



Modern Whig Party of America
Whig Academy
Leadership Course

Lesson 2:

Personal Time Management

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Introduction

Welcome to the lesson Time Management. Time management is an important skill that everyone can benefit from. Most of us have a basic idea of how to manage our time, but we could all improve in this area. Without proper planning it is easy for our responsibilities to pile up and overwhelm us.

In this Lesson

This lesson explains time management, time wasters and time savers, Covey's Four Quadrants Matrix, and the basics of a time management plan.

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Assess personal time management skills.
- Identify time wasters and savers.
- Prioritize activities using a time management tool.

Time Management

What do you think are some of our most precious resources?

Some people say time is a precious resource. Do you agree?

Although we think of time as a precious resource, do we agree that at times there seems to be a shortage of it?

It is the one thing which we never seem to have enough, and yet we all have the same exact 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week. Very often you reach the end of your day or even week and find that all those things that you wanted to accomplish are not checked off your list.

We all know time that has slipped away can never be regained. To make the most of this resource, you must learn to manage it. This requires making decisions about what is important, making a plan on how to accomplish what is important, and then sticking to it.

Time Savers and Wasters

Time is a major factor in accomplishing any task or activity. There are many things that keep us from completing those tasks or activities, and we call these time wasters. These things can be distracters, but not necessarily unpleasant. Examples could be an unexpected phone call or being distracted by the television.

Time savers can balance the time wasters in your life. An example of a time saver would be using an answering machine to handle the unexpected phone calls.

Time Savers and Wasters

How can you use the time savers to help you accomplish your tasks? You can plan the time savers into your day by setting your priorities daily and being aware of things that come up while

working on a task. Decide if the time saver will help you accomplish your task or will it distract you from completing your task.

Being aware of the time wasters in your day and how using time savers can help you use your time more efficiently is a step toward managing your time. While you cannot remove all the time wasters in your life, you can categorize all your tasks into categories, which can help you identify what things are most important to you.

Covey's Four Quadrants Matrix

In order to distinguish a time waster from what is truly important, you may need to categorize your tasks.

Steve Covey gives us a tool that breaks tasks down into four quadrants:

Urgent and Important (Quadrant I)

Important but Not Urgent (Quadrant II)

Urgent but Not Important (Quadrant III)

Not Urgent and Not Important (Quadrant IV)

Let's look at each of these categories more closely. Thinking all tasks are urgent is just an ineffective method of managing your time as not doing the tasks at all. Learning to decide what is important to accomplish and the priority it has in your day can lead you to effectively managing the time you have.

Covey's Four Quadrants Matrix

Click on each quadrant for a detailed description.

Quadrant I

Items that you would place in Quadrant I would be considered both important and urgent. They require immediate attention, such as emergencies or problems. Everyone will have items that fall into Quadrant I; however, you don't want to continuously categorize everything into this quadrant. As long as your focus is in Quadrant I, it will keep getting bigger and bigger until it eventually overwhelms you. The result of this causes stress, even burnout. In this quadrant you spend your time reacting to things that are urgent, assuming they are important, as you are not prepared for them.

Quadrant II

Quadrant II contains items that are important, but not urgent. This is the quadrant you want to spend the majority of your time. These are the things you need to do but rarely get around to. By managing activities in this quadrant, you will have vision, keep things in perspective and balanced, be disciplined and in control, and face few crises. Here you plan, prepare, anticipate and prevent problems. Quadrant II activities have a positive effect on your life.

Quadrant III

Quadrant III is urgent but not important. These are interruptions, some mail, some meetings, pressing matters, and popular activities. Here you will spend a lot of time meeting other people's priorities and expectations, thinking you are in Quadrant I.

Quadrant IV

Quadrant IV is not important or urgent. It could be called the Quadrant of Waste. Time wasters could include endless TV, gossiping around the water fountain, etc. Although at times, these activities may seem to be enjoyable, they are really not recreational, but rather they could be seen as “mind wasters.”

