

Why make lists?

Source : My Happy Job. Fabienne Broucaret

Fear of forgetting things, permanent rush, feeling of being stressed and overwhelmed. You want to make your life easier? In her book Listful Thinking, Paula Rizzo shares her tips to make efficient to-do lists (1). Here is why you should start doing so, ASAP:

1) Lists help lower your anxiety

Making a list will help reduce your concerns and your mental load. By writing, you take the things you need to do, and remove them from your mind. The result: reduced stress. In a professional environment, Paula Rizzo recommends to make your to-do list in the evening for the next day. This will allow your mind to be freer during the evening and will help you start the day more efficiently. To make it even more effective, prioritize your tasks by highlighting your priorities, and remain realistic.

2) Lists help you focus

Making lists makes us more careful to the information that we must remember. They strengthen our ability to focus. When you are interrupted, and we know this can happen a lot during a work day, referring to your list will allow you to quickly remember where you were when you got interrupted.

3) Lists help you gain self esteem

There is nothing more satisfying than crossing out an item on your list. "Seeing a task disappear gives me an exceptional feeling of fulfillment", says the author, "I even sometimes add items that I have already completed to my list, for the sole pleasure of crossing them out! This renewed self-esteem increases my motivation and my productivity." Don't hesitate to congratulate and to reward yourself when a task is completed. Another lead given by the author: write a gratitude list, which means, write down everything that makes you happy (including at work!)

4) Lists help organize your thoughts

Laying your ideas on paper help you see things more clearly, including when you face a difficult decision. The author recommends to make a pros and cons list in case you are thinking of changing jobs or positions. This is a way to take a closer look at your situation.

5) Lists help you gain perspective

Make a list about your life, with your dreams, big and small. This is a brilliant idea to go beyond everyday worries and give you a sense of direction. "This step reflects an intention, conscious or not, to implement your projects and aspirations." You can then break it down into mid and long term goals.