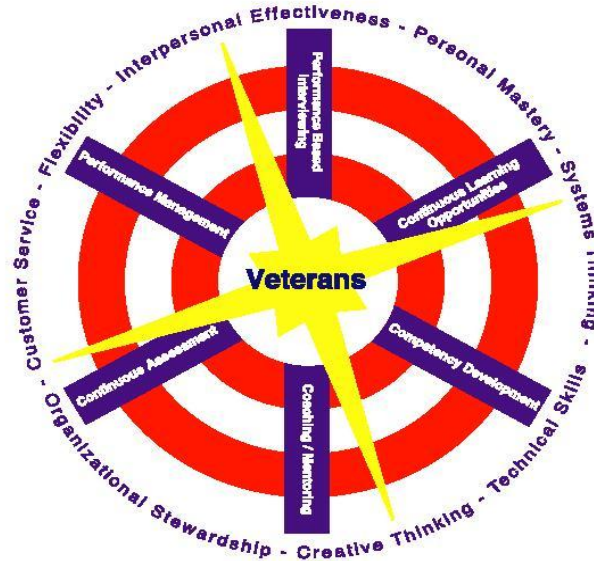


# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

## High Performance Development Model



Ankwasiize G. Evarist (Ph.D) 2016



## **PROFILE OF DR.ANKWASIIIZE**

DR. FR. EVARIST.GABOSYA. ANKWASIIIZE AJ, Ph.D (Psych) is a Catholic priest and Member of Apostle of Jesus Religious Missionaries. Ankwasiiize is an academic, Senior Lecturer and a Ugandan professional psychotherapist registered with Uganda Counselling Association (UCA/228/REG.YEAR 2011) (<http://www.ugandacounselling.org/content>) and a registered member with Uganda Council of Psychologists (UCPsy). Ankwasiiize is highly skilled in, curriculum development and review, psychological assessments, training and consulting services, lecturing, conducting field research and research mentoring and supervision for both undergraduate and post graduate as enhanced by his academic accomplishments and work experiences. Dr. Ankwasiiize Ph.D (Psych) is currently a principal supervisor of 5 PhD Thesis (in progress) for Nkumba Universities and has acted as an internal examiner for PhD thesis for three scholars and have already graduated with PhD degrees. He has authored five books and 12 peer reviewed articles in journals both locally and internationally. He has also attained enormous knowledge and experience in psychology and psychotherapy. Dr. Ankwasiiize is the Executive Director and a founder member of the global organization called Ankwasiiize Training and Counselling Services (ATCS). ATCS is registered and accredited as a Corporate Helping Organization by UCA with serial No.UCA/COR/001 2015. ATCS does research, consultancy and mentoring in different Bio-psycho-Spiritual and social issues. ATCS professionals carry out standardized psychological tests to different individuals, families and organizations of various magnitudes with networking centers across East African region. Dr. Ankwasiiize is the founder of Home of Divine Mercy Vocational Training institute supporting around two hundred (200) vulnerable youth with life skills in South western Uganda. Dr. Ankwasiiize is also a Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of University of Kisubi and a Senior lecturer of Counselling psychology with Nkumba University and University of Kisubi. He is a presenter of academic papers in different professional conferences both nationally and internationally. Through research, training, project designs, implementations, study, work placements, professional career and advocacies, Ankwasiiize is rightly called a Priest, Philosopher, a Theologian, Author, a Philanthropist and a Psychologist.

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## SECTION ONE

### A TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS APPROACH

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#### HOW GOOD IS YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT?

##### Discover Time Management Tools That can Help you Excel



Are you keeping track of time?

How often do you find yourself running out of time? Weekly, daily, hourly? For many people, it seems that there's just never enough time in the day to get everything done.

When you know how to manage your time you gain control of what you achieve.

Take this self-test quiz to identify the aspects of time management that you need most help with. The results will point you to the specific tools that will help you to work more efficiently.

#### How Good is Your Time Management?

##### Instructions

For each statement, click the button in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be), and don't worry if some questions seem to score in the 'wrong direction'. When you are finished, please click the 'Calculate My Total' button at the bottom of the test.

<b>15 Statements to Answer</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
<b>1</b> The tasks I work on are the ones with the highest priority.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2</b> I find myself completing tasks at the last minute, or asking for extensions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>3</b> I set aside time for planning and scheduling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4</b> I know how much time I spend on each of the various task I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5</b> I find myself dealing with interruptions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6</b> I use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities I should work on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>7</b> I leave contingency time in my schedule to deal with "the unexpected"?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>8</b> I know whether the tasks I am working on are high, medium, or low value.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>9</b> When I am given a new assignment, I analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10</b> I am stressed about deadlines and commitments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11</b> Distractions keep me from working on critical tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12</b> I have to take work home in order to get it done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13</b> I prioritize my To Do list or Action Program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>14</b> I confirm my priorities with my boss.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>15</b> Before I take on a task, I check that the results will be worth the time put in.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Total = 0					

### Score Interpretation

#### Score Comment

15-30 Ouch. The good news is that you've got a great opportunity to improve your effectiveness at work, and your long term success! However, to realize this, you've got to fundamentally improve your time management skills. (Read below to start.)

31-45 You're good at some things, but there's room for improvement elsewhere. Focus on the serious issues below, and you'll most likely find that work becomes much less stressful.

46-75 You're managing your time very effectively! Still, check the sections below to see if there's anything you can tweak to make this even better.

As you answered the questions, you probably had some insight into areas where your time management could use a pick-me-up. The following is a quick summary of the main areas of

time management that were explored in the quiz, and a guide to the specific tools you can use for each.

## **Goal Setting**

(Questions 6, 10)

To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what exactly needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, you'll fritter your time away on a confusion of conflicting priorities.

People tend to neglect goal setting because it requires time and effort. What they fail to consider is that a little time and effort put in now saves an enormous amount of time, effort and frustration in the future. Mind Tools has two great articles on goal setting that are must-reads for everyone. If you are serious about time management, we suggest you start with Personal Goal Setting and The Golden Rules of Goal Setting. We also recommend Treasure Mapping.

## **Prioritization**

(Questions 1, 4, 8, 13, 14, 15)

Prioritizing what needs to be done is especially important. Without it, you may work very hard, but you won't be achieving the results you desire because what you are working on is not of strategic importance.

Most people have a "to-do" list of some sort. The problem with many of these lists is they are just a collection of things that need to get done. There is no rhyme or reason to the list and, because of this, the work they do is just as unstructured. So how do you work on To Do List tasks – top down, bottom up, easiest to hardest?

To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks. This way you won't get caught scrambling to get something critical done as the deadline approaches. For information on how to start prioritizing your tasks, see Activity Logs, Prioritized To Do Lists, Prioritization, The Action Priority Matrix, and Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle

## **Managing Interruptions**

(Questions 5, 9, 11, 12)

Having a plan and knowing how to prioritize it is one thing. The next issue is knowing what to do to minimize the interruptions you face during your day. It is widely recognized that managers get very little uninterrupted time to work on their priority tasks. There are phone calls, information requests, questions from employees, and a whole host of events that crop up unexpectedly. Some do need to be dealt with immediately, but others need to be managed. Our article on Managing Interruptions discusses how you can minimize your interrupted time.

**However**, some jobs need you to be available for people when they need help – interruption is a natural and necessary part of life. Here, do what you sensibly can to minimize it, but make sure you don't scare people away from interrupting you when they should.

## **Procrastination**

(Questions 2)

"I'll get to it later" has led to the downfall of many a good employee. After too many "laters" the work piles up so high that any task seems insurmountable. Procrastination is as tempting as it is deadly. The best way to beat it is to recognize that you do indeed procrastinate. Then you need to figure out why. Perhaps you are afraid of failing? (And some people are actually afraid of success!)

