

A MATTER OF TIME

Time & Task Management



**Vermont Recreation & Parks Association
October 10, 2018**

Hi! I'm Claire.

I designed this workshop to help you work smarter, not harder.

Round of Intros

- name
- Role
- one word that describes your current relationship with TIME

Today we are going to:

- 1) Identify our unhealthy & unhelpful time habits
- 2) Explore and shift relationship to time
- 3) ID new tools and ideas to put in place to address those bad habits

WHAT THE #\$%^ IS TIME?

Mathematical description [\[edit\]](#)

The precise definition of the Equation of Time is^[20]

$$\text{EOT} = \text{GHA} - \text{GMHA}$$

The quantities occurring in this equation are

- EOT, the time difference between [apparent solar time](#) and [mean solar time](#);
- GHA, the [Greenwich Hour Angle](#) of the apparent (actual) Sun;
- GMHA = Universal Time – Offset, the [Greenwich Mean Hour Angle](#) of the mean (fictitious) Sun.

I've always been fascinated with time.

How we choose to spend it, how we're expected to spend it, how we never seem to have enough of it.

If you've seen movies like Interstellar, you know as well as I do how freaky and amazing the concept of time really is.

Take for example the equation of time. It's all based on the motion of the sun across the sky, which of course is really the Earth orbiting the sun.

The time equation is used to compare different kinds of motion – the apparent solar time, which is how quickly the sun is actually moving, and mean solar time, which is our theoretical movement of the sun with noons that are exactly 24 hours apart.

So we can think about our modern day clock and calendar is a sort of compromise, a method of marking the passage of occurrences and events in a continuing attempt to stay in sync with Earth itself.

Time might be one of our best attempts to align ourselves with the earth's natural rhythms.

In that way, it is all about movement – understanding how we move throughout the day in comparison to something that is universally experienced, which is the movement of the Earth around the sun.

Time is a universal language for movement.

It's actually quite beautiful.

WHAT THE #\$\$%^ IS TIME?

(we made it up!)

The truth of the matter is that time is something WE MADE UP.

That means that there are actually no inherent expectations of time itself.

Our experience might be that time lives in a clock in every room in our lives and is constantly watching us, slowing tsking us with every tick, judging our choices and our efficiency, but that is not real.

Time is not the boss. In fact, it is the very opposite!

AND YET it is a huge driver of a whole lot of stress and a whole lot of frustration.

What really is to blame here is not time itself, but our relationship with time.

WHAT THE #\$\$%^ IS TIME?

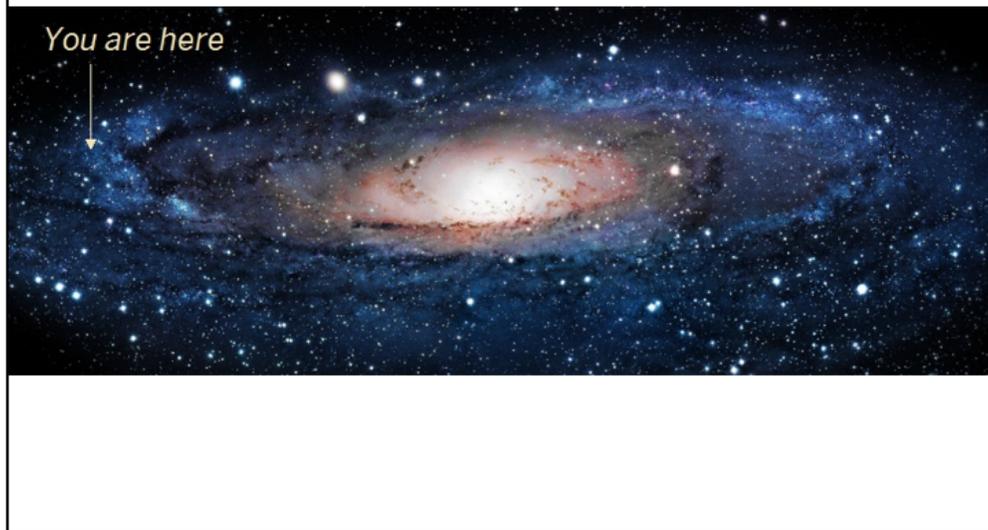


"So that's it settled then. We use GMT in the mornings and BST in the afternoons."

Chris Madden Cartoons
<http://www.chrismadden.co.uk/>

Obviously, we can't just change time. There are universal agreements about how time works. But we can change our relationship to time.

HELLO, SELF!



