritual around using the morning time to really focus on my day ahead and execute as much personal discipline as I can.

### Daily AM Routine:

**05:00** Rise, Market Check, Litterboxes

**06:00** Market Check, Exercise/Yoga/Stretching

**07:00** Market Check, Juicing/Supplements

**08:00** Market Check, Tea/Kitchen/Meal Planning

**09:00** Market Check, Personal Hygiene

**10:00** Market Check, Personal Income Needs

You will notice that all my logs, checklists and so on all start at 05:00 AM. Everything starts from that time in the morning. I start the day by getting my desk organized for the day/reviewing my checklists & material, AND I take care of the cats. I don’t use an “automated” self-cleaning cat box for my cats because I discovered that the more I surround myself with “high function” technology the more likely I am to get lazy. When I get lazy, I lose a level of discipline. This is also why I don’t use a “smart phone” but I am getting ahead of myself.

At the top of every hour all the way until 10:00 AM I am doing something at my desk to review/focus/log whatever is due for my daily trading discipline; I call that the “Market Check” and it typically takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. I review each timeframe of each market I am currently operating in, I note any signals in my signal log, I log any executions/fills that have happened up to that point, I adjust stops if needed, and I make at least one journal entry. After that is done—I then turn my attention to my personal needs and follow through as listed. Typically—I can get all the way through my AM routine by 09:00/09:30 as it rarely takes me a whole hour to do something like make juice or clean the kitchen. Sometimes I do everything in

one hour, including my morning shower and I am back to full focus at my desk for the rest of the day.

One thing I want to mention so no one gets confused. When I say on my ritual “Personal income needs” I am referring to managing my daily income/expense picture. Some people call this “Paying the bills” This isn’t something that happens every day at 10:00 necessarily but I set time aside every day to manage personal finances. Sometimes this means I write checks and pay bills, sometimes it means I review where to allocate money between non-market/trading investments, sometimes it means running to the hardware store to get something needed to fix something that broke in the back yard; the idea is that if anything is going to affect my income or personal net-worth-I am on top of it every day. This includes the cost of fixing a broken hose if needed because every dime counts. Especially if you make your living from something like the markets where you simply just never know how things are going to turn out.

So, by lunch time, I have had a very successful day if I have properly followed through on my AM ritual. I have had some exercise, I have had a healthy breakfast, took care of my personal needs, my cats, and maybe paid off a credit card. There is nothing to do now but *make money*.

My PM ritual is basically my PM checklist. I always end the day between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM; most of the time it is about 4:00 (rarely later). I end the day by logging everything that happened all day—everything including my personal things. I have a final journal entry and I review my 3x5 cards before closing the office door. That’s it. Please see my PM Checklist for the details.

Some traders do their personal needs at the end of the day—in other words their PM rituals include stopping at the health club on the way home from the office, they love to cook so they plan out each evening with their spouse at the end of their day; things of this sort. I want to emphasize that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to create a set of AM and/or PM rituals you use to maintain your sense of balance or control over important areas of your life. However you chose to do it is fine—but it is very important to create something that you do regularly to improve your daily focus and mental sharpness. Trading requires that you have a very focused and disciplined approach to what you are doing. Adding a degree of AM and PM rituals will help your focus tremendously.

Note to Reader:

By offering you the material provided throughout my website at no cost to you, it is my intention to help the serious trader shorten his or her learning curve. In my view, there is no “easy way” to develop your winning approach or to create a market-centric trading paradigm;

there is only a “consistent way” that is a result of two things working together: Your increasing level of personal discipline and your increasing knowledge of how to create a non-attachment mindset.

If you find that your pathway is reaching a frustrating point, or that you find yourself at a place in your growth where you just can't seem to get beyond; it is very likely that you are at a point in your trading where working with a qualified mentor/coach is the next step for you. If (or when) you get to that point and you are willing to consider finding a mentor/coach, please consider using the “contact me” form on my website, I still accept traders interested in working with someone and it might be a good fit.