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Chapter 1

Time Management



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SCENARIO

Robyn has known for three weeks that her English paper is due on Monday, but she hasn't started it yet. She had planned to catch up by spending the whole weekend writing her paper. Then she was invited to the football game and the dance afterward on Friday night. "Oh well, I still have all day Saturday and Sunday to finish my paper," she thought. So she went to the game. An invitation to lunch with friends on Saturday cut into most of the day. Then a date to the movies that night was more than she could resist. Now, it is Sunday, and Robyn is overwhelmed by her assignment. She knows that there is no way that she can complete it by Monday.

Looking for sympathy, Robyn calls her friend, Stacy.

Robyn: Stacy, what are you going to do about your English paper? I haven't even started yet!

Stacy: Oh, I finished mine.

Robyn: When did you write it? You went to the football game and the dance on Friday, and you went out to lunch and to the movies on Saturday just like I did.

Stacy: I started it three weeks ago and spent a couple of hours each week working on it. I finished it on Thursday.

Robyn: I wish I had done that. I'll probably be up all night, and I still may not finish!

Which student do you identify with? What did Stacy do that Robyn failed to do? You're right if you said that Stacy *planned* ahead. Stacy *managed her time*.

STIMULUS QUESTIONS

1. Do you often feel that there are not enough hours in the day to do all that you need or want to do? Describe what happens when you feel this way.

2. Are you frequently hurrying and scurrying to catch up? To arrive on time? To finish an assignment? What could you do to avoid hurrying to catch up?

3. Do you procrastinate? That is, do you put off doing certain tasks until later only to find that later there isn't enough time to complete the task? Do you hear yourself say things like, "I'll do it tomorrow," or "I've waited this long, one more day won't make any difference?" Tell about the last time you procrastinated and what happened as a result.

4. Think about and write down 3 things that you have been putting off—at school, at home, or at work.

■ _____

■ _____

■ _____

5. Read over your list of 3 items. Could the delayed completion of these tasks have a harmful effect on you? Tell what you think may happen as a result of your procrastination on each of the 3 items you wrote down.

■ _____

■ _____

■ _____

Look back over your responses to the stimulus questions. What conclusions can you draw about how you use your time? If you are not satisfied with how you spend your time, you are ready to learn the techniques for time management offered in this chapter.

LEARNING ABOUT TIME MANAGEMENT

What is Time Management?

Time Management is planning and monitoring the best way to spend your time so that your intended use of time matches your actual use of time. By following a plan for time management, you will be able to organize your tasks so that the most important ones get done on time. Through time management, you will be able to use time to your advantage; that is, you will avoid wasting time which will allow you to complete the things you must do and still have time for the things you want to do.

Why is Time Management Important?

Time Management is important because it helps you to focus on the things that need to be done and to schedule enough time to do them. By managing your time, you can work toward your goals and have time for both work and play. By learning how to manage your time, you can avoid wasting time. You can also reduce stress because you have time to do all of the things you need and want to do. By following a time management plan, you can resist the temptation to put off until later those important things which must be done today.

How to Do Time Management?

The basic rule of time management is to know what you have to do and plan enough time to do it. Before you can begin to manage your time, you need to decide what your priorities are. In other words, what is most important to you in your life at this time? After you identify your priorities, consider what it is that you hope to do in the near future. Is your goal to go to college, or do you plan to go to work after you complete high school? What are your needs? What do you need to do or to have to feel successful? By observing how you actually spend your time on a day-to-day basis, you can discover whether or not you are using your time in a way that will help you to reach your goals and fulfill your needs.

The following exercises are designed to teach you ways to manage yourself and your tasks so that you can use your time wisely. You will learn how to use a daily "To Do" list and a "Weekly Schedule" to set priorities, to avoid procrastination, to make time for school, homework and study, church and family, part-time work, after-school activities, and free time to use as you please.

EXERCISES

TM-1. Using the Daily “To Do” List

Without a doubt, one of the most useful time management tools is the simple “To Do” list. By making a “To Do” list for each day, you are creating a daily time plan to help you keep track of your time and your tasks.

Fill-out the “Things To Do Today” form (or, use a piece of notebook paper, a small memo pad, or a calendar). Be sure to list all of the things you need and want to do today. For example, an assignment that is due tomorrow must be done today, but a shopping trip could wait until another time. Completing the assignment is a higher priority (more important) than shopping.

THINGS TO DO TODAY	COMPLETED
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

TM-2. Ranking Your Tasks According to Priority

Go back over your list and place a number 1 to the left of your top priority tasks—those that *must* be done *today*. Then, go over your list again, and put a number 2 to the left of those things which *should* be done today, but which could be done tomorrow if you run out of time today. You are now ready to begin to follow your list. To get the most out of your day, complete the number 1 priority items first, then the number 2 items. Things that you cannot finish today can be carried over to tomorrow’s list. Keep in mind that what may have been a number 2 priority today may be a number 1 tomorrow.

Just as smart business people think ahead and plan their “To Do” list the night before, you should find a few minutes each night to write out your “To Do” list

for the next day. To keep what you need to accomplish fresh in your mind, review your list in the morning, perhaps as you eat breakfast. You, like a business person, can make the best use of your day by managing your time and your tasks and deciding your priorities.

TM-3. Deciding Your Priorities

Before you are ready to use a weekly time plan, you need to decide your priorities and evaluate your study needs. What do you really want: To prepare yourself for the current job market? To prepare for college? To make money? Or to have more play and leisure time?

You may be confusing yourself if your *intended time* does not match your *actual time*. *Intended time* is based on your goals, ambitions, or dreams. For example, you may intend to have a job in the future that provides you a style of living that requires much money. Your *actual time* spent is the time and energy you are actually spending right now to accomplish your intended dreams or goals.

1. Assess your intentions or goals Identify what is most important in your life at this time by numbering in order of importance (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) the activities in which you should be participating.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for college by studying	<input type="checkbox"/> Church activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Work/Money
<input type="checkbox"/> Family activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure (play, TV, dating, Internet, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. Assess your actual time Look at the same list and number the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) according to the actual time you spend on each item. BE HONEST. For example, if you spend the most time on sports, label it #1.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for college by studying	<input type="checkbox"/> Church activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Money
<input type="checkbox"/> Family activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure (play, TV, dating, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Surfing the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other