Once you know why you procrastinate then you can plan to get out of the habit. Reward yourself for getting jobs done, and remind yourself regularly of the horrible consequences of not doing those boring tasks! For more help on recognizing and overcoming procrastination see our guide to Beating Procrastination.

## **Scheduling**

(Questions 3, 7)

Much of time management comes down to effective scheduling of your time. When you know what your goals and priorities are, you then need to know how to go about creating a schedule that keeps you on track, and protects you from stress.

This means understanding the factors that affect the time you have available for work. You not only have to schedule priority tasks, you have to leave room for interruptions, and contingency time for those unexpected events that otherwise wreak chaos with your schedule. By creating a robust schedule that reflects your priorities and well as supports your personal goals, you have a winning combination: One that will allow you to control your time and keep your life in balance.

## **Key Points**

Time management is an essential skill that helps you keep your work under control, at the same time that it helps you keep stress to a minimum.

We would all love to have an extra couple of hours in every day. Seeing as that is impossible, we need to work smarter on things that have the highest priority, and then creating a schedule that reflects our work and personal priorities.

With this in place, we can work in a focused and effective way, and really start achieving those goals, dreams and ambitions we care so much about.

## SECTION TWO

### GOAL SETTING

Here are our five golden rules of goal setting:

#### The Five Golden Rules

##### 1. Set Goals that Motivate You

When you set goals for yourself, it is important that they motivate you: this means making sure that they are important to you, and that there is value in achieving them. If you have little interest in the outcome, or they are irrelevant given the larger picture, then the chances of you putting in the work to make them happen are slim. Motivation is key to achieving goals.

Set goals that relate to the high priorities in your life. Without this type of focus, you can end up with far too many goals, leaving you too little time to devote to each one. Goal achievement requires commitment, so to maximize the likelihood of success, you need to feel a sense of urgency and have an "I must do this" attitude. When you don't have this, you risk putting off what you need to do to make the goal a reality. This in turn leaves you feeling disappointed and frustrated with yourself, both of which are de-motivating. And you can end up in a very destructive "I can't do anything or be successful at anything" frame of mind.

#### Tip:

To make sure your goal is motivating, write down **why** it's valuable and important to you. Ask yourself, "If I were to share my goal with others, what would I tell them to convince them it was a worthwhile goal?" You can use this motivating value statement to help you if you start to doubt yourself or lose confidence in your ability to actually make the goal happen.

##### 2. Set SMART Goals

You have probably heard of SMART goals already. But do you always apply the rule? The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART. There are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

- Specific.
- Measurable.
- Attainable.
- Relevant.
- Time Bound.



## **Set Specific Goals**

Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

## **Set Measurable Goals**

Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To reduce expenses" how will you know when you have been successful? In one month's time if you have a 1 percent reduction or in two years' time when you have a 10 percent reduction? Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

## **Set Attainable Goals**

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralize yourself and erode your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best, and can also make you fear setting future goals that carry a risk of non-achievement. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

## **Set Relevant Goals**

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life and career to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals, and you'll fritter your time – and your life – away.

## **Set Time-Bound Goals**

Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.

## **3. Set Goals in Writing**

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it. As you write, use the word "will" instead of "would like to" or "might." For example, "I will reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year," not "I would like to reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year." The first goal statement has power and you can "see" yourself reducing expenses, the second lacks passion and gives you an excuse if you get sidetracked.

### **Tip 1:**

Frame your goal statement positively. If you want to improve your retention rates say, "I will hold on to all existing employees for the next quarter" rather than "I will reduce employee turnover." The first one is motivating; the second one still has a get-out clause "allowing" you to succeed even if some employees leave.

### **Tip 2:**

If you use a To-Do List, make yourself a To-Do List template that has your goals at the top of it. If you use an Action Program, then your goals should be at the top of your Project Catalog.

Post your goals in visible places to remind yourself every day of what it is you intend to do. Put them on your walls, desk, computer monitor, bathroom mirror or refrigerator as a constant reminder.

## **4. Make an Action Plan**

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting. You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way. By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal. This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term. Read our article on Action Plans for more on how to do this.

## **5. Stick With It!**

Remember, goal setting is an ongoing activity not just a means to an end. Build in reminders to keep yourself on track, and make regular time-slots available to review your goals. Your end destination may remain quite similar over the long term, but the action plan you set for yourself along the way can change significantly. Make sure the relevance, value, and necessity remain high.

### **Key Points**

Goal setting is much more than simply saying you want something to happen. Unless you clearly define exactly what you want and understand why you want it the first place, your odds of success are considerably reduced. By following the Five Golden Rules of Goal Setting you can set goals with confidence and enjoy the satisfaction that comes along with knowing you achieved what you set out to do.

So, what will you decide to accomplish today?



# FIVE GOLDEN RULES

for Setting Great New Year Career Goals



How many times have you said,  
“Next year, I’m going to do something  
about my career!”?

## LOTS OF PEOPLE SET NEW YEAR’S WORK RESOLUTIONS

Popular ones include:



### **How to Set a Goal**

First consider what you want to achieve, and then commit to it. Set SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) goals that motivate you and write them down to make them feel tangible. Then plan the steps you must take to realize your goal, and cross off each one as you work through them.

Many people feel as if they're adrift in the world. They work hard, but they don't seem to get anywhere worthwhile.

A key reason that they feel this way is that they haven't spent enough time thinking about what they want from life, and haven't set themselves formal goals. After all, would you set out on a major journey with no real idea of your destination? Probably not!

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into reality.

The process of setting goals helps you choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also quickly spot the distractions that can, so easily, lead you astray.

### **Why Set Goals?**

Top-level athletes, successful business-people and achievers in all fields all set goals. Setting goals gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge, and helps you to organize your time and your resources so that you can make the very most of your life.

By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals, and you'll see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind. You will also raise your self-confidence, as you recognize your own ability and competence in achieving the goals that you've set.

#### **A. Starting to Set Personal Goals**

You set your goals on a number of levels:

- First you create your "big picture" of what you want to do with your life (or over, say, the next 10 years), and identify the large-scale goals that you want to achieve.
- Then, you break these down into the smaller and smaller targets that you must hit to reach your lifetime goals.
- Finally, once you have your plan, you start working on it to achieve these goals.

This is why we start the process of setting goals by looking at your lifetime goals. Then, we work down to the things that you can do in, say, the next five years, then next year, next month, next week, and today, to start moving towards them.

## Step 1: Setting Lifetime Goals

The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in your lifetime (or at least, by a significant and distant age in the future). Setting lifetime goals gives you the overall perspective that shapes all other aspects of your decision making.

To give a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, try to set goals in some of the following categories (or in other categories of your own, where these are important to you):

- **Career** – What level do you want to reach in your career, or what do you want to achieve?
- **Financial** – How much do you want to earn, by what stage? How is this related to your career goals?
- **Education** – Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to have in order to achieve other goals?
- **Family** – Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?
- **Artistic** – Do you want to achieve any artistic goals?
- **Attitude** – Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? (If so, set a goal to improve your behavior or find a solution to the problem.)
- **Physical** – Are there any athletic goals that you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?
- **Pleasure** – How do you want to enjoy yourself? (You should ensure that some of your life is for you!)
- **Public Service** – Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?

Spend some time brainstorming these things, and then select one or more goals in each category that best reflect what you want to do. Then consider trimming again so that you have a small number of really significant goals that you can focus on.

As you do this, make sure that the goals that you have set are ones that you genuinely want to achieve, not ones that your parents, family, or employers might want. (If you have a partner, you probably want to consider what he or she wants – however, make sure that you also remain true to yourself!)

## Step 2: Setting Smaller Goals

Once you have set your lifetime goals, set a five-year plan of smaller goals that you need to complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan.

Then create a one-year plan, six-month plan, and a one-month plan of progressively smaller goals that you should reach to achieve your lifetime goals. Each of these should be based on the previous plan.

Then create a daily To-Do List of things that you should do today to work towards your lifetime goals.

