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Manage your Time Mastery

Start at the beginning of each day – or better – the end of the previous day – set your priorities. If you find yourself competing between many priorities, try using the Important Urgent grid.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	DO Now Urgent and Important	PLAN Important but not urgent
Not Important	DELGATE Urgent but not important	DELETE Not Important and not urgent

Understand that Urgent and Important are not the same thing!. Urgent things have a close deadline. Important things may be longer term but globally help you get where you want to go.

Aim to spend 60% to 80% on NON-URGENT YET IMPORTANT tasks.

What do you do with all those urgent tasks?



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- Ask yourself if the situation is as urgent as the other person believes?' If a house is burning or lives are at risk, then Yes it is!. But most other so-called 'urgent' tasks can probably wait until you have a moment to deal with them. Respect yourself and your own time more!
- Block together similar tasks - so that means answering your email two or three times a day instead of immediately they come in.
- Train people how you want to be treated. If urgent means by the end of the day, do it by the end of the day. Do not jump in and do it right away. If you do that, you are educating people that their needs are more important than yours. You will probably get more last-minute requests! Do the tasks in the due time, usually no need to do it before.
- If an urgent request comes in from your boss or a senior manager, you may choose to drop everything and just take care of it. You may also choose to tell them what you had to put down in order to deal with their last-minute request. Then they would know the impact their request has on your work.
- If you often get urgent last-minute tasks, plan for them! Schedule time into your day so that you are prepared for them when they happen
- Keep track of the urgent tasks that come up. See if you can plan for them going forward so that they come up less and less in the future
- If a task is urgent but not important, see if you can delegate it. If not block it together with other similar tasks



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If a task is neither important nor urgent, push back. Check if it is in alignment with your role. Learn to say 'NO' to these things and tell the person why you are saying NO

The [Urgent and Important Matrix](#) may help with this

At the beginning of the day, you set your intentions and you map out your time. Great!

Now, at the end of the day, before you plan your next day, reflect on how it went. This part is essential to see what is really going on! It will help you understand yourself better. Then you can identify what you need to do differently in future.

Reflect both on situations that went well and on situations that did not that go so well. This is important so that you get a sense of balance.

You can learn from and build on what is working well so that you can improve things that are not going so well. Even if a lot of things are not going to plan it is important to find the things that are going well. There is something to learn from them, even if those things appear small or insignificant.

It is also important to reflect on positive and negative situations in a balanced way. Have at least as many things that worked well as things that didn't, so that the balance of your focus is on the positive. This is necessary in order to overcome the brain's natural tendency to focus on the negative <https://positivepsychology.com/3-steps-negativity-bias>



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The invitation is that you reflect on how you manage your time and how well you did, at least 3 – 5 times per week. Set yourself a goal that feels achievable and aim to reach it at least 50 -80 % of the time. If you set the bar too high, you may not reach it and then you risk feeling despondent or giving up altogether. It is much more effective to set a lesser goal that you can achieve and then work towards increasing it.

Here is the self-reflection exercise. Spend 5 – 10 min on it , at least 3 – 5 times per week

What went well?

Identify and write down 3 things that went well today in terms of how well you managed your time.

1. What helped you, that this went well?
2. What was the impact of managing your time well in this situation?
3. What could you do tomorrow to enable more of these good things?
4. How could you apply this knowledge to other situations?

What didn't go so well?

Write down up to Three things that didn't go so well today in terms of how you managed your time.



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1. What was the impact of you not managing your time well?
2. What was difficult or challenging about this situation?
3. What helped you – or could help you in the future?
4. What can you do differently next time that type of situation occurs

Some Examples from clients

(All examples are composites made from real-life situations with clients)

What went well

Situation: Being On Time

“I had planned out my day and I wanted to focus on this project I’m working on. I gave myself two blocks of half an hour each to deal with urgent emails. Half an hour wasn’t quite long enough, so I had to continue a bit longer. But I had set a timer. That helped me to focus on how I used that time. I realized that a couple of the emails need longer answers but are not urgent. In the past, I would have answered right away. Now, I have planned to look at them later in the week. The timer really helped me, and also turning off my notifications when I was working on my project. I had it clear what I needed to do. I had gone upstairs where no-one could interrupt me. I also took a break in the middle of the day – which helped me to have a clean start in the afternoon. I did leave work about 15 mins later than planned but in the past, it was much later.

Situation: Meeting a deadline



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“I wanted to work on a project but I have been postponing it a lot. - I realised I work better in a busy environment, so I went down to a local café where there was a lot going on. It might be surprising but it forced me to pay attention to my work and I got loads done. I want to do more work at the café when I can. I was much less distracted than when I am trying to work from home like usual”

What didn't go well

Situation: Not having enough time to do things

“ I had a deadline for my project, but I kept getting pinged by my colleague who needed my urgent attention. So I was working on my project and I stopped at least 5 times to answer an email and reply to urgent requests. It was really hard and I didn't get anything done. Now I will need to work later this evening, That wasn't what I had planned and I had hoped to get to my Pilates class tonight. I am disappointed with myself. It was hard for me because of all the interruptions. Next time I could turn off my notifications so that I don't get disturbed so much. Tomorrow I am going to block some time again, but this time I will turn off my notifications. I can check them halfway through my focus time. I also think I need to book a later Pilates class – then I stand a better chance of getting there”

Situation: Demand from a client

“There was a crisis with one of my clients, I happened to see the message as I was leaving for the day. Initially, I thought I could fix it quickly, so I decided to give it a go. I did have a dinner to go to, but my friends are



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flexible. I knew if I was late, it wouldn't be a big deal. Then I just got stuck on solving the problem. It took about 2 hours. I totally lost track of time. I felt really bad about the dinner, but my friends are understanding, even though I missed it. I didn't want to turn up for dessert and I was pretty tired by then anyway. I think another time I would still try and solve the problem because it was an important client. Next time I would set a timer so if it was going to take longer than half an hour I would come back to them in the morning. Even though they are in a different time zone they do know that it's evening here. They know I am not supposed to be working all the time! I think I would also ask my friends to call me as in this case, it would help me to know that they are waiting for me. It would actually be easier for me if they were a bit less understanding in this case!"

Now it's your turn!

Use the following pages for your reflections



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Time Management Reflection Journal

Day 1

What went well

Situation 1

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4. How could you apply this knowledge to other situations?



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Day 5

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