

Prioritising Your Time – The Urgent / Important Matrix

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

The aim here is to spend more time in quadrant 2, **important but non-urgent** tasks, and lessen time spent in **crises, distractions and interruptions**. Look at the chart and consider where you spend most of your time. Then consider:

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

URGENT

NON-URGENT

IMPORTANT

<p style="text-align: center;">CRISES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor and major crises • Pressing problems • Deadlines • Meetings • Projects • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ <p style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Quadrant 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GOALS & PLANNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Prevention • Planning • Values clarification • Building relationships • Clarifying priorities • Goal setting • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ <p style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Quadrant 2</p>
--	---

NOT IMPORTANT

<p style="text-align: center;">INTERRUPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needless interruptions • Interruptions from others • Unimportant meetings • Unimportant phone calls • Unimportant mail / email • Other people’s minor issues • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ <p style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Quadrant 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DISTRACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivia • ‘Busy’ work (distractions) • Some phone calls • ‘Escape’ activities • Irrelevant email, social media • Excessive TV, internet usage • Excessive relaxing / sleeping • Self-critical thoughts • Your own time-wasters • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ <p style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Quadrant 4</p>
--	--



REVIEW:

- 3. Which quadrant do you spend most time in? _____
- 4. How does that feel? _____
 - a. Q1, Crises: If you're spending most of your time here, how are you dealing with stress?
 - b. Q2, Goals & Planning: Congratulations! How can you ensure you stay in this quadrant?
 - c. Q3, Interruptions: If you are spending most of your time here, you may need to find ways to say 'no' to others.
 - d. Q4, Distractions: If you are spending most of your time here, you may need to find ways to say 'no' to yourself.
- 5. What's getting in the way of you managing your time better? Be specific.

- 6. Where are you sabotaging yourself?

GET MOTIVATED:

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

- 8. What **could** you do differently? It's time to do some brainstorming. Write down all the ideas of things you could do. Note: this is only a brainstorming exercise to identify the possibilities. You will choose actions in the next question.

- 9. What is the **key** action that would support all the others?

COMMITMENT:

Identify 1 – 3 specific actions you will commit to. Make sure the action is something you can implement right away – or in the next day or so. Only pick actions you are 100% sure you can complete – and if necessary make the action smaller until you can commit 100%.

Action 1: _____ By when: _____

Action 2: _____ By when: _____

Action 3: _____ By when: _____