At an early stage, your smaller goals might be to read books and gather information on the achievement of your higher level goals. This will help you to improve the quality and realism of your goal setting.

Finally review your plans, and make sure that they fit the way in which you want to live your life.

### **Staying on Course**

Once you've decided on your first set of goals, keep the process going by reviewing and updating your To-Do List on a daily basis.

Periodically review the longer term plans, and modify them to reflect your changing priorities and experience. (A good way of doing this is to schedule regular, repeating reviews using a computer-based diary.)

### **SMART Goals**

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. While there are plenty of variants (some of which we've included in parenthesis), SMART usually stands for:

- **S** – Specific (or Significant).
- **M** – Measurable (or Meaningful).
- **A** – Attainable (or Action-Oriented).
- **R** – Relevant (or Rewarding).
- **T** – Time-bound (or Trackable).

For example, instead of having "to sail around the world" as a goal, it's more powerful to use the SMART goal "To have completed my trip around the world by December 31, 2015." Obviously, this will only be attainable if a lot of preparation has been completed beforehand!

### **Further Tips for Setting Your Goals**

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective, achievable goals:

- **State each goal as a positive statement** – Express your goals positively – "Execute this technique well" is a much better goal than "Don't make this stupid mistake."

- **Be precise:** Set precise goals, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you'll know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
- **Set priorities** – When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.
- **Write goals down** – This crystallizes them and gives them more force.
- **Keep operational goals small** – Keep the low-level goals that you're working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.
- **Set performance goals, not outcome goals** – You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control!

In business, these reasons could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, they could include poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck.

If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them.

- **Set realistic goals** – It's important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (for example, employers, parents, media, or society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions.

It's also possible to set goals that are too difficult because you might not appreciate either the obstacles in the way, or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

## Achieving Goals

When you've achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. Absorb the implications of the goal achievement, and observe the progress that you've made towards other goals.

If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

With the experience of having achieved this goal, review the rest of your goal plans:

- If you achieved the goal too easily, make your next goal harder.
- If the goal took a dispiriting length of time to achieve, make the next goal a little easier.
- If you learned something that would lead you to change other goals, do so.
- If you noticed a deficit in your skills despite achieving the goal, decide whether to set goals to fix this.



## Tip 2:

It's important to remember that failing to meet goals does not matter much, just as long as you learn from the experience.

Feed lessons you have learned back into the process of setting your next goals. Remember too that your goals will change as time goes on. Adjust them regularly to reflect growth in your knowledge and experience, and if goals do not hold any attraction any longer, consider letting them go.

## Example Personal Goals

For her New Year's Resolution, Susan has decided to think about what she really wants to do with her life.

Her lifetime goals are as follows:

- **Career** – "To be managing editor of the magazine that I work for."
- **Artistic** – "To keep working on my illustration skills. Ultimately I want to have my own show in our downtown gallery."
- **Physical** – "To run a marathon."

Now that Susan has listed her lifetime goals, she then breaks down each one into smaller, more manageable goals.

Let's take a closer look at how she might break down her lifetime career goal – becoming managing editor of her magazine:

- **Five-year goal:** "Become deputy editor."
- **One-year goal:** "Volunteer for projects that the current Managing Editor is heading up."
- **Six-month goal:** "Go back to school and finish my journalism degree."
- **One-month goal:** "Talk to the current managing editor to determine what skills are needed to do the job."
- **One-week goal:** "Book the meeting with the Managing Editor."

As you can see from this example, breaking big goals down into smaller, more manageable goals makes it far easier to see how the goal will get accomplished.

## Key Points

Goal setting is an important method of:

- Deciding what you want to achieve in your life.
- Separating what's important from what's irrelevant, or a distraction.
- Motivating yourself.
- Building your self-confidence, based on successful achievement of goals.

Set your lifetime goals first. Then, set a five-year plan of smaller goals that you need to complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan. Keep the process going by regularly reviewing and updating your goals. And remember to take time to enjoy the satisfaction of achieving your goals when you do so.

If you don't already set goals, do so, starting now. As you make this technique part of your life, you'll find your career accelerating, and you'll wonder how you did without it!

## **Five Rules to Set Yourself Up for Success**

Learn five techniques for setting effective goals.

Have you thought about what you want to be doing in five years' time? Are you clear about what your main objective at work is at the moment? Do you know what you want to have achieved by the end of today?

If you want to succeed, you need to set goals. Without goals you lack focus and direction. Goal setting not only allows you to take control of your life's direction; it also provides you a benchmark for determining whether you are actually succeeding. Think about it: Having a million dollars in the bank is only proof of success if one of your goals is to amass riches. If your goal is to practice acts of charity, then keeping the money for yourself is suddenly contrary to how you would define success.

To accomplish your goals, however, you need to know how to set them. You can't simply say, "I want" and expect it to happen. Goal setting is a process that starts with careful consideration of what you want to achieve, and ends with a lot of hard work to actually do it. In between there are some very well defined steps that transcend the specifics of each goal. Knowing these steps will allow you to formulate goals that you can accomplish.

Here are our five golden rules of goal setting:

### **B. The Five Golden Rules**

#### **1. Set Goals that Motivate You**

When you set goals for yourself, it is important that they motivate you: this means making sure that they are important to you, and that there is value in achieving them. If you have little interest in the outcome, or they are irrelevant given the larger picture, then the chances of you putting in the work to make them happen are slim. Motivation is key to achieving goals.

Set goals that relate to the high priorities in your life. Without this type of focus, you can end up with far too many goals, leaving you too little time to devote to each one. Goal achievement requires commitment, so to maximize the likelihood of success, you need to feel a sense of urgency and have an "I must do this" attitude. When you don't have this, you risk putting off what you need to do to make the goal a reality. This in turn leaves you feeling disappointed and

frustrated with yourself, both of which are de-motivating. And you can end up in a very destructive "I can't do anything or be successful at anything" frame of mind.

### **Tip:**

To make sure your goal is motivating, write down **why** it's valuable and important to you. Ask yourself, "If I were to share my goal with others, what would I tell them to convince them it was a worthwhile goal?" You can use this motivating value statement to help you if you start to doubt yourself or lose confidence in your ability to actually make the goal happen.

## **2. Set SMART Goals**

You have probably heard of SMART goals already. But do you always apply the rule? The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART. There are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

- **Specific.**
- **Measurable.**
- **Attainable.**
- **Relevant.**
- **Time Bound.**

### **Set Specific Goals**

Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

### **Set Measurable Goals**

Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To reduce expenses" how will you know when you have been successful? In one month's time if you have a 1 percent reduction or in two years' time when you have a 10 percent reduction? Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

### **Set Attainable Goals**

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralize yourself and erode your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best, and can also make you fear setting future goals that carry a risk of non-achievement. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance

you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

### **Set Relevant Goals**

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life and career to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals and you'll fritter your time – and your life – away.

### **Set Time-Bound Goals**

Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.

### **3. Set Goals in Writing**

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it. As you write, use the word "will" instead of "would like to" or "might." For example, "I will reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year," not "I would like to reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year." The first goal statement has power and you can "see" yourself reducing expenses, the second lacks passion and gives you an excuse if you get sidetracked.

#### **Tip 1:**

Frame your goal statement positively. If you want to improve your retention rates say, "I will hold on to all existing employees for the next quarter" rather than "I will reduce employee turnover." The first one is motivating; the second one still has a get-out clause "allowing" you to succeed even if some employees leave.

Post your goals in visible places to remind yourself every day of what it is you intend to do. Put them on your walls, desk, computer monitor, bathroom mirror or refrigerator as a constant reminder.

### **4. Make an Action Plan**

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting. You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way. By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal. This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term. Read our article on Action Plans [+](#) for more on how to do this.

