



Building a Better Life – Concrete Steps for Success

JOEL K. OPPENHEIMER, PE

January 28, 2010

How Are You Doing?



- Great! Terrific!
- Good.
- I will get by.
- Hanging in there.
- I would be doing much better if I did not have to sit here and listen to this talk.
- Not bad. At least I do not have to work today.
- Not bad. The weekend is not too far away.
- OK. I'll survive.

Great Day – Element 1 - Attitude



- Starts with your thinking
- Being Proactive
- Being Positive
- Being Responsible

Great Day – Element 1



- Change Your Thinking – Change Your Life (Brian Tracy)
- “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”
- “Checkup, from the Neck Up.”
(Zig Ziglar)

What Do You Want?



What is success?

What makes a great day?

What makes a great life?

Six Requirements for Success



- Peace of Mind
- Health / Energy
- Loving Relationships
- Financial Freedom
- Worthy Goals & Ideas
- Personal Fulfillment

Great Day – Element 2 - Goals



- Written Goals
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Annual
 - Lifetime

Great Day – Element 3 – Managing Time



How Much Free Time? Week = 168 hrs.

- Sleep = 8 hrs. / day = 56 hrs. per week
- Work = 40 hrs. / week
- Commute = 10 hrs. / week
- Wake up, dress, prepare for bed = 14 hrs.
- Meals / food shopping = 3hrs. / day=21 hrs.

27 Discretionary Hours per week!

Three Elements for a Great Day



- Attitude
 - Proactive
 - Positive
 - Responsible
- Know Where You Want to Go - Goals
- Using Time Effectively – Time Management

Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People



Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

	Interdependence
Public Victory	Habit 6: Synergize
	Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood
	Habit 4: Think Win / Win
	Independence
Private Victory	Habit 3: Put First Things First
	Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind
	Habit 1: Be Proactive
	Dependence

Building a Better Life – Concrete Steps for Success

Part 1

Attitude

Habits



- Good habits are hard to form but easy to live with.
- Bad habits are easy to form but hard to live with.
- Law of Habit: “Any thought or action that you repeat over and over will eventually become a new habit.”

Proactive Versus Reactive



PROACTIVE

- I can
- I choose
- I can
- I will
- I will
- I am responsible
- It was my fault
- I control my future
- Let's solve it
- I will find a solution

REACTIVE

- I can't
- I have to
- I wish or I hope
- I'll try
- I should
- He is to blame
- It was their fault
- He controls my future
- Life is full of problems
- It will never work

Attitude Formula



$$E \times R = O$$

Event x Response = Outcome

Attitude, Proactive, Positive



“If it is to be, it is up to me.”

Brian Tracy

Law of Cause and Effect



- Everything happens for a reason; for every effect, there is a specific cause.
- Thoughts are causes, conditions are effects.
- Sowing and Reaping
- “If you keep doing what you have been doing, you will keep getting what you have been getting.”
- Old Texas saying: “If all you ever do is all you've ever done, then all you'll ever get is all you ever got.”
- To change your life, change your thoughts.

Law of Cause and Effect

- Sign in a feed store:

*If you don't like the crop you
are reaping,
Check the seed you are sowing.*

John Maxwell

Law of Cause and Effect



“Our achievements of today are but the sum total
of our thoughts of yesterday.
You are today where the thoughts of yesterday
have brought you
and you will be tomorrow where the thoughts of
today take you.”

Blaise Pascal

(French Mathematician, Philosopher and Physicist, 1623-1662)

Law of Attraction



- Living magnet attracting people, situations and circumstances that harmonize with our dominant thoughts.
- “Birds of a feather, flock together.”
- “If you want to soar like an eagle, don’t hang with the turkeys.” [Zig Ziglar]
- “The Secret” by Rhonda Byrne

Law of Attraction



- Negative vibration words:
 - Don't
 - Not
 - No
- Instead, What do I want?

Law of Substitution



- Since your mind can only focus on one thought at a time, we can substitute a positive thought for a negative one.

