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PEOPLE

WHO DO

**50 PRODUCTIVITY MASTERS ON
HOW TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE
AND GET THINGS DONE**



Joseph Mavericks



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Michele Koh Morollo is a freelance journalist, copywriter, and the author of short fiction collection [Without: Stories of lack and longing](#). She's written for Dwell.com, AFAR, Psychologies, Business Traveller, Culture Trip, and CNN Travel, and has worked with brands such as Apple, Gibson, and Herman Miller. She lives in Hong Kong.

What time do you wake up in the morning?

I'm usually up some time between 6:30am and 7:30am.

Once you're up, what is the first thing you do in the morning?

I stretch, then do about 20 minutes of what I call "yogabata". It's a routine I came up with that combines yoga poses with the tabata method high-intensity interval training. After that I meditate for 10 minutes.

On days I have paid assignments and projects, I work from my home office. I'll fix myself a breakfast of fruit, muesli and black coffee, and read two daily inspirational readings while eating. Then I shower and begin work.

On days when I work on my own stuff (short fiction and Medium articles) I shower after my morning exercise and meditation. I then walk to a nearby café and have a croissant and black

coffee for breakfast. I'll read the news on my phone while I eat, then begin work.

How much of your personal success (online and offline) do you attribute to your morning routine?

I'd say about 70 percent. It's important for me to set myself up right for the day. I suffer from allergies in the summer, and when I can't breathe well, I can't think clearly because there's not enough oxygen going to my brain. Exercise and deep breathing during meditation has helped with this. I see these two routines as natural stimulants that prep my body and mind for long periods of deep work.

My morning routine has evolved over time. In the past, my exercise and meditation sessions were longer. But I've found that shorter sessions work better because I then have more energy conserved for writing, and can begin work earlier.

What drives you to do what you do on a daily basis?

The desire to maintain peace of mind, and experience relief from psychological and emotional tension. When I was 17, I had a mental breakdown and clinical depression. The act of writing was what got me out of the doldrums, and I'm very grateful that I've been able to make a living, and a life from it.

I take comfort and pleasure looking at written words strung together to tell stories that help make sense of life. I hope that with my own writing, I can provide some of that comfort and pleasure to others too.

What advice do you have for people who struggle to actually start working on the projects they have?

For me, the biggest obstacle is the tyranny of multitasking. One problem I had when I started writing short stories was picking one idea and actually sticking with it rather than hopping from one to another the moment I felt stuck.

I work in blocks of 1.5 hours. I'll set my alarm and when that time is up, I'll allow myself to decide if I can and want to continue with the task at hand, or if I want to shift gears and work on something else. But for at least 1.5 hours I'll give 100% to only one task.

Choose what you most need to or want to do at any given moment. Then, silence that nagging voice telling you about all the other items you have on your todo list. I think that's the key to doing good work.



Summary

Michele's Top 3 Tidbits

- 1.** Don't fall for multitasking.
- 2.** Work in blocks of 1.5 hours, and give 100% to one task and only one during that time.
- 3.** 70% of my success resides in my morning routine.



Michele's Top 3 Tools

- 1. Pre-work journal**
Journal before work so you can unload the items taking up too much headspace.
- 2. Post-its**
Jot down your todo list on only one Post-It, so you can avoid multitasking too much.
- 3. Any alarm clock**
Work in blocks of 1.5 hours to manage your focus and take time to stretch/drink.