

# The Myth of Time Management

*By Rob McKelvey*

OK. Here it is. The fact is that there is no such thing as time management. You can manage projects, and tasks, and even money, but you can't manage time. You can't speed it up and you can't slow it down. Time gives us 24 hours in each day...no more, no less. And guess what, nobody knows how much actual time in total we have to use.

So if we can't manage time how do we make the most of it? Would you be interested in getting control back of your time? Well by following this simple 5 point plan you can get the most out of your time. After the time you have on this earth is **your** time.

1. **Determine What is Important:** What is actually important for you and to you? For example what do you need in order to be performing/living at your optimum level? Not for someone else but for you. What is it that you want to accomplish in your time on this earth? This applies to your work as well as your life. There are items that are not important, not urgent, urgent, and important...and combinations of the four. The most effective way to ensure that you don't get overstressed and burn out is to have a balance in these four categories.

Let me give you some examples. Not important activities could be something like interruptions. Not urgent and not important work is simply "busy work"...doing things to look busy. Urgent important activities usually have a time frame associated with them. And important but not urgent activities generally revolve around planning something. What is important and or urgent for you?

2. **Prioritise What is Important:** Once you have figured out what is important in your life it is now useful to prioritise those things that are important. Most likely you will have entered something in each of the categories or quadrants. Not everything has the same importance or urgency level. It is now the time to prioritise the activities each quadrant. You can use a numbering or alphabetic system to assign priorities. During the prioritisation of the activities you may find that some change quadrants. This is perfectly OK and normal. After all, something that is urgent and important for someone else may not be urgent and important for you.
3. **Allocate Time:** Now that you have priorities of what is important in your life how much time do you want to spend on them? You may find it helpful at this point to actually put the activities in your diary with the associated time. You may think this a case of overkill since you already know what needs to be accomplished, however, it has been proven that the act of writing the activities down, and assigning time frames to them, helps to crystallise them. You would be surprised at how days magically fill up with unimportant activities when you don't have time allocated to important ones.

4. **Focus:** By focussing on the priorities and the allotted time you have a chance of accomplishing or attaining what is important to you. Basically, and this may sound like motherhood, it is advisable to focus on the important/urgent activities first and the not important/not urgent activities last. What ever the activity you are doing at the time, give it your complete attention. Try not to be distracted by unimportant things. And if you are then recognize the fact, put it aside, and get back on focus. Often it is useful to have only one thing on your desk at a time to help with the focussing of the activity.
  
5. **Be Selfish:** Put your needs first. This may seem harsh, but if you don't focus on you, who will? When you have allocated time to work on something that is important and urgent, don't allow yourself to be distracted by interruptions. It may be useful to let those around you know that you are working on something that is urgent and or important and that you can not be disturbed for a period of time. Fill your diary or day planner with things that are of importance to you.

Having gone through the above steps there is one thing to remember and that is that things change. The levels of urgency and importance associated with activities are bound to change. In fact some of the priorities of what is important to you may change as well. So remain flexible to these changes and address them when they occur. It is always useful to review what is important to you on a regular basis, whether it be on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Do what works for you..

If you follow the 5 steps in the program, I can assure you that you will get more control over time.