

Introduction

A highly sensitive person perceives everything stronger, and is more prone to distraction, fatigue and a resulting procrastination at work if they don't manage their sensitivity properly.

They may find a typical office background noise more disturbing, get tired after a whole day of staring at the screen, and need extra time to withdraw somewhere quiet and dark after a meeting or an offsite.

These *top 10 tips* are proven strategies for highly sensitive people to remain productive and healthy in the most stressful environment.

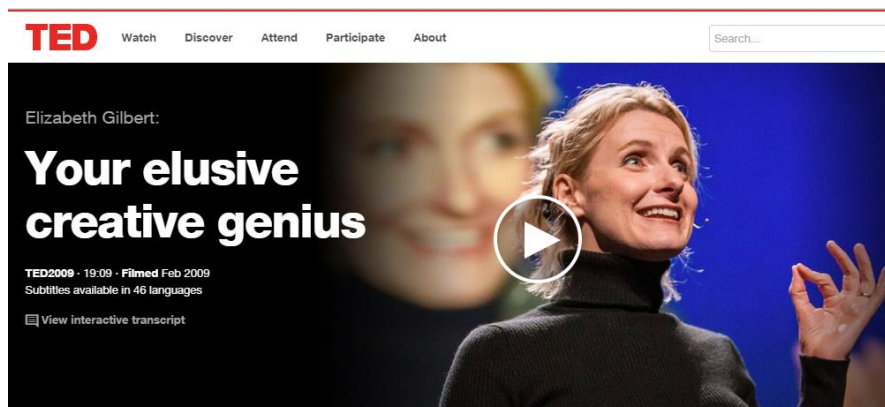


*By Anastasia Dedyukhina,
coach and start-up mentor*

1 Start your day with an inspiration

As a highly sensitive person, you are very susceptible to the mood and energy of people around you. To give yourself a positive boost for the day, start with some inspirational activity. You can take 20 minutes to read a truly inspiring book, or listen to a 10-minutes TED talk while you are brushing your teeth.

Hint: check this inspirational talk by Elizabeth Gilbert on to how our society thinks about artists and the emotional risks that often come hand-in-hand with creativity, and a genius that lives inside each of us.



2 Keep mornings just to yourself

Morning is the time when your nervous system is still not overloaded. You don't want to get triggered into other people's problems and emotions from the very start of the day. So be proactive: do what YOU need to do first thing in the morning, and only then what others are asking for.

This means no emails or incoming phone calls until you are done with your stuff.

Also avoid morning meetings, especially the ones you haven't set up yourself. You

also want to minimize any in-person communication with anyone before you've ticked all boxes on your to-do list, if this is not on your to-do list.

Hint: if you still need to write emails, but don't want to be distracted by what's coming into your mailbox, use a delayed email function, either as a browser extension or an app. It allows you to receive new emails not as they come, but once every hour or you choose.

For example, www.inboxpause.com does that for Gmail. [Outlook](#) has an in-built function for that.

3 You MUST have breaks

If you are a highly sensitive person, you need more rest than most people to recharge your nervous system. It may sound counterintuitive, but the most efficient thing to do for a highly sensitive person is to have more rest. If you don't, you will get overloaded pretty fast, and will not be productive at all.

To avoid accumulating stress, try to incorporate breaks every couple of hours or so. When taking a break, completely change the environment and body position. Taking rest for a highly sensitive person means doing something that involves **as little stimulation** as possible – so no computer, no reading news.

Instead, take a few moment to be somewhere quite, or (even better!) having a little walk outside. Otherwise, if you've been working by yourself on something for a long time, go talk to people, but make sure these are positive ones.

4 Don't pile up the meetings

If you are senior enough and manage your schedule yourself, do not put several meetings one after another, especially if these are one-to-one meetings. If you have a secretary, make sure they know it. If you are in a group training in the morning, do not put any personal meetings in the evening – you'll be worn out.

If you aren't senior yet and get multiple invitations you can't just ignore, make sure to triple check with the organizer if you really need to be in the meeting! Most of the invites are sent out by definition. Remember that a highly sensitive person needs time to recharge after any intense experience, so try to mix sole and group activities.

Your Daily Checklist

Morning inspiration

Today I am starting my work at _____ am/pm.