Universal Laws of Success



- Law of Control
- Law of Cause and Effect (Sowing/Reaping)
- Law of Belief
- Law of Expectation
- Law of Attraction
- Law of Concentration
- Law of Substitution
- Law of Correspondence

Responsibility



- Forgive

“Resentment is like drinking poison
and then hoping it will kill your enemies.”

Nelson Mandela

Responsibility



- Forgive
- Take Control

“Never let yesterday use up today.”

Richard H. Nelson

Building a Better Life – Concrete Steps for Success

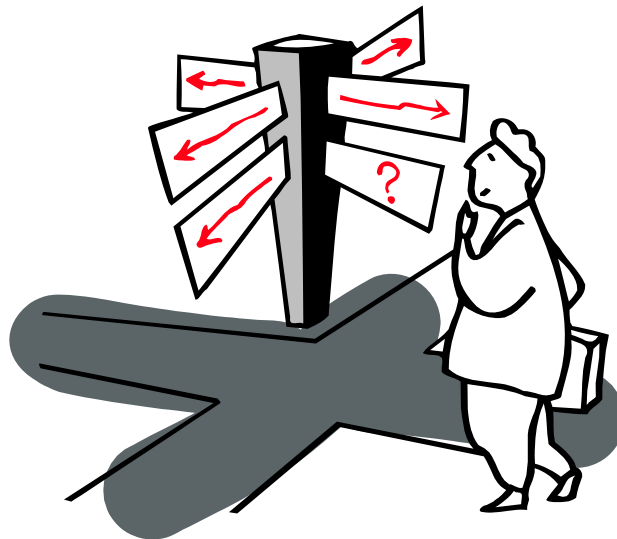


Part 2

Goal Setting

1st Step – Setting Goals

“If you do not know where you are going, all roads will get you there.”



1st Step – Setting Goals



“If you don’t have goals for yourself,
you are doomed forever to work to
achieve the goals of others.”

Brian Tracy

“Goal setting
is the
master skill of success.”

Brian Tracy

Reasons to Set Goals



- Set direction
- To grow (in the right direction, consciously)
- To be aware of what one wants and then to set about doing it
- Measure accomplishments

Reasons People Do Not Set Goals



- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
 - Others won't like me, ridicule, feel guilty
- Avoids risking, avoids change
- Now what
- Low self-esteem (not worthy)
- I don't have the time
- Logic (Left Brain) – It feels silly
- Not sold on value
- Do not know how

S.M.A.R.T. Goals



S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Action-Oriented

R = Realistic

T = Timing

Principles of Goal Setting



1. “Dream big dreams”

