
Sample “Sherpa-compatible” expectation setter addons to add to your email signature on all your computers, tablets, and smartphones



Directions:

1. Look over these examples and feel free to steal from them and write your own
2. Email it to yourself so you can copy/paste this text on all your devices.
3. It should right go above or below your normal email signature
4. It will only be read if it stands out so I recommend putting it in red or a bright color. People are probably used to seeing your email signature and will tend to skip over it.

Purpose:

- These “addons” are key to settings the expectations needed so you can regain control over your attention and implement the Sherpa Program strategies including:
 1. Only checking email 3-4 times a day.
 2. Never checking in the morning (before 10am).
- Only in this way will you not get any push back or puzzled looks when they are used to (or have expectations) that you are easily interruptible.

These also accomplish the following:

1. These sets expectations, makes others think twice before making a grab for your precious attention for items that are not pressing
2. Letting others know that your attention is valuable and that you will neither be checking your email at the normal statistical average rate of 11 times an hour or replying at the average in the average 6-second time frame.
3. Assuring them that you are still fully responsive and available with just a call (or maybe a call or text) or via your admin for urgent matters.
4. Have others gain a bit of respect for you since they see that you value your attention and put in place attention management measure to focus on important work, which could include one of their projects.
5. It will take a bit more work for them to interrupt your “flow” if they have to actually pick up a phone and call or scrawl out a text using small on-screen buttons on their

smartphone. Maybe they will move on and take care of their question on their own if they can.

If you would like to go to the next level, look the vacation auto-responders section on the next last.

Kathy's Version:

To improve my focus and better serve clients, I only check email 3 to 4 times a day. if you have anything time sensitive, please call or text me!

Kathy's Version (variation for people with an admin):

To improve my focus and better serve clients, I only check email at 10am, 2pm, and 5pm PST M-F. if you have anything time sensitive, please call or text me! [A variation is: "please contact my secretary/admin Erica at x@x.com/619-666-6666].

Ken's Version:

Thank you for your email! Due to my current workload, I am only checking email at 11am and 4pm. If you need anything immediately please call me on my cell so that I can address this important matter with you. Thank you and have a great day!

-Ken

Jim's Version:

Due to high workload, I am currently checking and responding to e-mail twice daily at 12: 00 P.M. PST and 4: 00 P.M. PST. Also, I can't guarantee a rapid response time given my current situation. If you require urgent assistance please contact me via phone at 555-555-5555. Thank you for understanding this move to more efficiency and effectiveness. It helps me accomplish more to serve you better.

Jim

Mike's Signature (with a shameless self-promotion):

I use the [Sherpa System](#) for optimizing my attention, avoiding "Tyranny of the Inbox", and better serving clients, so I only check email 2 or 3 times a day. My first check is at 10am PST. If you have anything time-sensitive, please don't hesitate to call or text me at 619-212-3243.

Tim's Signature

Due to other commitments, I'm checking email no more than once a week, often less. If it's truly urgent (cannot wait a week), please call or email my assistant. If you don't have her info, thank you for waiting until we get back to the inbox.

All the best to you and yours,

Tim

Your Signature:

If you are in a time of deep work, and won't be able to honor email commitments (or want a powerful escape from the Tyranny of the Inbox) consider also adding this auto-responder to your email system

Also, my inbox is very full at the moment and work is remarkably overwhelming. While I'm making my best efforts to respond to all messages in a timely fashion, I'll be significantly slower than usual for the next few weeks. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sample “Sherpa-compatible” Vacation/Project auto-responder Ideas to add to your “out of office auto-reply” in your email program (typically done just on your email server):

Consider these ideas.

- No one wants to come back from a vacation with 500 to 2000 emails in their Inbox.
- If you are managing your attention skillful, you probably be will focused and busy on HVAs (high value actives) when your return.
- If you are budgeting your attention, as Sherpa advises, do you really want to return from vacation only to spend a day (or more) on email?
- Consider that when you return there will be even more thing to catchup on and new things to move forward on.
- The senders of those emails probably have an expectation of an eventual reply.
- In our society, you have some level of commitment to respond to the vast majority of those email. Just image if you got them in the postal mail. Not fulfilling commitment, for most people, is something that bounces around in their heads and is an attention hijacker.
- We now know that attention hijackers steal our focus and attention, increase self-interruptions, and are a not conducive to learning to control our attention.

To solve these issues, some people resort to checking email on vacation (even for just once a day).

- This solution is makes little sense, from an attention management perspective, because they are denying their brains the ability to fully disconnect and get the “restorative attention” that neuroscientists agree is valuable to recharging your cognitive abilities.
- This solution also takes away from the restorative value of a vacation.

- This solution may also not be fair to your family as you can never be 100% present if you are checking email and being reminded of commitments or starting to formulate responses, consciously or not.
- New research to show that this “restorative attention” enhances problem solving, skills like connecting the dots, and other creative abilities.

Below are auto-responder that will solve this problem.

- The last one may seem radical to some, but consider what your time and attention are worth, how rare it is that the most valuable things we want to accomplish come from email. It completely solves the problems of coming back to 500+ emails.
- NOTE: I have fortune 1000 clients that count on me, and I put the last one up every year. Never has anyone said anything negative to this auto-responder.
- These auto-responders can apply to not on a vacation, but times when you are deeply focused on a project.

Jon’s Autoresponder:

I am on vacation and I need some time to fully disconnect. I suspect you can relate to having a demanding job and coming back to an inbox with 1000+ emails, that there is no way I can respond to, particularly upon reentry. This creates a situation that would not be fair to you or me.

Please know that it could take me a long time to get back to you, if I can get to this massive project at all.

If you sent anything important, it will be in your Sent Items folder and I would greatly appreciate it if you could move it to your Drafts folder and resend it after July 31.

*Thanks for your understanding.
Jon*

Mike’s autoresponder - I put this up annually for my annual father-daughter Sherpa Losar trip
Sorry, I did not get your email.

I'll went on vacation with my4-year old to celebrate Losar, the Sherpa New Year, again this year from Feb 14th to Feb 21.

I won't be checking email to enable me to cognitively recharge and give my daughter my full attention.

To avoid having to “clear” the 1000+ emails will be waiting to suck all my time and attention when I come back, I have set-up a rule to auto-delete anything that comes in, even from close friends.

If you have anything that is NOT time sensitive, feel free to save it in your Drafts folder and email it starting Monday, Feb 22.

If you have anything that IS time sensitive, feel free to call or text my cell phone. I will be available anytime except for the weekend of Feb 16 and 17.

Sorry for the extra work and thank you for helping me get the disconnect time my brain needs to serve you better when I come back.

Mike