### **5. Stick With It!**

Remember, goal setting is an ongoing activity not just a means to an end. Build in reminders to keep yourself on track, and make regular time-slots available to review your goals. Your end destination may remain quite similar over the long term, but the action plan you set for yourself along the way can change significantly. Make sure the relevance, value, and necessity remain high.

### **Key Points**

Goal setting is much more than simply saying you want something to happen. Unless you clearly define exactly what you want and understand why you want it the first place, your odds of success are considerably reduced. By following the Five Golden Rules of Goal Setting you can set goals with confidence and enjoy the satisfaction that comes along with knowing you achieved what you set out to do.

So, what will you decide to accomplish today?

## C. Treasure Mapping

### Visualizing Your Goal for Greater Achievement



Make a picture of what you want.

When you want to achieve something really badly, have you ever tried closing your eyes and imagining yourself "there"? You touch it, feel it and see it clearly. You scan every detail in your mind's eye.

This is a powerful and important technique for motivating yourself and building the self-confidence needed to achieve your goals. Yet when you open your eyes, the vivid image starts to fade, and it can take real concentration to recreate your visualization each time you want some inspiration.

What if you could keep hold of that vivid image and refer to it when ever you need a little motivation, or a reminder of what you are working towards? Treasure mapping is a simple tool to help you do just that. Visualization itself is a very powerful technique. And Treasure Mapping can be the icing on the visualization cake!

It's a very simple but effective idea: Treasure Mapping involves creating a physical representation or collage of what you want to achieve. It acts as a constant reminder and representation of your goals. And so it intensifies the effects of visualization, which acts on your subconscious mind to motivate and encourage you towards achieving those goals.

Let's say you have the ambition to get fitter and run a marathon: Your "treasure map" could include pictures of runners, people crossing the marathon finishing line, and athletes training hard; perhaps it could also include pictures of the foods that you need to eat (and those you need to avoid).

If you are a salesperson with the ambition to beat sales records in your company, your treasure map could include a representation of the sales chart you hope to achieve, pictures of people signing deals with customers, pictures of your product standing proud; and perhaps a picture of someone receiving a prize.

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## SECTION THREE

### PRIOTIZATION

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#### A. The Action Priority Matrix

##### Making the Most of Your Opportunities



Is your task a "quick win"?

Whether these are bright ideas to pursue, exciting opportunities, or interesting possibilities, most of us have many more activities on our "wish lists" than we have time available to work on them.

By choosing activities intelligently, we can make the very most of our time and opportunities. However, by choosing badly, we can bog ourselves down in time-depleting, low-yield projects that stop us moving forwards.

This is where an "Action Priority Matrix" can be useful. These simple diagrams help you choose the activities you should prioritize and the ones you should avoid, if you want to make the most of your time and opportunities.

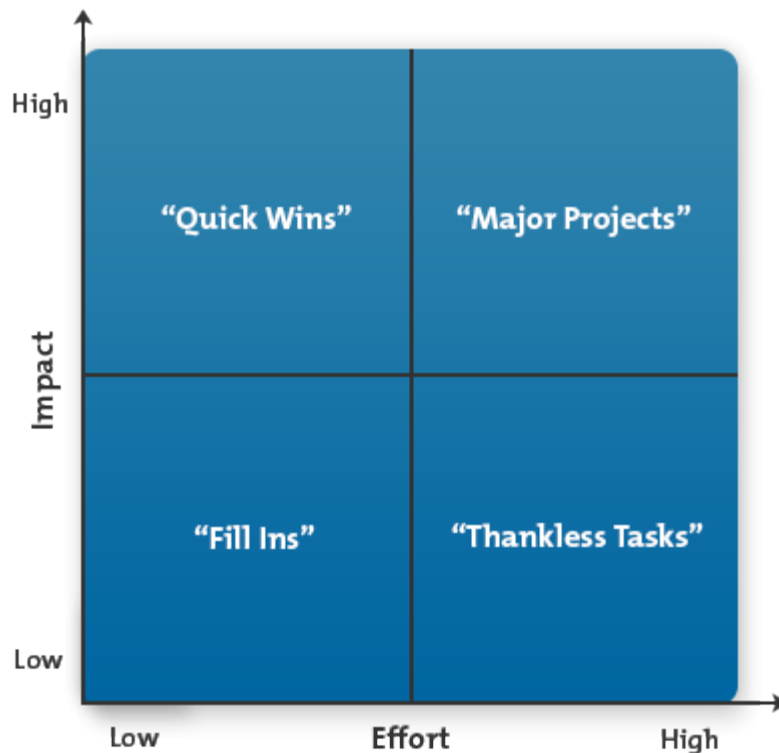
#### About the Tool

Action Priority Matrices\* (see figure 1, below) show you how to prioritize +activities to make the most of your time, energy, and talents.

This is useful, because we rarely have time to complete all of the tasks and projects on our wish lists. When we use the matrix to choose activities intelligently, we can spend more of our time on the high-value activities that keep us moving forwards.

We can also drop tasks that contribute little.

**Figure 1 – The Action Priority Matrix**



To use the matrix, you score tasks based firstly on their impact and secondly on the effort needed to complete them.

You then use your scores to plot these activities in one of four quadrants:

**Quick Wins (High Impact, Low Effort)**

Quick wins are the most attractive projects, because they give you a good return for relatively little effort. Focus on these as much as you can.

**Major Projects (High Impact, High Effort)**

Major projects give good returns, but they are time-consuming. This means that one major project can "crowd out" many quick wins.

**Fill Ins (Low Impact, Low Effort)**



Don't worry too much about doing these activities – if you have spare time, do them, but drop them or delegate them if something better comes along.

### **Thankless Tasks (Low Impact, High Effort)**

Try to avoid these activities. Not only do they give little return, they also soak up time that you should be using on quick wins.

#### **Tip:**

Once you understand the principles behind the Action Priority Matrix, you'll probably find that you apply it quickly and intuitively to new tasks and projects.

### **How to use the Tool**

To use the Action Priority Matrix, download our worksheet and then follow these steps:

#### **Step 1**

List the major activities that you want to or need to complete.

#### **Step 2**

Score these on impact (from, say, 0 for no impact to 10 for maximum impact), and on effort involved (from, say, 0 for no real effort to 10 for a major effort).

#### **Step 3**

Plot the activities on the Action Priority Matrix, based on your scores.

#### **Step 4**

Prioritize appropriately, and delegate + or eliminate low-impact activities.

#### **Tip:**

Use common sense to interpret the lines that separate the four quadrants. After all, there's only a small difference between a 4.9-impact activity defined as a "thankless task" and a 5.1-impact task defined as a "major project."

### **Variants of the Tool**

The approach we describe above explains how you can use the Action Priority Matrix as an informal or personal way of prioritizing tasks. However, you can use this approach on a larger scale by using, for example, "financial return" as the scale on the vertical axis, and "person months" on the horizontal axis.

Alternatively, you could substitute "feasibility" for "effort" on the horizontal axis to prioritize projects based on your ability to implement them. (This variant is sometimes known as the "Impact/Feasibility Matrix.")

### **Tip:**

Also see our article on Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle  $\oplus$  – this is a similar tool that you can use to manage your priorities, and it is particularly useful for bringing "firefighting" under control.

### **Key Points**

The Action Priority Matrix is a simple tool that helps you choose which activities to prioritize  $\oplus$ , and which activities to delegate or eliminate. This helps you make best use of the opportunities available to you.

The matrix has four quadrants:

- Quick wins.
- Major projects.
- Fill ins.
- Thankless tasks.

To use the matrix, make a list of your ongoing activities and goals. Score each task on impact and effort, using a 0 to 10 scale. Next, plot your activities on the matrix, and then prioritize, delegate, or drop activities appropriately.

## **B. Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle**

### **Using Time Effectively, Not Just Efficiently**



Focus on your most important work.

Imagine that your boss has asked you to prepare an important presentation for the next board meeting.

You only have a few days to put it together, your workload is already high, and you have many other urgent tasks on your To-Do List. Because of this, you're anxious, you can't concentrate, and everything seems to distract you.