“The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

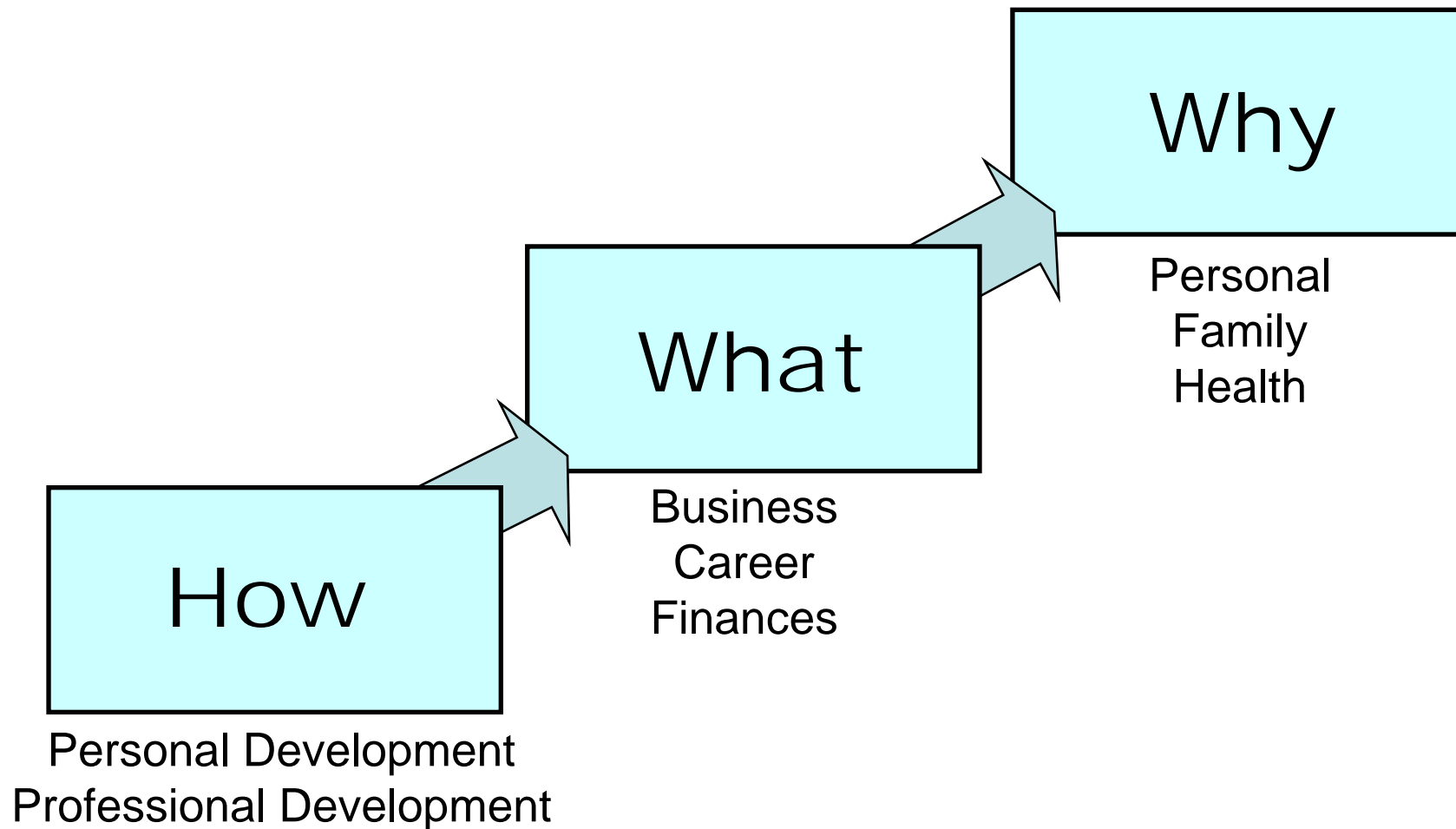
Michelangelo

Principles of Goal Setting



1. “Dream big dreams”
2. Goals must be written in present tense, personal, positive, visual, emotional (reticular activating system)
3. Goals must be balanced
 - What – Business, Career, Financial
 - Why – Personal, Family, Health
 - How –Professional & Personal Development