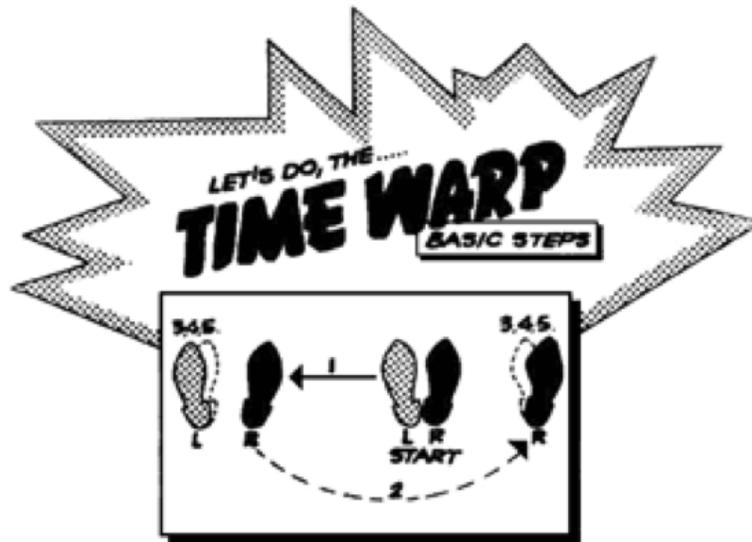
In order to change our relationship with time, we need to know about what works for YOU, why you're here and where you're going.

Often, when you hear people complaining about lack of time or too much work, or how they don't have enough time off, or how they can't wait until they retire so they can actually enjoy their lives, it isn't time or their job that is the problem.

The problem is that they have lost touch with what they want and why they are doing what they're doing.

It is easy to forget that in almost all cases, we *choose* how to spend our time.

COMMON TIME WARPS



That starts with identifying the bad habits and triggers that get you into a time warp, when everything is running behind, when the to do list is piling up.

Awareness is the first step in changing our behavior.

Knowing our triggers allow us to recognize when we need to shift our mindset to avoid falling into things like resentment, stress and overwhelm. When habits and triggers go unchecked, that's what can happen.

TIME WARPS

- When I think I am indispensable
- When I end up with no time for the most important stuff I need and want to do
- I have a hard time saying "NO"
- I feel unrelenting pressure
- I regularly work long hours
- I feel guilty leaving work on time
- My worry & problems come home with me
- Time becomes a common excuse

Here are some of the big symptoms of my bad habits...

Excuse... typically for stuff I don't want to do!

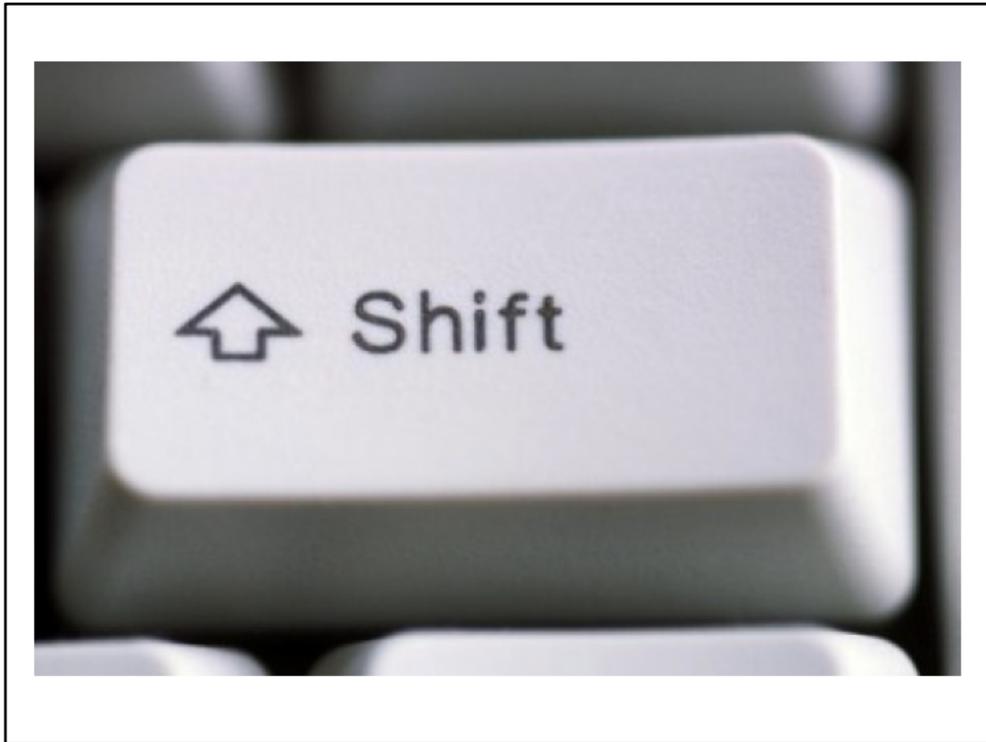
"It's only a matter of time."