Time stressors are some of the most pervasive sources of pressure in the workplace, and they happen as a result of having too much to do, in too little time. So, how can you beat this stress, and deliver the things that are essential to doing a good job?

Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle helps you think about your priorities, and determine which of your activities are important and which are, essentially, distractions.

### **What Are "Urgent" and "Important" Activities?**

In a 1954 speech to the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was quoting Dr J. Roscoe Miller, president of Northwestern University, said: "I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent." This "Eisenhower Principle" is said to be how he organized his workload and priorities.

He recognized that great time management means being effective as well as efficient. In other words, we must spend our time on things that are important and not just the ones that are urgent. To do this, and to minimize the stress of having too many tight deadlines, we need to understand this distinction:

- **Important** activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.
- **Urgent** activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else's goals. They are often the ones we concentrate on and they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.

When we know which activities are important and which are urgent, we can overcome the natural tendency to focus on unimportant urgent activities, so that we can clear enough time to do what's essential for our success. This is the way we move from "firefighting" into a position where we can grow our businesses and our careers.

### **How to Use Eisenhower's Principle**

To use this principle, list all of the activities and projects that you feel you have to do. Try to include everything that takes up your time at work, however unimportant. (If you manage your time using a To-Do List or Action Program, you will have done this already.)

Next, think about each activity and put it into one of four categories, as shown in Figure 1, below:

**Figure 1 – Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle**



Then use the strategies described below to schedule your activities.

### **1. Important and Urgent**

There are two distinct types of urgent and important activities: ones that you could not have foreseen, and others that you've left until the last minute.

You can eliminate last-minute activities by planning ahead and avoiding procrastination +.

However, you can't always predict or avoid some issues and crises. Here, the best approach is to leave some time in your schedule to handle unexpected issues and unplanned important activities. (If a major crisis arises, then you'll need to reschedule other tasks.)

If you have a lot of urgent and important activities, identify which of these you could have foreseen, and think about how you could schedule similar activities ahead of time, so that they don't become urgent.

### **2. Important but not Urgent**

These are the activities that help you achieve your personal and professional goals, and complete important work.

Make sure that you have plenty of time to do these things properly, so that they do not become urgent. Also, remember to leave enough time in your schedule to deal with unforeseen problems.

This will maximize your chances of keeping on track, and help you avoid the stress of work becoming more urgent than necessary.

### **3. Not Important but Urgent**

Urgent but not important tasks are things that prevent you from achieving your goals. Ask yourself whether you can reschedule or delegate them.

A common source of such activities is other people. Sometimes it's appropriate to say "no" to people politely, or to encourage them to solve the problem themselves. (Our article "'Yes' to the Person, 'No' to the Task" will help here.)

Alternatively, try to have time slots when you are available, so that people know they can speak with you then. A good way to do this is to arrange regular meetings with those who interrupt you often, so that you can deal with all their issues at once. You'll then be able to concentrate on your important activities for longer.

### **4. Not Important and not Urgent**

These activities are just a distraction – avoid them if possible.

You can simply ignore or cancel many of them. However, some may be activities that other people want you to do, even though they don't contribute to your own desired outcomes. Again, say "no" politely, if you can, and explain why you cannot do it.

If people see that you are clear about your objectives and boundaries 🚫, they will often avoid asking you to do "not important" activities in the future.

### **Key Points**

Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle helps you quickly identify the activities that you should focus on, as well as the ones you should ignore.

When you use this tool to prioritize your time, you can deal with truly urgent issues, at the same time as you work towards important, longer-term goals.

To use the tool, list all of your tasks and activities, and put each into one of the following categories:

- Important and urgent.
- Important but not urgent.
- Not important but urgent.
- Not important and not urgent.

Then schedule tasks and activities based on their importance and urgency.

## C. Preparing a To-Do List

Do you often feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to do, or do you find yourself missing deadlines? Or do you sometimes just forget to do something important, so that people have to chase you to get work done?

All of these are symptoms of not keeping a proper "To-Do List." These are prioritized lists of all the tasks that you need to carry out. They list everything that you have to do, with the most important tasks at the top of the list, and the least important tasks at the bottom.

By keeping such a list, you make sure that your tasks are written down all in one place so you don't forget anything important. And by prioritizing tasks, you plan the order in which you'll do them, so that you can tell what needs your immediate attention, and what you can leave until later.

To-Do Lists are essential if you're going to beat work overload. When you **don't** use them effectively, you'll appear unfocused and unreliable to the people around you. When you **do** use them effectively, you'll be much better organized, and you'll be much more reliable. You'll experience less stress, safe in the knowledge that you haven't forgotten anything important. More than this, if you prioritize intelligently, you'll focus your time and energy on high value activities, which will mean that you're more productive, and more valuable to your team.

Keeping a properly structured and thought-out list sounds simple enough. But it can be surprising how many people fail to use them at all, never mind use them effectively. In fact, it's often when people start to use them effectively and sensibly that they make their first personal productivity breakthroughs, and start making a success of their careers.

### Preparing a To-Do List

#### Step 1:

Write down all of the tasks that you need to complete. If they're large tasks, break out the first action step, and write this down with the larger task. (Ideally, tasks or action steps should take no longer than 1-2 hours to complete.)

#### Note:

You may find it easier to compile several lists (covering personal, study, and workplace, for example). Try different approaches and use the best for your own situation.

#### Step 2:

Run through these tasks allocating priorities from A (very important, or very urgent) to F (unimportant, or not at all urgent)

If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and demote the less important ones. Once you have done this, rewrite the list in priority order.

### **Using Your To-Do List**

To use your list, simply work your way through it in order, dealing with the A priority tasks first, then the Bs, then the Cs, and so on. As you complete tasks, tick them off or strike them through.

What you put on your list and how you use it will depend on your situation. For instance, if you're in a sales-type role, a good way to motivate yourself is to keep your list relatively short, and aim to complete it every day.

But in you're in an operational role, or if tasks are large or dependent on too many other people, then it may be better to focus on a longer-term list, and "chip away" at it day-by-day.

Many people find it helpful to spend, say, 10 minutes at the end of the day, organizing tasks on their list for the next day.

#### **Tip:**

All of us think, plan and work differently. A program that works well for a colleague might not work well for you simply because you learn and think in your own way. This is why it's useful to research and try several different ways of compiling your list before deciding on a single system.

### **Examples**

To-Do Lists can help you get, and stay, on top of important projects and piles of tasks or decisions.

For instance, imagine you're heading a team that's working on a project. There are so many tasks to do, and so many people doing them, that staying on top of it all seems overwhelming.


In this situation, structure your list by team member, writing out tasks and deadlines for every person on the project. Each day as you write out your own tasks that need completion, you can also check your Team To-Do List to see who's working on what, and if anything is due in that day. You can also include other tasks that you need to complete as part of your job.

Or, imagine you're in a sales role and have a long list of people who you need to talk to. You write out a list of everyone you need to call and every client you need to see, and start prioritizing.

You know that one client really keen on your product and is ready to buy, so you prioritize them with an "A" – this is a prospect that's really worth focusing on. Conversely, you know that another prospect is playing you off against several competitors, meaning that the you'll make less

profit, and that there's a reasonable chance that you won't get the business. You prioritize this person with a "D". It's worth making some effort here, but you should focus most of your attention on better prospects.

### **Tip:**

To-Do Lists are particularly useful when you have a small number of tasks that you need to complete. However, they can become cumbersome when you have too many items on them, or when you need to progress multiple projects. At this stage, it's worth starting to use Action Programs , which are designed to manage more complex situations reliably.

### **Key Points**

To be well organized in the workplace, you need to be using To-Do Lists. By using them, you will ensure that:

- You remember to carry out all necessary tasks.
- You tackle the most important jobs first, and don't waste time on trivial tasks.
- You don't get stressed by a large number of unimportant jobs.