Exercise: Covey’s Four Quadrants Matrix

Drag each activity into the correct Quadrant

- Crisis
- Prevention
- Interruptions
- Trivia
- Pleasant activities
- Recreation
- Deadline-driven projects
- Pressing Problems
- Relationship building
- Busy Work
- Some calls/meetings
- Pressing matters
- Time Wasters

Important

Not
Important

I Activities:	II Activities:
III Activities:	IV Activities:

Answers:

I Activities: Crisis Pressing Problems Deadline-driven projects	II Activities: Prevention Relationship building Recreation
III Activities: Interruptions Some calls/ meetings Pressing matters	IV Activities: Trivia Busy work Pleasant activities

Covey's Four Quadrants Matrix

Looking at these quadrants, what does this tell you about why we often don't seem to accomplish those things that we think are important? Possible reasons would be that we often put out fires and try to categorize everything that happens unexpectedly as 'urgent.'

One way to help you work more efficiently would be to focus on activities from Quadrant II such as planning and preparing.

Other ways to work more efficiently include:

- Using a list to prioritize all activities of the day.
- Making a plan of things that must be done and things that can wait.
- As new activities come up, deciding what category they really fall into and react accordingly.

This will keep you from unnecessarily reacting to others, always wasting your time or reacting to problems as 'always urgent'. Focus on time savers and don't get caught up in the time wasters.

Time Management

Whatever method of time management you use, if you do not follow it, it will not work. Although there will be events in your life that are urgent and not in your control, most of your daily tasks will not become urgent if you follow a time management plan you have previously set up and did not wait until the last minute to develop.

Time Management Plan

A simple Time Management Plan provides you with a way to ensure all of your tasks are organized and completed in the appropriate order. Let's review:

- Get started – This is one of the all time classic time wasters. Often, as much time is wasted avoiding a project as actually completing the project.
- Get into a routine – Mindless routine may curb your creativity, but when used properly, it can release time and energy. Choose a time to get certain tasks accomplished, such as answering email, working on a project, or completing paperwork, then stick to it every day. Use a planning tool to plan your time.

Time Management Plan

- Do not say yes to too many things – Saying yes can lead to unexpected treasures, but the mistake you often make is to say yes to too many things. This causes you to live to the priorities of others rather than according to your own. Every time you agree to do something else, another thing will not get done. Learn to say "No".

- Do not commit to unimportant activities, no matter how far ahead they are – Even if a commitment is a year ahead, it is still a commitment. Often you agree to do something far ahead when you would not normally do so if it was in the near future. No matter how far ahead it is, it will still take the same amount of your time.

Time Management Plan

- Divide large tasks – Large tasks should be broken up in to a series of small tasks. By making small manageable tasks, you will eventually accomplish the large task. Also, by using a small piece approach, you will be able to fit these small tasks into your hectic schedule.
- Do not put unneeded effort into a project – There is a place for perfectionism. For most activities, there comes a stage when there is not much to be gained from putting extra effort into it. Save perfectionism for the tasks that need it.
- Deal with it for once and for all – You may often start a task, think about it, and then lay it aside. You will repeat this process over and over. Either deal with the task right away or decide when to deal with it and put it aside until that time.

Time Management Plan

- Set start and stop times – When arranging start times, also arrange stop times. This will call for some estimating, but your estimates will improve with practice. This will allow you to better schedule activities.
- Plan your activities – Schedule a regular time to plan your activities. If time management is important to you, then allow the time to plan it wisely.

If you don't manage what you have, more time will not allow you to manage it better. As someone once said, "No one has enough time, but everyone has all there is."

Review Exercises

1. Which quadrant would 'Crisis' fall under?
 - a. Q1
 - b. Q2
 - c. Q3
 - d. Q4
2. Which quadrant would 'Busy Work' fall under?
 - a. Q1

- b. Q2
- c. Q3
- d. Q4

3. Which quadrant would 'Pressing Problems' fall under?

- a. Q1
- b. Q2
- c. Q3
- d. Q4

4. Which quadrant would 'Interruptions' fall under?

- a. Q1
- b. Q2
- c. Q3
- d. Q4

5. Which quadrant would 'Pleasant Activities' fall under?

- a. Q1
- b. Q2
- c. Q3
- d. Q4

Summary

Congratulations! This completes the lesson Personal Time Management. In this lesson you learned about time management, time wasters and time savers, Covey's Four Quadrants Matrix, and the basics of a time management plan.

You should now be able to:

- Assess personal time management skills.
- Identify time wasters and savers.
- Prioritize activities using a time management tool.

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