"I didn't have time to do it."

"If only I had more time."

"It'll be better next time."

Are there any others? What about some of the things that came up in the inquiries?



These kinds of symptoms and habits perpetuate this notion that time is something that exists outside of us, that it lives in a clock and is concrete and limited and is working against us.

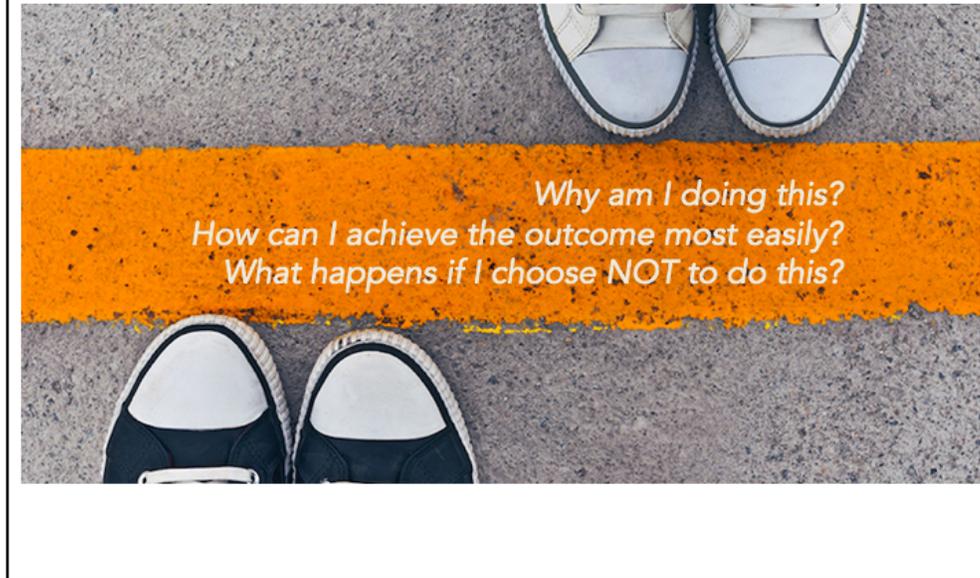
I think it's time to treat time differently.

Try this: Rather than think of time as something outside of ourselves, like some rule or mandate on what or how much we *should* be doing, think about it as what it has always been to humans, before we came up with the idea of work... time a tool for understanding how things move in relation to one another and to the earth.

Just like the earth that revolves around the sun day after day, we are given time each day to live fully, create what we envision, and do what we love.

Try to see it more about what we can accomplish rather than everything we have to accomplish. This will help you discern what to actually be doing with your time rather than feeling like you always have to do it all.

LIMITES & BOUNDARIES



For this reason, drawing boundaries is a really important and often overlooked time management tool.

A boundary is a limit defining you in relationship to someone or to something.

Boundaries can be physical and tangible or emotional and intangible.

If you find yourself stuck in a time warp, try asking yourself these 3 simple questions:

Why am I doing this?

How can I achieve the outcome most easily?

What happens if I choose NOT to do this?

Nobody else will draw our own boundaries for us. No matter what our job is, it is always our job to know our boundaries & communicate them to others.

Boundary How To:

-Know Yourself

-Communicate Clearly

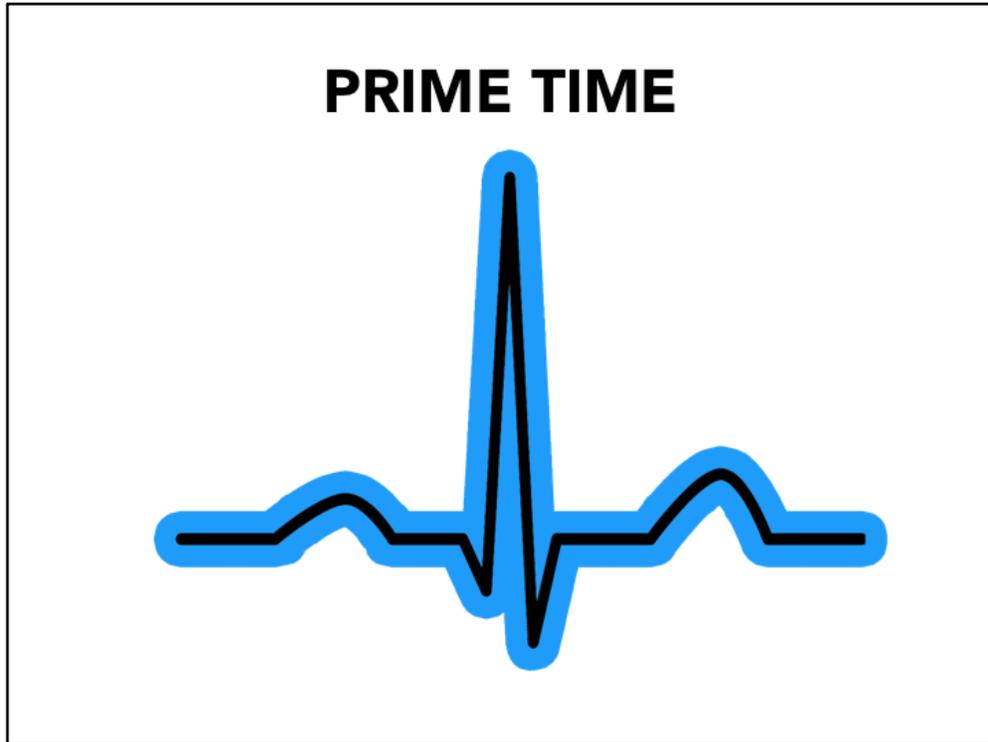
-Bring Up Violations Right Away

-Use Concrete vs. Personal Explanations

-Be Ready for Boundary Breaches

Think back to the time triggers you identified or identified with just a few minutes ago. When these are activated, chances are a boundary of yours has been crossed.

Based on that and the Prime Time exercise, try to identify 2 or 3 time boundaries that are really important to you feeling good and doing good at work.



Everyone's timetable is different. While most of us have to work within a time frame established by somebody else, it is very important to know your own rhythms and energy levels throughout the day.

Below each hour of the day, place an x in the box that best demonstrates your energy level.

Draw a line to connect the dots.

Use the 2nd graph to test your assumptions live one day next week.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

**7 days without a pun
make one weak.**

We often complain about not having enough time in the day, or that we don't know where the time goes. Well now it's time to find out!

Think about the top 3 activities missing from this list, and add them to the left column.

For each day, enter the # of hours you spend doing on each activity.

Add them up and subtract 24 to see the amount of free time you have each day.

For each activity, calculate the % of the total hours of the week to get a glimpse of how your time balances out overall.

As long as you blame others for your time management choices, you will have little opportunity to improve your life. Accept responsibility for how you spend your time, and you gain the power to direct your own life.

SHARE



Turn to your neighbor/s and share any insights about your own time and energy levels and how this could impact the way you spend your time.

Some Takeaways:

TAKE ADVANTAGE of your prime time.

Use high-energy times when you need them – tasks that require greater attention and effort.

Save routine work for lower energy periods.

Use energy boosters at low-energy times that require your attention – coffee, tea, walk outside.

THE 80/20 RULE



Who has heard of the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 Rule?

The Pareto principle is the idea that 20 percent of a person's effort will produce 80 percent of the result.

Essentially, Pareto showed that approximately 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population; Pareto developed the principle by observing that 20% of the peapods in his garden contained 80% of the peas.

For example, if your goal is \$100,000 in sales, 20 percent of your effort toward this goal will result in \$80,000 in sales.

The value of the Pareto Principle for a manager is that it reminds you to focus on the 20% that matters. 20% of your time produces 80 percent of your results. Identify and focus on those things.

Prioritize your time on tasks that produce the best overall result. Focus on what matters!

"Vital few and the Trivial many"

For instance, if you can figure out which 20% of your time produces 80% of your business' results, you can spend more time on those activities and less time on others. Likewise, by identifying the characteristics of the top 20% of your customers (who represent 80% of your sales), you can find more customers like them and dramatically grow your sales and profits.