Balanced Goals



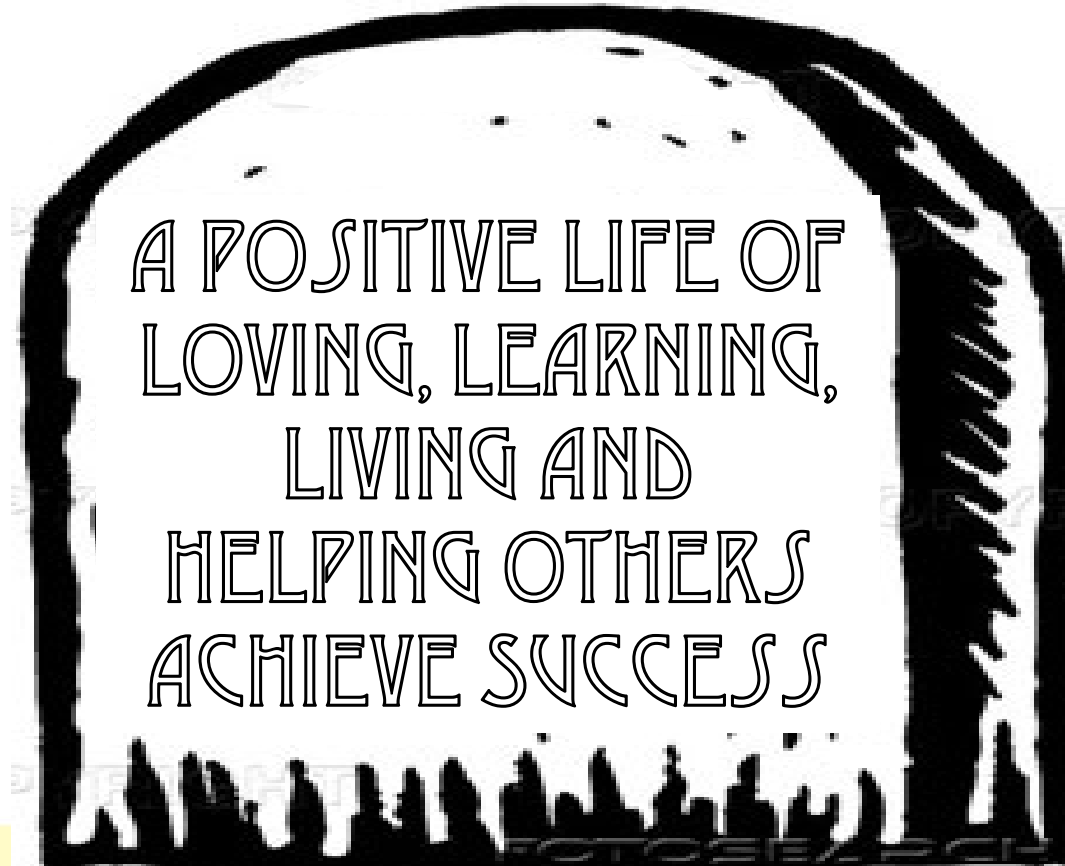
Principles of Goal Setting



1. “Dream big dreams”
2. Goals must be written in present tense, personal, positive, visual, emotional (reticular activating system)
3. Goals must be balanced
 - What – Business, Career, Financial
 - Why – Personal, Family, Health
 - How –Professional & Personal Development
4. Major definite purpose
5. Plan of Action to accomplish goals