Start by listing all of the tasks that you must carry out.

Mark the importance of the task next to it, with a priority from A (very important) to F (unimportant). Redraft the list into this order of importance. Then carry out the jobs at the top of the list first. These are the most important, most beneficial tasks to complete.

You can also use software-based approaches to manage your list. You can often access these from anywhere, and they can often be synced with your Smartphone or PDA.

Have you thought about what you want to be doing in five years' time? Are you clear about what your main objective at work is at the moment? Do you know what you want to have achieved by the end of today?

If you want to succeed, you need to set goals. Without goals you lack focus and direction. Goal setting not only allows you to take control of your life's direction; it also provides you a benchmark for determining whether you are actually succeeding. Think about it: Having a million dollars in the bank is only proof of success if one of your goals is to amass riches. If your goal is to practice acts of charity, then keeping the money for yourself is suddenly contrary to how you would define success.

To accomplish your goals, however, you need to know how to set them. You can't simply say, "I want" and expect it to happen. Goal setting is a process that starts with careful consideration of what you want to achieve, and ends with a lot of hard work to actually do it. In between there are some very well defined steps that transcend the specifics of each goal. Knowing these steps will allow you to formulate goals that you can accomplish.



## SECTION FOUR

### MANAGING INTERRUPTIONS

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#### **Maintain Focus, Keep Control of Your Time**



Avoid interruptions to your progress.

Everyday interruptions at work can be a key barrier to managing your time effectively and, ultimately, can be a barrier to your success.

Think back to your last workday, and consider for a minute the many interruptions that occurred. There may have been phone calls, emails, hallway conversations, colleagues stopping by your office, or anything else that unexpectedly demanded your attention and, in doing so, distracted you from the task at-hand.

Because your day only has so many hours in it, a handful of small interruptions can rob you of the time you need to achieve your goals and be successful in your work and life. More than this, they can break your focus, meaning that you have to spend time re-engaging with the thought processes needed to successfully complete complex work.

The key to controlling interruptions is to know what they are and whether they are necessary, and to plan for them in your daily schedule. The tips that follow will help you do that, and so prevent interruptions from frustrating you and jeopardizing your success.

#### **Using the Tool**

Use the following tips to understand and manage interruptions:

##### **1. Keep An Interrupters Log**

If interruptions consistently rob you of time and energy, or if they frequently push you off schedule and cause delays, it's time to keep an Interrupters Log. This is a simple record of the interruptions you experience in the course of a day.

[Click here to download our free Interrupters Log Worksheet.](#) Figure 1 shows an example of it.

### **Figure 1: The Interrupters Log**

<b>Person</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Description of Interruption</b>	<b>Valid?</b>	<b>Urgent?</b>
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Keep your Interrupters Log with you every day for at least a week, recording every interruption you experience, and marking down the person interrupting you; the date and time it occurs; what the interruption is; whether it was valid; and whether it was urgent (or whether someone could have waited until a better time.)

Once you have recorded the interruptions for a week, sit down with your log and analyze the information.

Which interruptions are valid and which are not?

You need to deal with the valid interruptions. We'll show you below how you can schedule them into your day so that they get the attention they need, while you still have the time you need to adequately address your daily work.

As for the interruptions that are not valid, you must find a way to block these out in the future.

## **2. Analyze and Conquer Interruptions**

To analyze and conquer the interruptions you find in your Interrupters Log, firstly look at whether the interruption is valid or not.

Could someone have avoided interrupting you by waiting for a routine meeting? Or was it something they should have asked you about at all?

If not, deal with this politely but assertively.

Next, look at how urgent the interruptions were, and whether they could have been pre-empted. You can pre-empt many interruptions by holding routine meetings with people: If they're confident that they'll have access to you at a defined point in the near future, they'll learn to save up non-urgent issues until this meeting.

However, some interruptions are both urgent and valid. You need to be interrupted, and you need to deal with the situation.

From your Interrupters Log, you'll see how much time is taken up by these urgent, valid interruptions. Block this time into your schedule as "contingency time", and only take on as much other work as you can fit into the remaining time. You'll have to juggle this other work around the interruptions, but at least you won't be overloaded and stressed by the things that you haven't done because they've been displaced by emergencies.

### **3. Put Your Phone to Work for You (Not Against You)**

A little bit of planning can go a long way in working to control telephone interruptions, which many people experience all day long. If you are on a deadline or your focus needs to be intense (and not interrupted), use your voice mail to screen calls, or have an assistant deal with messages for you. This way, you can deal with calls by priority, and at times that suit you. In fact, this telephone time can be planned into your schedule, and so become a normal part of your working day.

### **4. Catch Your Breath**

When interrupted, it's easy to get caught up in the "rush" of the person who is interrupting, for they undoubtedly feel their request is urgent. In reality, however, most interruptions are not genuinely crisis-driven, and it can serve everyone best to take a little time before taking action.

Take a few minutes to consider the situation. Catch your breath and clear your head. A small delay, even one of just a few minutes, goes a long way in assessing the situation accurately and reacting appropriately.

### **5. Learn to Say "No"**

It's often acceptable to say "no" to requests or tasks if you are busy when someone else can handle it, if it is not an important task, or if it can be done later.

When this is the case, saying "no" in a courteous and sincere way, followed by a short explanation is the best course of action to take: "I am working against a very tight deadline on an important project right now so, I am sorry, but I can not jump in and help".

### **6. "Available" and "Unavailable" Time**

Simple yet effective: Let people know when you are available. and when you are not. Make sure that people know that during your "unavailable time", they should only interrupt you if they have to.

You and your co-workers can also agree on a signal that everyone in the office can use when unavailable, like turning the nameplate on the door around, or simply closing the door. This alleviates interruptions and can avoid hurt feelings.

**Tip:**

Be careful here. If you're a manager, an important part of your job is to be available to people, to handle urgent issues which arise, and to coach your team so that people are as effective as possible.

If you put up barriers that are too high, you won't be able to do these jobs. By all means, use "unavailable time", but don't over use it, and make sure people know they can interrupt you if there is a genuine crisis.

## **7. "Invitation Only" Time**

Schedule regular check-in times for the individuals you talk to most often. Ask these people to keep a running list of things that they need to discuss, so you can cover all the points at one time. And, force yourself to do the same.

An open-door policy is good, but you should limit the number of people you invite to your work area. For instance, if you're scheduling a meeting, offer to meet your co-worker in his or her office or a conference room. This way, you can excuse yourself after you accomplish your purpose. Additionally, it's much easier to get up and leave than it is to get people to leave your office once they're seated and comfortable.

## **8. Uncontrollable Interruptions**

There are interruptions that, no matter how hard you try, you simply cannot control.

Most people are happy to schedule a more convenient time, but when this does not work, quickly set the parameters by saying something like, "I only have five minutes to talk about this right now," and stick to it.

Do not ask the interrupter to sit down and do not engage in small talk. Encourage the interrupter to get right to the point and if a solution cannot be reached before the allotted time runs out, set a time for getting back to them and, again, stick to it.

## SECTION FIVE

### EFFECTIVE SCHEDULING

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#### Planning to Make the Best Use of Your Time



Are you making the best use of your time?

It's the end of another busy working day and, even though you came into the office early and left late, you don't feel as if you've accomplished anything significant.

It's all too easy for this to happen. Faced with endless meetings, frequent interruptions, and urgent last-minute tasks, you can easily be busy all day without making any progress on high-priority projects and goals.

That's why it's so important to know how to schedule your time properly. In this article, we'll look at the steps you can take to do this, thereby making time for the work that really matters, while still leaving time for personal development, family and friends.

#### **The Importance of Scheduling**

Scheduling is the art of planning your activities so that you can achieve your goals and priorities in the time you have available. When it's done effectively, it helps you:

- Understand what you can realistically achieve with your time.
- Make sure you have enough time for essential tasks.
- Add contingency time for "the unexpected."
- Avoid taking on more than you can handle.
- Work steadily toward your personal and career goals.
- Have enough time for family and friends, exercise and hobbies.
- Achieve a good work-life balance.