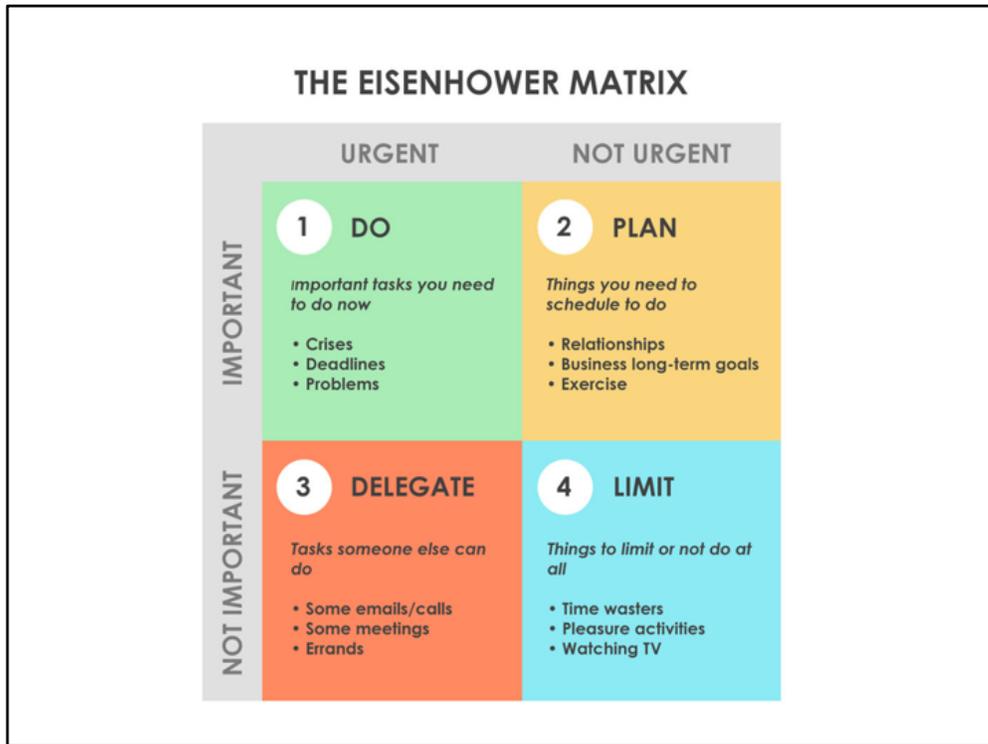
PRIORITIZE



Take 5 to 7 post it notes to write down things you know you need to do tomorrow or next week – work, personal, anything. Just things that are stressing you out.

PRIORITIZE

	<i>Urgent</i>	<i>Not Urgent</i>
<i>Important</i>	1 Is it Urgent?	2
<i>Not Important</i>	3 Is it Important?	4

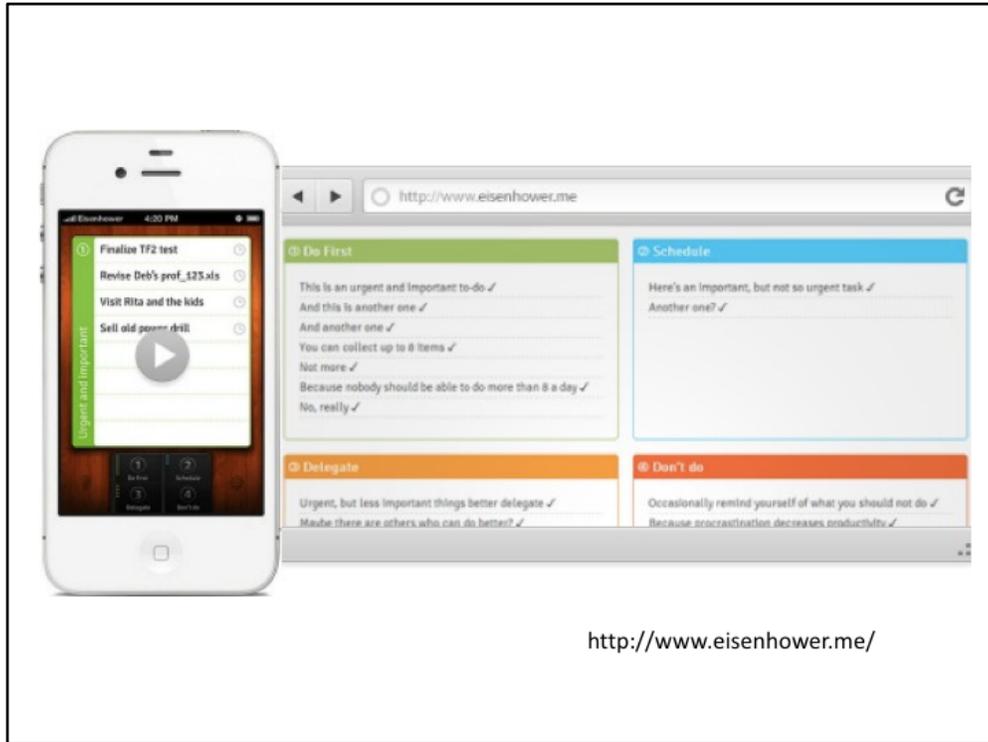


This diagram shows you what you should do with the tasks that ended up there.

Walk through each quadrant.

What kind of activities tend to fall into each quadrant and how do we tend to deal with them?

