

Prioritizing Your Time

The Urgent/Important Matrix

How do you manage your time? Are you constantly interrupted by others? Do you always seem to move from one crisis to another? This Urgent/Important Matrix Tool can help you understand where your time goes, and prioritize your time more effectively going forward.

BACKGROUND: Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower used the so-called "Eisenhower Principle" to organize his tasks. He is quoted as saying, "What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important."

Dr Stephen Covey brought these concepts to the mainstream, calling it "The Urgent/Important Matrix" in his famous book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

The aim here is to spend more time in Quadrant 2, **Important but Non-Urgent** tasks, and lessen time spent in Crises, Distractions and Interruptions. Look at your chart and consider where you spend most of your time. Then consider:

1. **What % of time do you spend in each quadrant?** Write the number down in the quadrants below.
Note: Make sure this is a gut-feeling, your first instant response.
2. **List specific examples** that are relevant to YOU for each quadrant and add to the blank lines below.

		URGENT	NON-URGENT
IMPORTANT	CRISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor and Major Crises • Pressing Problems • Deadlines • Meetings • Projects • _____ • _____ • _____ 	GOALS & PLANNING
		Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
NOT IMPORTANT	INTERRUPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needless interruptions • Interruptions from Others • Unimportant Meetings • Unimportant Phone calls • Unimportant Mail/Email • Other People's Minor Issues • _____ • _____ • _____ 	DISTRACTIONS
		Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4

Please turn over to review what you have learned and identify up to 3 actions to improve your time management.

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REVIEW TIME:

3. Which quadrant do you spend MOST time in? _____

4. 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.

5. What's getting in the way of you managing your time better? Be specific. _____

6. Where are you sabotaging yourself? _____

GET MOTIVATED:

7. How would 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.

8. What COULD you do differently? It's time to do some brainstorming - write all the ideas of things you could do. Note: This is only a brainstorming exercise to identify possibilities, you will choose actions in the next section.

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

COMMITMENT:

Now 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 most impactful thing I have learned about myself today is: _____