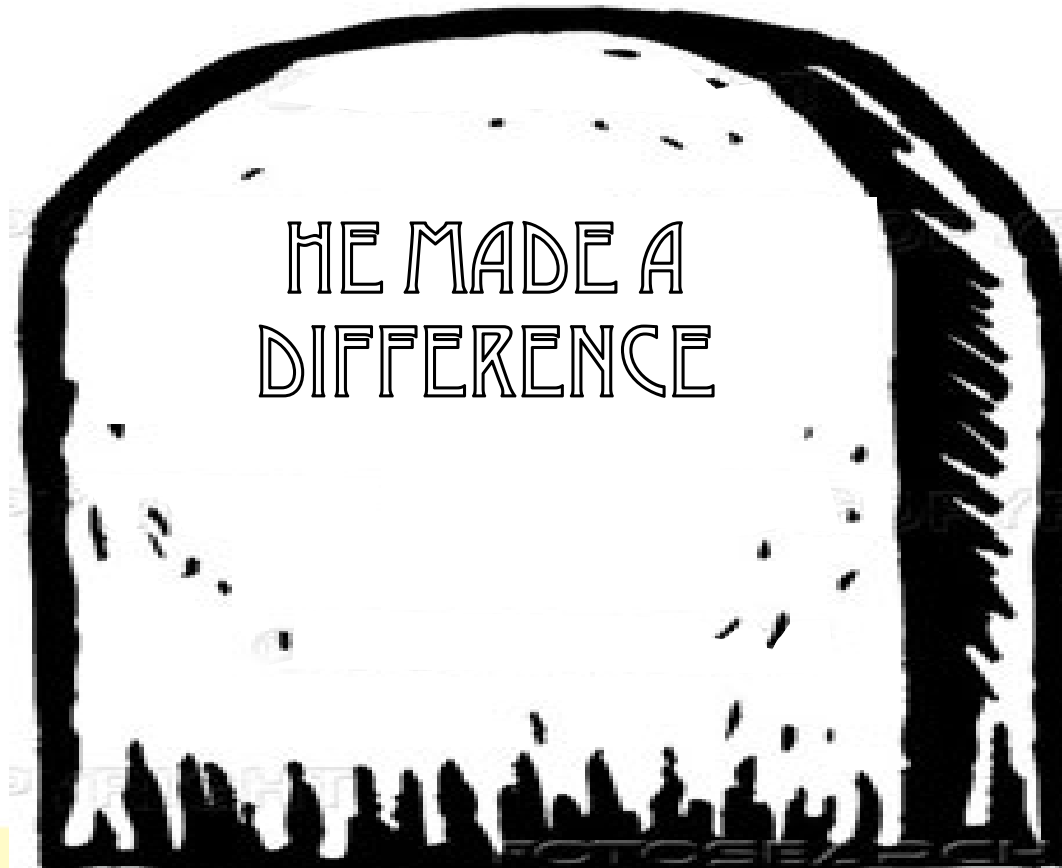
Major Definite Purpose

- In 30 secs., list 3 most important goals right now
- Eulogy / Life Story / Epitaph



Major Definite Purpose

- In 30 secs., list 3 most important goals right now
- Eulogy / Life Story / Epitaph



Major Definite Purpose



- In 30 secs., list 3 most important goals right now
- Eulogy / Life Story / Epitaph
- What 5 things you value most in life
- What if you won \$10 million
- 6 Months to live
- Always wanted to do but afraid to try
- In your life, what gave you greatest satisfaction
- Granted 1 wish
- 1 Great thing if you could not fail

Goal Attainment



“A goal properly set
is halfway achieved.”

“A goal without a deadline
is just a dream.”

Building a Better Life – Concrete Steps for Success

Part 3

Time Management

Goals Set Priorities



- With Priorities Set...
- What is the most valuable use of my time right now?

High Priority Task



- High future impacts to your goals
- Important future consequences

Low Priority Task



- Little or no impact to your goals
- Little or no future impacts

Why Time Management



Stephen Covey asks:

“How many people on their death beds wish they had spent more time at the office?”

Ben Franklin's Simple Definition



“Time is the stuff life is made of.”

Time Management

We are all busy but...
Are we productive?



Time Management



“You run the day or it runs you.”