“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important”

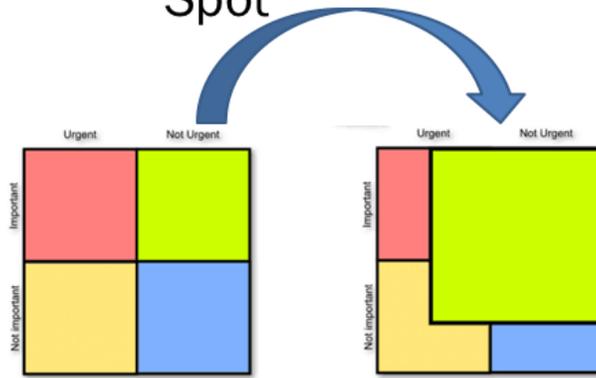


Eisenhower App

<http://www.eisenhower.me/>

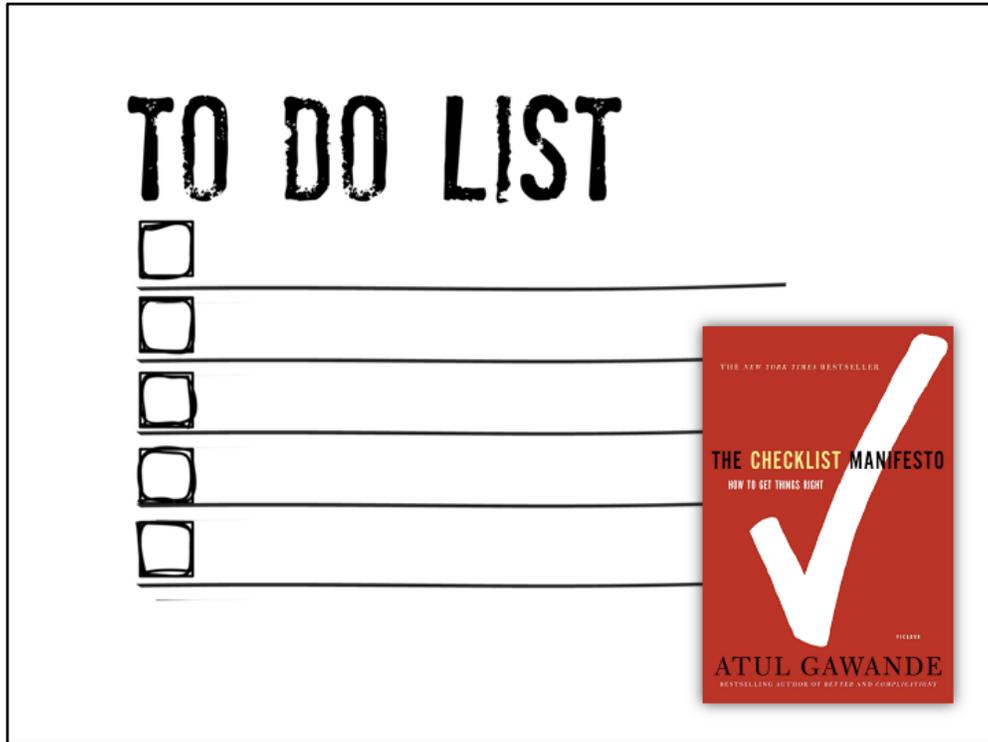
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Time Management Sweet Spot



The secret to the matrix is that quadrant 2, the Plan/Schedule quadrant, is the sweet spot. This is where you want to be, because you're spending most of your time doing important things WITHOUT being stressed out by them.

That's why we're talking about the importance of planning today – along with your own intuition and stress-management tools, planning is the number one thing you can do to reduce the amount of stress in your life.



Checklists are by far the best way to manage your tasks and time.

Only put IMPORTANT and URGENT tasks on here, rather than all of the tasks you initially came up with. That's the real value.

Errors of ignorance (mistakes we make because we don't know enough) VS errors of ineptitude (mistakes we made because we don't make proper use of what we know). Failures in the modern world are more about the 2nd.