I will not go to any meeting or check emails before _____ am/pm

Before I communicate with anyone, I need to do:

- 1.
- 2.

Breaks from work scheduled for _____, _____, and _____ am/pm.

My non-negotiable rituals for today are:

- 1.
- 2.

Today I finish my work at _____ am/pm. And I mean **FINISH.**

5 Minimize your triggers

We all are stimulated by different things – some of us are more sensitive to noise, some to smells, some to information overload. Notice what triggers your sensitivity, and start consciously managing it. For instance, if your trigger is noise, make sure you have a pair of earplugs when you work (earplugs are way better than earphones for an HSP, as music adds to stimulation). In my experience, wax earplugs are the best ones, as they don't let any noise in and are also not irritating to the ear.

If you absolutely cannot avoid the trigger, try minimizing it. For instance, if you know you get tired after the flight and airport crowds trigger you, do not set up important meetings for that day. Go on a business trip a night before to have proper rest.

6 Don't multitask

A typical trigger for all highly sensitive people is multitasking. People aren't generally good at multitasking as it's been proven by a famous [Stanford](#) research, but we HSPs get dragged into it even more easily. Most computer programs trigger multitasking, and as an HSP you need to actively manage what you do online.

Researchers who studied student productivity discovered that the more time a person allocates to a specific task, the more productive they become. Students who switched between different activities were less productive than those who dedicated time to do one particular thing. So make sure to organize your work the way that you have enough time for one particular task and aren't distracted.

This means you may need to book a meeting room just for yourself, ask everyone not to approach you for two hours, and switch off all notifications, all sound signals on your communication devices and put them face down. If you're waiting for an important call, you should not be working on something that requires your concentration. Similarly, do not open more than one tab when browsing online.

Hint: to avoid irrelevant browsing, [block](#) temporarily particular or all websites. You can choose the type of content you want to block, or set up the maximum daily time you're allowed to browse online.

7 Establish your boundaries

Decide **where** and **when** work starts and finishes, and tell others about it. This is equally important if you work for yourself.

Don't make a big deal out of it, but rather make it practical. For example, if you decide you will not read emails after working hours unless there's an absolute emergency, in which case you can be reached on your phone. You may want to switch on an email autoreply after working hours that specifies how you can be reached and what a genuine emergency is. If you are not senior enough, make sure you run it past your boss first.



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to me ▾

Oct 4 (7 days ago) ☆



Meetings, presentations, workshops, planning sessions, creative pursuits plus life, oh my! I'm in and out, on and off email and yes, trying at all times to be as responsive as humanly possible. Stay tuned, if you're getting this out of office message, it means I have your email.

Looking to pick my brain? Read this post from [Steve Blank](#) or this by [Adrienne Graham](#) then connect with me through Emissary <http://www.emissary.io/u/#/jkhoe>

If it's mentoring advice you are after, connect with me and ask your questions on [Levo League](#).

If you regularly end up working over the weekend, it can mean two things. First, you might not be very good at time management, and need some training. Second option is that you are just not in the right environment - industries where you cannot manage your time and should be “always on” are not for you. If you have to be always alert, you will burn out really fast.

8 Get daily routine in place

Many highly sensitive people tend to have difficulties with managing change. If you work in a rapidly changing environment, you need to have some stable elements you can hold to. Try to wake up, have a meal and go to bed at a particular time. Make certain things and timing in your daily calendar non-negotiable.

I assume that even if you are running late, cleaning your teeth in the morning is probably non-negotiable, and you will squeeze in 30 seconds to do that. You need to have more “teeth cleaning moments” throughout your day – predictable and reoccurring things that will happen to you no matter what. Sticking to the routine creates a sense of control over your life, and this is the most important thing that you need to build a successful career, dear highly sensitive person.

9 Keep notifications off and devices outside of your bedroom

When your messenger and email notifications are on, as well as the sound on your mobile, it means that you are alert all the time. The same happens when you keep your phone near your bedroom – your subconsciously are still expecting a message to come in.

This impacts your deep sleep phase – it's as if you were trying to sleep in the room with open doors and windows where at any given moment anyone might come in. Your mind is spending energy to keep the alert on, and so you become less productive, and the sleep is also not so deep. Switch off as many notifications as you can and keep your devices in a separate room when you are having rest.

10 My best personal productivity tip that might be useful for other highly sensitive people