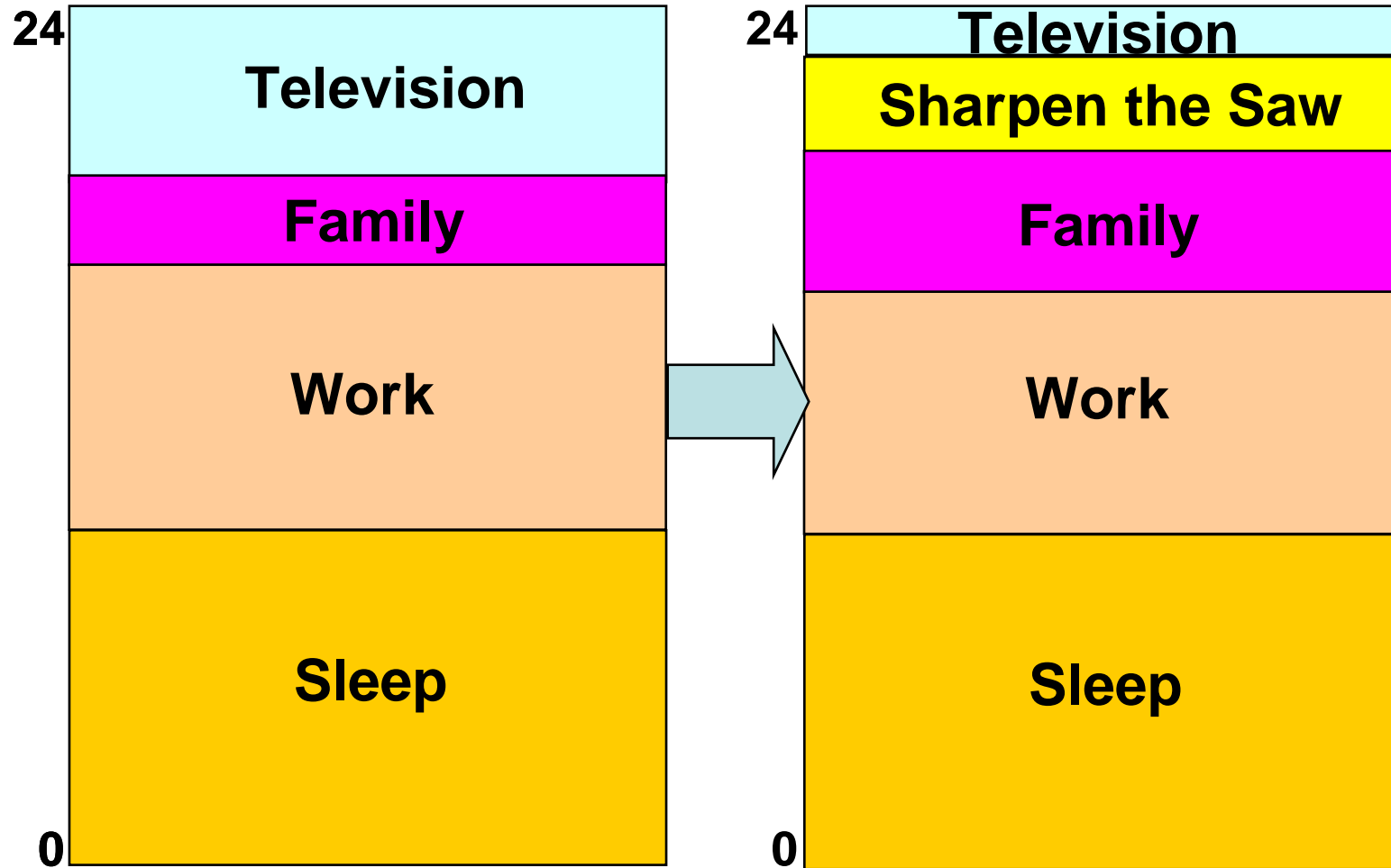
Jim Rohn

Time – Unique Resource

- Cannot accumulate / store
- Everyone has same amount
- Cannot be replaced
- Spent at constant rate of 60 seconds per minute
- All accomplishments require time



Time – “A Full Day”



Why Time Management



All Things Being Equal,
TIME Becomes the Differentiator!

- 2 Sources of Value - Time & Knowledge
- Every job is to solve problems & satisfy needs of people
- Value added is through increased productivity
- Successful people are more productive than unsuccessful people

Value of Time



- Rewards in Life will Match Service Provided
- “You can have anything you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want.” [Zig Ziglar]

Time Management



All successful people have one thing
in common...

They value time!