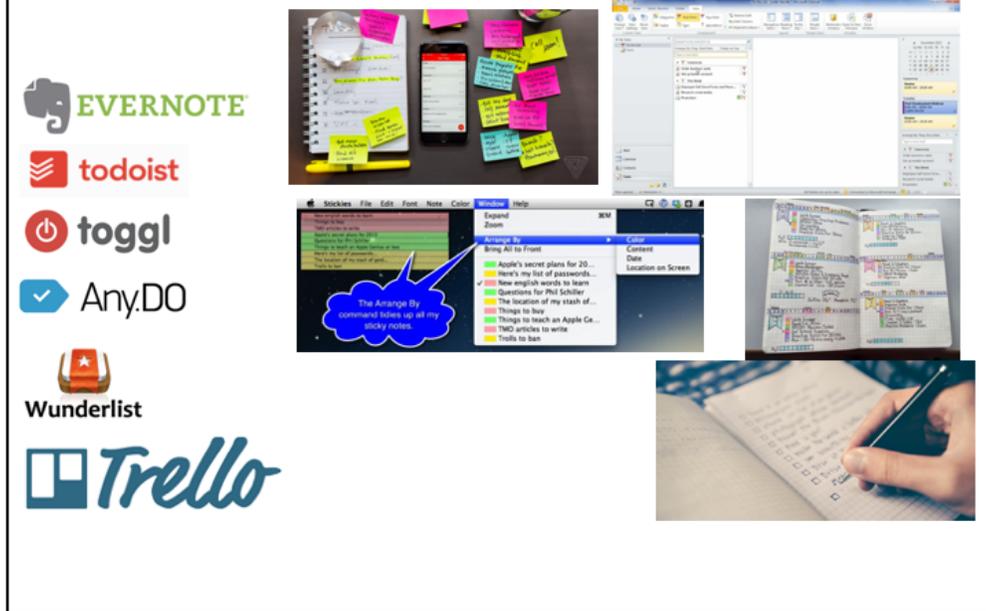
Our world is growing more and more complex, and we like to think that we'll remember it all and have it all under control, but the truth is, we don't.

Experts need checklists—literally—written guides that walk them through the key steps in any complex procedure.

Pilots use them. Surgeons use them. For a reason.

Find one that works for you.

JUST TO DO IT!



What works for you?

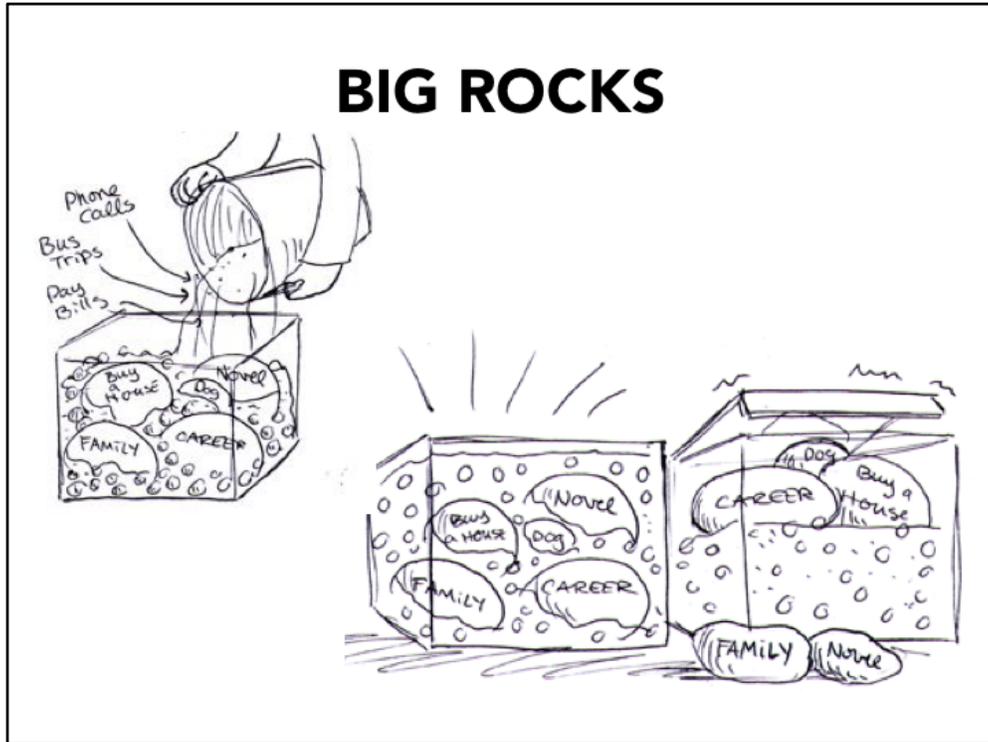
To Do List Tips:

- Tech works for tech people, otherwise written is best
- Start with action verb
- No more than 1 page
- Carry over undone tasks to new page
- Cross it off!
- Stick with one medium
- Make it something you want to look at



And now it is time for a magic trick...