Time is the one resource that we can't buy, but we often waste it or use it ineffectively. Scheduling helps you think about what you want to achieve in a day, week or month, and it keeps you on track to accomplish your goals.

## **How to Schedule Your Time**

Set a regular time to do your scheduling – at the start of every week or month, for example.

There are a number of different tools to choose from. A simple and easy way to keep a schedule is to use a pen and paper, organizing your time using a weekly planner.

The most important thing when choosing your planner is that it lets you enter data easily, and allows you to view an appropriate span of time (day/week/month) in the level of detail that you need.

Once you have decided which tool you want to use, prepare your schedule in the following way:

### **Step 1: Identify Available Time**

Start by establishing the time you want to make available for your work.

How much time you spend at work should reflect the design of your job and your personal goals in life.


For example, if you're pushing for promotion, it might be prudent to work beyond normal hours each day to show your dedication. If, on the other hand, you want to have plenty of time for out-of-work activities, you might decide to do your allocated hours and no more.

### **Step 2: Schedule Essential Actions**

Next, block in the actions you absolutely must take to do a good job. These will often be the things you are assessed against.

For example, if you manage people, make sure that you have enough time available to deal with team members' personal issues, coaching, and supervision needs. Also, allow time to communicate with your boss and key people around you.

### **Step 3: Schedule High-Priority Activities**

Review your To-Do List , and schedule in high-priority and urgent activities, as well as essential maintenance tasks that cannot be delegated or avoided.

Try to arrange these for the times of day when you are most productive – for example, some people are at their most energized and efficient in the morning, while others focus more effectively in the afternoon or evening.

#### **Step 4: Schedule Contingency Time**

Next, schedule some extra time to cope with contingencies and emergencies. Experience will tell you how much to allow – in general, the more unpredictable your job, the more contingency time you'll need. (If you don't schedule this time in, emergencies will still happen and you'll end up working late.)

Frequent interruptions can eat into your time. Learning how to manage them + can reduce the amount of contingency time you need to set aside. Some interruptions will be hard to predict, but leaving some open space in your schedule gives you the flexibility you need to rearrange tasks and respond to important issues as they arise.

#### **Step 5: Schedule Discretionary Time**

The space you have left in your planner is "discretionary time": time that is available to deliver your priorities and achieve your goals. Review your prioritized To-Do List and personal goals +, evaluate the time you need to achieve them, and schedule them in.

#### **Step 6: Analyze Your Activities**

If, by the time you reach step five, you find that you have little or no discretionary time available, you need to go back through steps two, three and four, and question whether all of the tasks you've entered are absolutely necessary. It may be that some things can be delegated or tackled in a more time-efficient way.

One of the most important ways that you can build success is by maximizing the leverage + you can achieve with your time. Increase the amount of work you can complete by delegating + to other people, outsourcing key tasks, or using technology to automate as much of your work as possible. This will free you up to achieve your goals.

If you find that your discretionary time is still limited, then you may need to renegotiate + your workload or ask for help. Use your newly prepared schedule as evidence of your heavy commitments. This demonstrates to your boss how well-organized you are, and might make him or her more receptive to your request!

#### **Key Points**

Scheduling is the process by which you plan how you'll use your time. Doing it well can maximize your effectiveness and reduce your stress levels.

Follow this six-step process to prepare your schedule:

1. Identify the time you have available.
2. Block in the essential tasks you must carry out to succeed in your job.

3. Schedule high-priority urgent tasks and vital "housekeeping" activities.
4. Block in appropriate contingency time to handle unpredictable events and interruptions.
5. Schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals in the time that remains.
6. Analyze your activities to identify tasks that can be delegated, outsourced or cut altogether.

It's important that your schedule makes time for your professional and personal goals. If you have little or no discretionary time left when you reach step five, revisit your tasks to see if you can do them differently – otherwise, your work-life balance will suffer.



## SECTION SIX

### OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

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#### **Manage Your Time. Get It All Done.**

Discover how to beat the damaging habit of procrastination, and get your tasks done on time.

If you've found yourself putting off important tasks over and over again, you're not alone. In fact, many people procrastinate to some degree – but some are so chronically affected by procrastination that it stops them fulfilling their potential and disrupts their careers.

The key to controlling this destructive habit is to recognize when you start procrastinating, understand why it happens (even to the best of us), and take active steps to manage your time and outcomes better.

#### **What is Procrastination?**


In a nutshell, you procrastinate when you put off things that you should be focusing on right now, usually in favor of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you're more comfortable doing.

According to psychologist Professor Clarry Lay, a prominent writer on the subject, procrastination occurs when there's "a temporal gap between intended behavior and enacted behavior." That is, when there's a significant time period between when people intend to do a job, and when they actually do it.

#### **How to Overcome Procrastination**

Follow these steps to deal with and control procrastination:

##### **Step 1: Recognize That You're Procrastinating**

If you're honest with yourself, you probably know when you're procrastinating. But to be sure, take our Are You a Procrastinator?  self test.

Here are some useful indicators that will help you know when you're procrastinating:

- Filling your day with low priority tasks from your To Do List.
- Reading e-mails several times without starting work on them or deciding what you're going to do with them.
- Sitting down to start a high-priority task, and almost immediately going off to make a cup of coffee.
- Leaving an item on your To Do list for a long time, even though you know it's important.

- Regularly saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, and filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks already on your list.
- Waiting for the “right mood” or the “right time” to tackle the important task at hand.

### Notes:

Putting off an **unimportant** task isn't necessarily procrastination: it may just be good prioritization!

Putting off an important task for a short period because you're feeling particularly tired isn't necessarily procrastination either, so long as you don't delay starting the task for more than a day or so, and this is only an occasional event. If you have a genuine good reason for rescheduling something important, then you're not necessarily procrastinating. But if you're simply “making an excuse” because you really just don't want to do it, then you are.

In his 1986 article “At Last, My Research Article on Procrastination”, published in the *Journal of Research on Personality*, Lay noted that procrastinatory behavior is independent of need for achievement, energy, or self-esteem. In other words, you may be a procrastinator even if you're confident in your own abilities, energetic, and enjoy achieving things.

### Step 2: Work Out WHY You're Procrastinating

This can depend on both you and the task. But it's important to understand which of the two is relevant in a given situation, so that you can select the best approach for overcoming your reluctance to get going.

One reason is that people find a particular job **unpleasant**, and try to avoid it because of that. Most jobs have unpleasant or boring aspects to them, and often the best way of dealing with these is to get them over and done with quickly, so that you can focus on the more enjoyable aspects of the job.

Another cause is that people are **disorganized**. Organized people manage to fend off the temptation, because they will have things like prioritized to-do lists and schedules which emphasize how important the piece work is, and identify precisely when it's due. They'll also have planned how long a task will take to do, and will have worked back from that point to identify when they need to get started in order to avoid it being late. Organized people are also better placed to avoid procrastination, because they know how to break the work down into manageable “next steps”.

Even if you're organized, you can **feel overwhelmed by the task**. You may doubt that you have the skills or resources you think you need, so you seek comfort in doing tasks you know you're capable of completing. Unfortunately, the big task isn't going to go away – truly important tasks rarely do. You may also fear success as much as failure. For example, you may think that success will lead to you being swamped with more requests to do this type of task, or that you'll be pushed to take on things that you feel are beyond you.

Surprisingly, **perfectionists** are often procrastinators, as they can tend to think "I don't have the right skills or resources to do this perfectly now, so I won't do it at all."

One final major cause is having **underdeveloped decision-making skills**. If you simply can't decide what to do, you're likely to put off taking action in case you do the wrong thing.

