

FIRST THINGS FIRST

To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy

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MAIN IDEA

Putting first things first is a new approach to time management.

The new system focuses on doing what is important rather than what is urgent. It stresses effectiveness rather than simple efficiency as the key to using time management systems to improve the quality of life. In turn, true effectiveness is based on a principle-centred approach - that is, on principles which have been revered throughout history and which have been shown to enhance the quality of a person's life over the experience of many years and many generations.

Putting first things first is not a quick-fix shortcut to business success. Rather, it stresses living a meaningful life rather than a purely efficient life. It is based on the premise that the deepest motivations felt by every person are to live, to love, to learn and then to leave a legacy for future generations. The key lies in escaping the tyranny of the clock and following your internal compass.

1. THE CLOCK AND THE COMPASS

Time management systems have typically worked on the principle of increasing efficiency - that is, of increasing the amount of tasks that are accomplished each day. However, for most people, being able to do more in the same time is not the major concern. The real issue is doing the right things - tasks that will add value to the quality-of-life.

Therefore, a new time management system is needed which not only aligns with the clock (efficiency) but also aligns with the compass of effectiveness. That is, a new system is required which allows people to spend more of their time efficiently doing those things that will add to the quality of their lives.

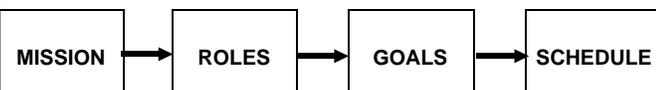
By closing the gap between the way people spend their time and what is most deeply important to them, quality of life can be greatly improved and enhanced.

2. THE MAIN THING IS TO SHIFT THE FOCUS FROM "URGENCY" TO "IMPORTANCE"

Spend 30 minutes a week aligning the clock with your own personal compass.

In other words, have a regular weekly planning session in which you plan ahead the activities of the coming week. This simple process will ensure the things which you consider to be most important are not lost in the daily hustle-bustle of accomplishing the activities which are urgent.

The weekly planning session should follow this sequence:



3. THE SYNERGY OF INTERDEPENDENCE

The real advantage of the 4th generation time management system is that it provides a way for any organization to make a transition from typical to high-performance through the establishment of interdependent business associations.

The concept of interdependency is unique to the 4th generation time management system. It proposes that communicating and dealing with other people is at the very core of effective time management, and that by taking into account the uniqueness and capacity of every individual, an organization can move ahead more effectively than individuals could ever do on their own.

Interdependence applies not only to unifying the efforts of everyone within the organization, but also to the creation of beneficial strategic alliances between one organization and another.

	Urgent	Non Urgent
Important		X
Not Important		

4. PRINCIPLE-CENTRED LIVING

When you have aligned your time management system with the correct principles, the quality-of-life you can enjoy while working towards your ultimate destination is very high. In fact, the journey and the destination become one and the same.

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Supporting Ideas

For most people, there is a gap between the compass and the clock - between doing what is most important and the way they spend their time. Being aware of this, the traditional approach has been to attempt to manage time better - to do more things in less time.

Over the years, time management has evolved through three distinct generations:

1. Notes and Lists

In the first generation of time management techniques, people become obsessed with keeping notes and check lists. By carrying a "To Do" list at all times, you hope to accomplish more.

2. Planning

In the second generation approach, time is carefully planned in calendars and appointment books. Targets and deadlines are set, appointments and commitments are meticulously written down and everything is carefully and methodically organized.

3. Priorities

In the third generation of time management, every task is assigned a relative importance. You work hard to accomplish those things with the highest priority, and some of the tasks with lower priority if possible.

The only problem with these generations of time management is the essential difference between efficiency and effectiveness. Specifically, a gap still remains between what is most deeply important to a person and the way they spend their time.

Therefore, a fourth generation time management system is needed which will close that gap and allow people to achieve with their lives whatever is most important.

4TH GENERATION TIME MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: FIRST THINGS FIRST

Fundamental Question:

What are the "first things" and how can they be put first?

The 4th generation program focuses on taking the true principles that most people are aware actually determine the quality of life, and translating those principles into the fabric of day to day life. That is, to live a life which conforms with your most fervently believed principles without becoming submerged in a myriad of unimportant tasks which constantly crop up and drain all available time and energy.

Instead of focusing on doing more, the 4th generation program focuses on doing the right things in a balanced and productive way.

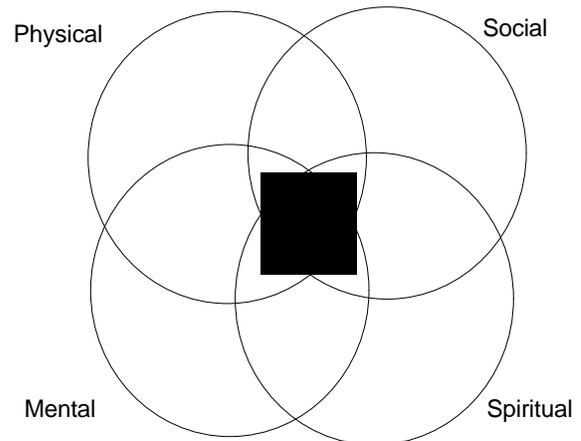
3 Key Ideas

1. Fulfillment of the four human needs and capacities.

Humans feel empty and incomplete unless they find a meaningful way to meet four basic needs:

1. Physical needs - food, clothing, shelter, security.
2. Social needs - to belong, to relate to others, to love.
3. Mental needs - to develop and grow.
4. Spiritual need - sense of meaning, to leave a legacy.

If any one of these basic needs remains unmet, the quality of a person's life is greatly reduced. In fact, most people will not be able to rationally consider time management while any of the four basic needs remains unmet.



There is a certain amount of balance and synergy between the four separate needs. When all four needs are being met in an integrated way, a person is living in the shaded area on the chart above. At this point, a person could be described as having a "fire within" leading to visions of future greatness, passion and a spirit of adventure. Generally speaking, at this point, a person starts to focus on leaving a legacy for future generations rather than just seeing each day through.

2. The reality of "true north" principles.

A 4th generation time management program must acknowledge that not only meeting the four basic needs is important but the way we seek to meet those needs is equally important. There is no sense of achievement if we don't respect the process by which we got there.