Definition of Time Management



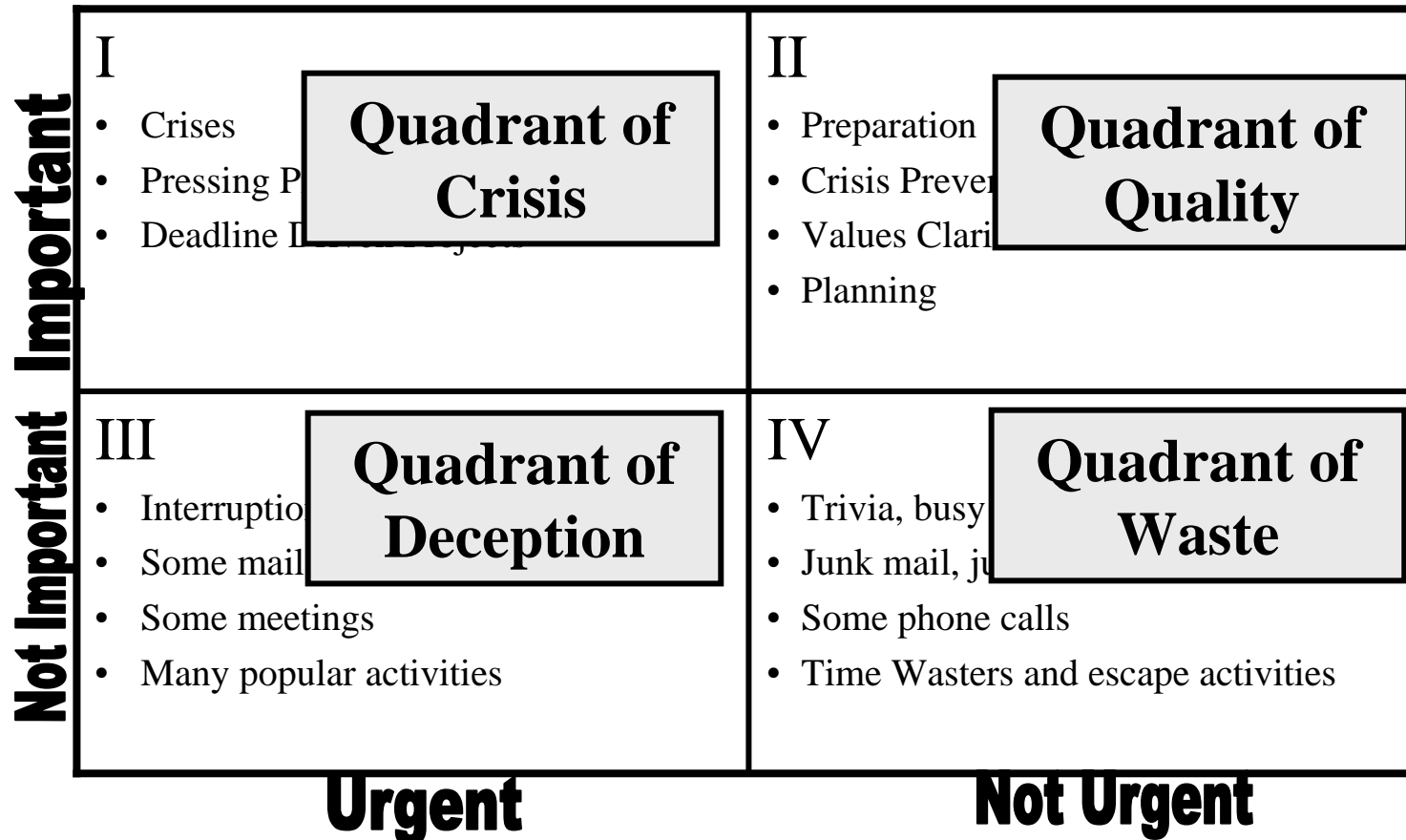
“Time Management is **planning** and **organizing** your time in such a way that you accomplish your **most important goals** as quickly as possible.”

Pareto's Principle (80-20 Rule)



- 80% of effects comes from 20% of causes (Law of Cause and Effect)
- 80% of sales comes from 20% of clients
- Focus on 20% of tasks that create 80% of results
- Do not “major in minor things”

Time Management Matrix



7 Ways to Get More Done



- Work harder with greater focus & concentration.
- Work with faster tempo.
- Batch similar tasks - learning curves.
- Do more important things, higher value tasks with higher potential payoff.
- Do things that you are better at.
- Make fewer mistakes. Do it right first time.
- Simplify work – reduce, eliminate or consolidate steps.

Best Practices – Value of Time



- **Law of Compensation:** “You are always fully compensated for whatever you do, positive or negative.”
- Whatever you put in, you get out (Law of Sowing and Reaping)

Best Practices – Value of Time



- If you want to increase the quality and quantity of your pay, you must increase the quality and quantity of your contribution (the service you provide).
- “When we do more than we are paid to do, eventually we will be paid more for what we do.” [Zig Ziglar]

Best Practices – Value of Time



- “Law of Comparative Advantage”
- Hourly rate (current and desired)
- Can someone else less expensive do the task?
- If so, delegate.

Comparative Advantages

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

DELEGATE!

Marcus Buckingham “Now, Discover Your Strengths”

Make More Time for Yourself



- To earn more, you must learn more
- Knowledge is doubling every 7 years
- To move further, you must learn more

Renewal - Interdependence



- **Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw**
 - Physical
 - Spiritual
 - Mental
 - Social / Emotional

Sharpen the Saw – To Learn More...



