

Using Your Time Wisely

Have you ever wished for a 30 hour day? Surly that would relieve pressure, right? If only we had more time. It seems like we live under the pile of unfinished tasks, unanswered emails, unvisited friends, unread books. But would a 30 hour day really solve the problem? A mothers work is never finished, but neither is a teacher, students, business professional etc.

Growing up I was in all sorts of activities... trying to earn my acceptance and approval through what I did. My time was completely maxed out, trying to get my value and importance from what I did and what others thought of me. But then I came to a point after realizing that even if I did achieve my self-imposed level of worthiness that it would leave me to pursue yet another activity. It wasn't until someone told me about how surrendering my life to Christ, letting Him forgive me for not being perfect, did my life have value, significance and importance. Not b/c of what I did or what others thought, but b/c I was His child. Now my life is not run by trying to prove something to people or by trying to get their approval and value from what I do. Not that I am perfect at managing my time, but I have grown tremendously.

When we stop to evaluate, we realize that our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically the problem of priorities. Our greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.

Do important things first.

Rocks and Sand Illustration

Time Management Grid

		Urgency	
Importance	High	Quadrant 1 Urgent and Important "Firefighting"	Quadrant 2 Important but Not Urgent "Quality Time"
	Low	Quadrant 3 Urgent but Not Important "Distraction"	Quadrant 4 Neither Urgent nor Important. "Time wasting"

👉 Quadrant 1 represents things which are both urgent and important. We've called this "firefighting". The activities need to be dealt with immediately, and they're important.

👉 Quadrant 2 represents things which are important, but not urgent. We've termed this one "Quality Time". Although the activities here are important, and contribute to achieving the goals and priorities - they don't have to be done right now. As a result, they can be scheduled in when you can give quality thought to them. A good example would

be the preparation of an important talk, or mentoring a key individual. Prayer time, family time and personal relaxation/recreation are also part of Quadrant 2.

~ Quadrant 3 are distractions. They must be dealt with right now, but frankly, are not important. For example, when you answer an unwanted phone call, - you've had to interrupt whatever you were doing to answer it.

~ The final quadrant, Quadrant 4, are things which are neither urgent nor important. Some meetings could fall into this category - they've been scheduled in advance, but if they achieve nothing, or you don't contribute to them, then they have simply wasted time. Other examples could include driving time and low quality relaxation or family time.

Consciously strive to maximize Quadrant 2 time. Doing so can reduce the amount of time taken up by firefighting quadrant 1 activities, since many quadrant 1 activities could have been quadrant 2 if they had been done earlier.

You can also seek to reduce time spent in Quadrant 3 by improving your systems and processes for dealing with distractions.

Seek to eliminate as much as possible of quadrant 4 activities, by either not spending time on these things, or changing the nature of them to make them more productive. For example, driving can be quadrant 4 if the time is unproductive, but there are a number of ways of making this time more productive by listening to a praise tape, praying, learning new skills with a tape course, planning and so on.

Knowing what's important...

Goal Planning helps you know what to say Yes to.

Many people have a daily to-do list which they can prioritize and then work through. However, to focus your time on that which is truly important, ie in line with your goals, you will need to : i. Consciously become aware (and write down!) of what you are trying to achieve across the key roles and different parts of your life. Some leaders may feel strange to set goals for family life, but these goals may be more about finding quality time together than achieving specific objectives. However, if you only set goals for the parts of your life which are concerned with school or work, then these elements may squeeze out time for other parts of your life. Think about mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially.

We play defense with our calendar rather than offense. We need to direct our schedule the way it should go rather than have it be ran by the tyranny of the urgent. Determining your top priorities will be one of the most strategic things you can do. What activities will consume your time? What people will you spend time with? What projects will receive you best effort? Will your day be filled with your priorities or the requests of others? Time Management Math-Every week has 168 hours. Chart activities (on a weekly schedule) you do to figure out how many of the 168 of are using.

Tips

1. Prepare a schedule that has a place for your classes and other regular responsibilities, but also for any irregular responsibilities. List your irregular activities. Ask yourself, at a set 15-minute period of time each morning, regarding everything you plan to do that day:
 - a. Can I forget it (in light of my goal)? Choose best over good. You may not want to forget it, but if you can, you should. (ie. times for relaxation, socializing, rest and exercise are vital)
 - b. Is there someone else I could ask to do this for me
 - c. Where in my schedule can I most quickly and effectively accomplish it?
2. Use big blocks of time for big jobs, not small ones.
3. Save little things, such as phone calls, for little spaces of time.
4. Estimate the amount of time a job will take.
5. Sort out your “must do’s” from your “choose to do’s”. Our obligations in life are the biggest priorities we have, but more often than not, you will find that you really do not have to do many things; you choose to do them.
6. Spend as much time as you can in your area of strength. Great satisfaction and refreshment in doing what you are gifted in.
7. Ask yourself, can someone else do it better?
8. Avoid perfectionism. Perfectionism paralyzes you from progress. But welcome tension. Stressing out won't help you, but understanding tension will always be part of our life will help us persevere and will improve focus.
9. Avoid procrastination.
10. Control interruptions and distractions.

Statistic of age 95 wish...

1. Reflected more
2. Risked more
3. Did more that outlived them.

If you want to talk more, email me at Laura.Krokos@uscm.org or find me on facebook.