

Time Management

The Urgent/Important Matrix

BACKGROUND

Former US President Eisenhower used the so-called “Eisenhower Principle” to organise his tasks. He is quoted as saying, “What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”

Dr Stephen Covey made these concepts mainstream, calling it “The Urgent/Important Matrix” in his famous book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

How do you spend your time? Are you constantly interrupted by others? Do you always seem to move from one crisis to another? Perhaps you are not prioritizing your time as well as you could...

Time is obviously best spent in Quadrant 2 – Important but Non-Urgent tasks. But first:

1. Look at your chart and consider where you spend most of your time.
2. What % of time do you spend in each quadrant? Write the number down below.
NB. Make sure this is a gut-feeling, your first instant response.
3. List specific examples that are relevant to YOU for each quadrant and add to the blank lines below.

IMPORTANT	URGENT CRISES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minor and Major Crises ▪ Pressing Problems ▪ Deadlines ▪ Meetings ▪ Projects ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ 	NON_URGENT GOALS & PLANNING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation ▪ Prevention ▪ Planning ▪ Values Clarification ▪ Building Relationships ▪ Clarifying Priorities ▪ Goal Setting ▪ ▪ ▪
	INTERRUPTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needles interruptions ▪ Interruptions from Others ▪ Unimportant Meetings ▪ Unimportant Mail/Emails ▪ Other People’s Minor Issues ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ 	DISTRACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trivia ▪ “Busy” work (distrations) ▪ Some phone calls ▪ Your own special time-wasters ▪ “Escape” activities ▪ Excessive TV, Internet usage ▪ Self-criticl thoughts ▪ ▪ ▪
NOTIMPORTANT		

Why not post this on your fridge or somewhere you will see it regularly to remind you?

REVIEW TIME:

4. So, which quadrant do you spend MOST time in? _____

5. How does that feel? _____

Q1 - Crises - If you're spending most of your time here, how are you dealing with stress?

Q2 - Goals & Planning - Congratulations! How could you make sure you stay in this quadrant?

Q3 - Interruptions - If you're spending most of your time here, you may need to find ways to say "No" to others.

Q4 - Distractions - If you're spending most of your time here, you may need to find ways to "No" to yourself!

6. So, what's getting in the way of you managing your time better? Be specific. _____

7. Where are you sabotaging yourself? _____

GET MOTIVATED:

8. How will your life be different if you managed your time more effectively? What's in it for you? List all the benefits to you of managing your time better including at home, in relationships and the workplace!

9. What COULD you do differently? It's time to do some brainstorming - write all the ideas of things you could do. Note: You don't have to action them - this is a brainstorming exercise for possibilities.

10. What is the KEY action that would support all the others? _____

COMMITMENT:

It's time to identify 1-3 specific actions you will commit to. Make sure this action is something you can implement right away - or in the next day or so. Note: Only pick actions you are 100% sure you will complete - and if necessary make the action smaller until you can commit one hundred percent!

Action 1 _____ By When _____

Action 2 _____ By When _____

Action 3 _____ By When _____

The biggest thing I have learned about myself today is: _____

I am committed to achieving these actions Signed _____ Date _____