

Time Management Sourced from: “*First Things First*”, Stephen Covey

Everybody has 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, 52 weeks in a year. So why is that some of us feel there are not enough hours in a day to do everything?

The answer is deceptively simple- *time management is really about self management*. There is no such thing as time management. Time is a constant. We can’t control time. **We can only control how we manage our time.** We are the ones who choose the activities that fill our day. Once we truly understand that our choices control what we do in a day, in a week, in a year, we are in a position to manage the choices we make with our time.

So let’s first look at the 4 keys ways people spend their time:

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p style="text-align: center;">I = Demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crises • Pressing problems • Deadline driven, projects, meetings, preparations 	<p style="text-align: center;">II = The Zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Prevention • Values clarification • Planning • Relationship building • True re-creation • Empowerment
Not important	<p style="text-align: center;">III = Deception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruptions, some phone calls • Some mail, some reports • Some meetings • Many popular activities 	<p style="text-align: center;">IV = Distraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivia, busywork • Some phone calls • Timewasters • “Escape” activities • Irrelevant mail • Excessive TV

Quadrant I represents things that are both urgent and important. This is where we have a deadline to meet, have a broken machine that needs repairing, or have to undergo urgent heart surgery. We need to spend time in Quadrant I. This is where we manage, where we produce. It's where we use our experience and judgment to respond to the many different needs and challenges. But we also need to realize that many important activities become urgent through procrastination, or because we don't do enough prevention and planning.

Quadrant II includes activities that are important but not urgent. Here's where we do our long-range planning, anticipate and prevent problems, empower others, broaden our minds and increase our skills through reading and continuous professional development, prepare for important meetings and presentations, or invest in our relationships. Increasing time spent in this quadrant increases our ability to do. Ignoring this Quadrant feeds and enlarges Quadrant I. Planning, preparation, and prevention keep many things from becoming urgent. Quadrant II does not act on us; we must act on it. This is the Quadrant of personal leadership.

Quadrant III includes things that are urgent and not important. The noise of urgency creates the illusion of importance. But the actual activities, if they're important at all, are only important to someone else. Many phone calls, meetings, and drop-in visitors fall into this category. We spend a lot of time in this Quadrant meeting other people's priorities and expectations, thinking we're really in Quadrant I.

Quadrant IV includes things that are not urgent and not important. We often escape to this Quadrant through the exhaustion of being in Quadrants I and III. Real recreation is a valuable Quadrant II activity. Reading addictive light novels, watching mindless television shows, or gossiping around the staff room at work is not.

Now what?

Think about your activities over the last week. Which Quadrants do they fall into? Use the blank template at the end to determine where you spend your time. Think carefully as you consider Quadrants I and III. It's easy to think that because something is urgent, it's important. A quick way to differentiate between the two quadrants is to ask yourself if the urgent activity contributed to an important objective. If not, it probably belongs in Quadrant III.

Most people spend the majority of their time in Quadrants I and III. And what's the cost? If urgency is driving up, what important things are not receiving your time and attention. Ask yourself:

- “What is the one activity that you know if you did superbly well and consistently would have significant positive results in your personal life?”
- What is the one activity that you know if you did superbly well and consistently would have significant positive results in your professional or work life?

Answers generally fall under seven key activities:

- 1. Improving communication with people
- 2. Better preparation
- 3. Better planning and organizing
- 4. Taking better care of self
- 5. Seizing new opportunities
- 6. Personal development
- 7. Empowerment.

All of these are Quadrant II activities. They're important!!!

How do you feel when you're operating in 'urgency'? How do you feel when you're operating in "importance"?

Typically people who are 'in urgency' use words like 'stressed out', 'used up', 'unfulfilled', 'worn out'. But when they talk about 'important' they use words like 'confident', 'fulfilled', 'on track', 'meaningful', 'peaceful'. These feelings can tell you a lot about the source of the results you're getting in life.

Is it bad to be in Quadrant I?

No, it's not. In fact, many people spend a significant amount of their time in Quadrant I. The key issue is why you're there. Are you in Quadrant I based on urgency or importance? If urgency dominates, when importance fades, you'll slip into Quadrant III- it's the urgency addiction. But if you're in Quadrant I because of importance, when urgency fades you'll move into Quadrant II. Both Quadrants I and II describe what's important; it's only the time factor that changes. The real problem is when you're spending time in Quadrants III and IV.

I'm already flat out. Where do I get time to spend in Quadrant II?

Quadrant III is the primary place to start. This quadrant can fool us. The key is learning to see all of our activities in terms of their importance. Then we're able to reclaim time lost to the deception of urgency and spend it in Quadrant II. It's useful to ask yourself "Are you doing what is effective or what you are comfortable with?"

How to plan your week...

Planning Quadrant II activities is a way of thinking, not a time management tool. You control your thoughts which means you can control your use of time.

One of the first keys is to broaden your perspective to planning a week at a time, not daily. This instantly takes away some of the urgency and sense of rushing to get things done.

Step One: Connect with your Vision and your Mission

What's most important in your life as a whole? Context gives meaning and you need to consider the big picture. It's also easy to say 'no' when there is a deeper 'yes!' burning inside.

Step Two: Identify your Roles

Much of our frustration in life comes from the sense that we're succeeding in one role at the expense of another. By identifying your key roles, you can begin to see a bigger context. Remember that balance isn't 'either/or'; it's 'and'. As an example you might define your roles as father/mother, manager-team development, manager-sales and marketing, soccer coach, individual/personal development.

Step Three: Select Quadrant II Goals in each Role

“What is the most important thing I could do in each role this week to have the greatest positive impact? Focus on importance rather than urgency.

Step Four: Create a Decision-Making Framework for The Week

The key here is not to prioritise your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. Imagine a glass that you fill up with sand, then some pebbles, and finally some big rocks...only there's no more room for the big rocks. Let's reverse the order. By placing the rocks in first, then the pebbles, the sand can still slip into the gaps. That's exactly what happens when we focus on urgent tasks...there's never any time for the important ones. Yet by putting the big rocks in first, the sand will still find a way in.

Step Five: Exercise Integrity in the Moment

That means make sure you put the most important things in first. ie First things first (The title of Stephen Covey's book). Any changes that you make are based on choice not urgency. Prioritise according to which quadrant the activities fall into.

Step Six: Evaluate

Unless we learn from how we are living, how are we going to keep from making the same mistakes, struggling with the same problems week after week.

Now suppose you were to spend 30 minutes a week for the next 52 weeks of your life going through this process. Suppose you accomplished only half of the Quadrant II goals you set. Would that represent more time in Quadrant II than you're spending now? If you were able to invest that much more time in Quadrant II, what difference would it make in the quality of your personal and professional life? Quality of life depends on what happens in the space between stimulus and response!

Over the course of the coaching programme, I'm going to be holding you accountable for working **on** your business. Guess which quadrant that fits into? ☺

Let's go and have some FUN...

My week looks like this:

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	I = Demand	II = The Zone
Not important	III = Deception	IV = Distraction

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”