BIG ROCKS



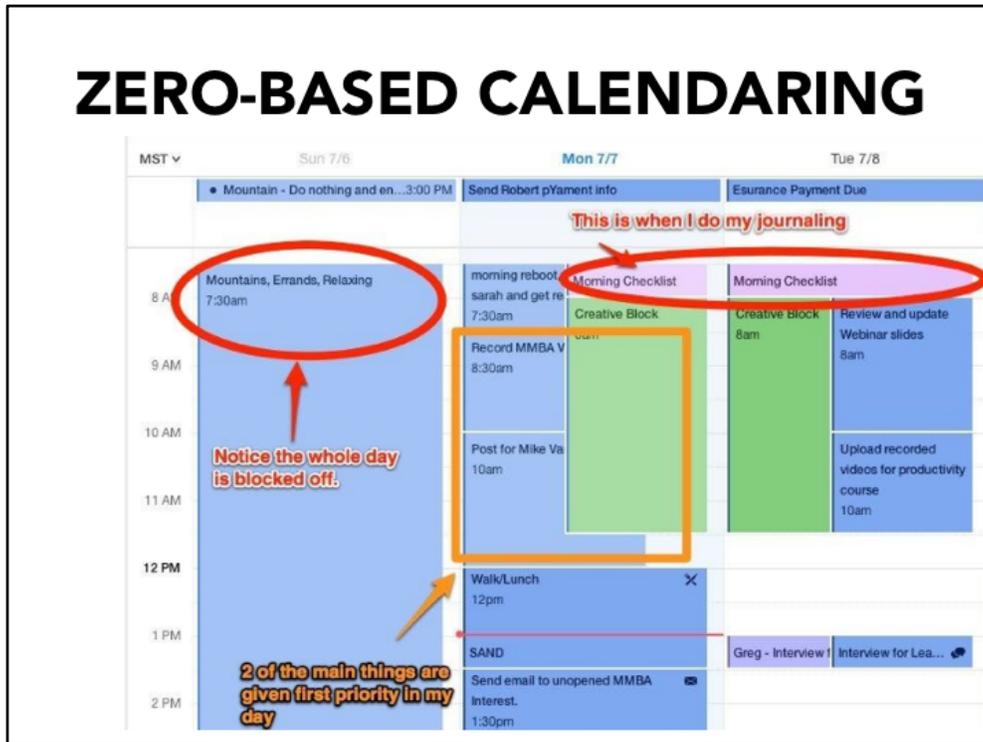
What are your big rocks? Take a moment to think about them. Write them down. Feel how they feel in your body.



Parkinson's Law

WORK **EXPANDS**
SO AS TO FILL
THE TIME AVAILABLE
FOR ITS COMPLETION

ZERO-BASED CALENDARING



- Once you have your big rocks, what do you do? Schedule them first.
- Based on the idea of 0 based budgeting, good for people who can never quite get a handle on things
- In 0 based budgeting, you never let a dollar go unaccounted for because the idea is that you'll spend it on something that isn't of value to you.
- Instead, you have a plan in the budget for every dollar of income, which includes putting any extra in savings or towards debt payments.
- You can still decide to spend \$500/month on organic produce from the coop that is a mile closer than the grocery store like SOME PEOPLE I KNOW, the key is just putting it down on paper so every dollar is accounted for.
- In 0 based calendaring, you start by putting in the Big Rocks, the things that matter most, because starting there means you can actually get to everything else. Not starting there tends to mean you never get to the important stuff.
- Part of the discipline is to only do what you've planned or put into the calendar.
- Can use apps like Timely to track what you actually do compared to what you've scheduled.
- It might look overwhelming, but it can be really helpful especially if you have a hard time getting to the stuff you actually love to do.

TOP 10 TIME MANAGEMENT HACKS

1. eat the frog
2. \$1000/hour
3. start short
4. Ms. Em Ail
5. ~~perfection~~
6. brain or no brain
7. good morning good meeting
8. step by step
9. pomodoro
10. say no (no, really)

EAT YOUR FROG

- Get 'er done. These are the urgent & important tasks.

\$1,000/HOUR

- It's your job to put value on your time and to communicate that worth to others through good judgment and choices.
- 80/20 rule... where do you focus your time?
- Good judgment comes from experience.
- Experience comes from bad judgment.

START SHORT

- Cross it off!

EMAIL ZONE

- Let others know when you're in your email zone. Put it in your signature!
- Consider implementing this organization-wide.

PERFECTION

- Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.
- Your 80% looks like 100% to everybody else.

BRAIN OR NO BRAIN

- Schedule the brainy tasks when you're at your best, and the more mundane tasks when you can be on auto-pilot.
- Use the Rhythm exercise here!

MEETINGS FIRST

- It can be hard to focus and be productive leading up to bigger commitments.

STEP BY STEP

- Don't let the bigness of something keep you from making a plan.

POMODORO

- Know and anticipate your distractions. Expect Interruptions.
- Write them down. Then plan on doing them in between set tasks & timeframes.
- The idea is that you'll be more productive in the work time and get to full be distracted in the down time, rather than a constant mix of both.
- Never schedule 8 hours into your day. Schedule 4 to 5.
- Frequent breaks improve mental agility.

SAY NO

- Especially to non-essential tasks.
- Delegate if somebody can do it at least 80% as well as you can.
- Practice on friends! Then tell them you're just kidding.

THANK YOU!

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