### **Step 3: Adopt Anti-Procrastination Strategies**

Procrastination is a habit – a deeply ingrained pattern of behavior. That means that you won't just break it overnight. Habits only stop being habits when you have **persistently** stopped practising them, so use as many approaches as possible to maximize your chances of beating them. Some tips will work better for some people than for others, and for some tasks than others. And, sometimes, you may simply need to try a fresh approach to beat the "procrastination peril"!

These **general tips** will help **motivate** you to get moving:

- Make up your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a piece of tasty flapjack at lunchtime if you've completed a certain task. And make sure you notice how good it feels to finish things!
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works! This is the principle behind slimming and other self-help groups, and it is widely recognized as a highly effective approach.
- Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task.
- Work out the cost of your time to your employer. As your employers are paying you to do the things that **they** think are important, you're not delivering value for money if you're not doing those things. Shame yourself into getting going!
- Aim to "eat an elephant beetle" first thing, every day!

If you're procrastinating because you're disorganized, here's how to **get organized!**

- Keep a To-Do list so that you can't "conveniently" forget about unpleasant or overwhelming tasks.
- Use Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle to help prioritize your To-Do List so that you cannot try to kid yourself that it would be acceptable to put off doing something on the grounds that it is unimportant, or that you have many urgent things which ought to be done first when, in reality, you're procrastinating.
- Become a master of scheduling and project planning, so that you know when to start those all-important projects.
- Set yourself time-bound goals: that way, you'll have no time for procrastination!
- Focus on one task at a time.

If you're putting off starting a project because you find it **overwhelming**, you need to take a different approach. Here are some tips:

- Break the project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks. You may find it helpful to create an action plan.
- Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions. You'll feel that you're achieving things, and so perhaps the whole project won't be so overwhelming after all.

If you're doing it because you find the task **unpleasant**:

- Many procrastinators overestimate the unpleasantness of a task. So give it a try! You may find that it's not as bad as you thought!
- Hold the unpleasant consequences of **not** doing the work at the front of your mind.
- Reward yourself for doing the task.

Finally, if your problem is that you **can't decide** what action to take, and are putting off making a decision because you're nervous about making the wrong choice, see our decision-making section. This teaches a range of powerful and effective decision-making techniques.

Remember: the longer you can spend without procrastinating, the greater your chances of breaking this destructive habit for good!

### **Key Points**

To have a good chance of conquering procrastination, you need to spot straight away that you're doing it. Then, you need to identify why you're doing it and take appropriate steps to overcome the block.

## ARE YOU A PROCRASTINATOR?



Are you putting off the tasks that you need to do?

As with many self-sabotaging behaviors, the first step in stopping procrastinating is to recognize that you're doing it.

But this isn't always as straightforward as it sounds!

Many procrastinators persuade themselves that they have good reasons for delaying getting on with what they have to do. And once you've got into a "victim" mindset (which many procrastinators do), you may not realize that what you're doing is procrastinating, and that it's up to you to overcome it.

So take our self-test below and find out whether or not you are a procrastinator!

### Are You a Procrastinator?

#### Instructions

For each statement, click the button in the column that most applies to rate yourself by indicating the extent to which each statement is characteristic or uncharacteristic of you. The scale ranges from (1) 'Not like me at all' to (5) 'Very like me.' Note that (3) on the scale is neutral i.e. the statement is neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic of you. Click the 'Calculate My Total' button to add up your score and check your result using the scoring table underneath.

15 Statements to Answer	Not like me at all	Not like me	Neither me or not	Like me	Very like me
1 I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 When planning a meeting, I make the necessary arrangements well in advance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>15 Statements to Answer</b>	<b>Not like me at all</b>	<b>Not like me</b>	<b>Neither me or not</b>	<b>Like me</b>	<b>Very like me</b>
<b>3</b> I generally return emails and phone calls promptly. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4</b> I find that jobs often don't get done for days, even when they require little else except sitting down and doing them. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5</b> Once I have the information I need, I usually make decisions as soon as possible. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6</b> When I have something difficult to do, I tell myself that it's better to wait to do it until I'm feeling more inspired. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>7</b> I usually have to rush to complete tasks on time. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>8</b> I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>9</b> I usually start a task I'm given shortly after I'm given it. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10</b> When deadlines are approaching, I often waste time by doing other things. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11</b> I often have a task finished sooner than necessary. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12</b> When preparing for a meeting, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13</b> I often delay starting tasks that I have to do. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>14</b> When faced with a huge task, I figure out what the first step is so that I can get going. <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>15</b> I frequently say "I'll do it tomorrow". <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Total = 0

### Score Interpretation

## Score Comment

- 15-30 You're a procrastinator, and it's not something to be proud of. It means that you miss deadlines and waste a lot of time. As a result, your boss is not getting from you what you're capable of delivering, and he or she is probably very frustrated with this. Follow the link below to find out why you're doing this, and how you can stop it.
- 31-45 You're a mild procrastinator. You need to understand better why you procrastinate – there are several reasons, for it, and more than one may apply to you. And you need to learn the steps you can take to stop doing it. Click the link below for more information.
- 46-75 Good news! You're not a systematic procrastinator! If you do, however, occasionally catch yourself procrastinating over something, follow the link below for tips on dealing with this.

**Source:** This set of questions is based on the Procrastination Scale created by Professor Clarry Lay of York University, Canada, and is presented with his kind permission. The questions are for illustrative purposes only, and no validation work has been conducted on them.

Procrastination is as tempting as it is harmful. If you have recognized a tendency to procrastinate within yourself, you need to figure out why. Perhaps you are afraid of failing? (Or perhaps you're actually afraid of success!)

Once you know why you procrastinate then you can plan to get out of this stressful habit. Reward yourself for getting jobs done, and remind yourself regularly of the serious consequences of not doing those tasks you love to avoid! See our article on [Overcoming Procrastination](#) to learn how to kick this self-sabotaging habit!

## Key Points

Procrastination is stressful, is highly damaging to your productivity – and is often deeply frustrating for your colleagues to deal with. The first step in beating it is to recognize that you're doing it, and this self-test will show you whether you are.

## SECTION SEVEN

### MOTIVATING YOURSELF

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#### Practical Tools and Strategies



Motivate yourself to complete your tasks.

Are you able to get excited about every task you need to do? Or do you sometimes need a bit more help to make a start, never mind getting the task done? Maybe you're continuing to ignore those overflowing filing cabinets, instead of taking some time out to reorganize them.

Or, you're avoiding that difficult conversation with a person who is always late, choosing instead to tolerate the tardiness. Perhaps you keep rearranging your priorities, so that the tasks you hate always end up at the bottom of the list.

The longer you delay doing something, the more stress and pressure you're likely to feel. After a while, you may even start to lose confidence in your ability to complete the task at all.

Many of us sometimes need help getting motivated. And it can be very frustrating when we know we have to do something, but we just can't get around to making a start.

#### Motivation Basics

There are essentially two types of motivation:

- **Intrinsic motivation** – This is when you are motivated by "internal" factors to meet your own personal needs. Most hobbies and leisure activities are based on intrinsic motivation. We do them because we enjoy them, not because we have to.
- **Extrinsic motivation** – This is when you are motivated by "external" factors that are given or controlled by others, for example, by salary or by praise. Our jobs are usually based on extrinsic motivation, although there will be some intrinsic motivation involved if you enjoy aspects of what you do.



Most situations at work involve both types of motivation. If we do a job we enjoy, some of the work we do will be intrinsically motivating. Realistically though, we probably wouldn't go to work if we weren't being paid! Enjoying your job is intrinsically motivating, while being paid a salary to do it is extrinsically motivating.

Even if we do a job we enjoy, problems can crop up when we need to do something that we don't inherently like – such as filing, speaking with staff about performance issues, completing reports, and so on. We have to do undesirable tasks as part of our job, so we have to find a way to motivate ourselves to complete them. That's where self-motivation is necessary.