- Read 1 hour per day in your field
- Take speed reading course
- Invest 3% of income in improving self
- Rip and read – Use during waiting times
- Read books by experts (see “Book List”)
 - Make sure authors are successful
 - Wait for paperbacks
 - Read reviews
- University on Wheels

University on Wheels



- Zig Ziglar
 - Goals, See You at the Top, Top Performance...
- Brian Tracy
 - How to Master Your Time, Psychology of Achievement, Maximum Achievement, The Universal Laws of Success and Achievement
- Lou Heckler – Leadership Training
- Edwin Bliss – Doing it Now
- Jeffrey Mayer – If You Haven't Got the Time...
- Napoleon Hill
 - Keys to Positive Thinking, Think and Grow Rich

Recommended Books and Audiobooks



Recommended Books and Audiobooks						Date: 5/19/2008 11:20	Contact: Joel.Oppenheimer@stvinc.com (410-281-2850)
Author		Title	Media	No.	Subject	Description	Rating
Ziglar	Zig	Goals	Cassettes	6	Goal Setting	Excellent recording on setting goals	9
Ziglar	Zig	Top Performance	Cassettes	6	Self-Improvement	Excellent motivational tape on success	8
Ziglar	Zig	See You at the Top	Book/Cassette	382	Self-Improvement	Success principles. Ziglar's first book.	8
Ziglar	Zig	Over the Top	Book/Cassette		Self-Improvement	Excellent motivational tape on success	8
Tracy	Brian	How to Master Your Time	Cassettes	6	Time Management	Tremendous overview on time management	10
Tracy	Brian	Psychology of Achievement	Cassettes	6	Self-Improvement	A classic must listen to tapes on success	10
Tracy	Brian	The Universal Laws of Success and Achievement	Cassettes	6	Self-Improvement	Attitude, finances, goals, and success	9
Tracy	Brian	Maximum Achievement	Book/Cassette	344	Self-Improvement	Book supporting Psychology of Achievement	9
Tracy	Brian	Time Power	Book		Time Management	Book detailing time management	9
Tracy	Brian	Change Your Thinking, Change Your Future	Book		Self-Improvement	Attitude for success	8
Tracy	Brian	Eat That Frog	Book/CD		Time Management	Short simple tips on time management. Quick reading	8
Tracy	Brian	Goals	Book	278	Goal Setting	The Ultimate goal setting book. Must Read!	10
Tracy	Brian	Millionaire Habits	Book/Cassette		Self-Improvement	Attitude, goal setting, finances, excellent overview	9
Tracy	Brian	Creating Your Future	Book		Self-Improvement	Overview on creating a successful life.	8
Bliss	Ed	Doing It Now	Cassettes	6	Time Management	The ultimate time management guru.	9
Wetmore	Donald	KISS Guide to Organizing Your Life	Book		Time Management	Excellent overview on time management	9
Morgenstern	Julie	Organizing from the Inside Out	Book/Cassette		Time Management	Excellent time management guru	8
Covey	Stephen	The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People	Book/CD/Cass		Self-Improvement	The classic book that frames success. Must read.	10
Heckler	Lou	Leadership Training (CareerTrack)	Cassettes	4	Leadership	Excellent audiobook on leadership	9
Hill	Napoleon	Think and Grow Rich	Book/CD/Cass		Self-Improvement	The original self-improvement, goal setting book	10
Hill	Napoleon	Keys to Positive Thinking	Book/Cassette		Self-Improvement	Excellent overview of positive mental attitude.	9
Mayer	Jeffrey	If You Haven't Got the Time to Do It Right...	Cassettes		Time Management	Short overview on time management tips.	8
Mayer	Jeffrey	Time Management for Dummies	Book		Time Management	Excellent book on time management.	9
Carnegie	Dale	How to Win Friends and Influence People	Book/Cassette		Relationships	A classic book that has survived time. A must read.	10
Buckingham	Marcus	Know Your Strengths	Book/Cassette		Self-Improvement	Excellent book to evaluate your strengths.	9
Rohn	Jim	7 Strategies for Wealth and Happiness	Book		Self-Improvement	Excellent author, excellent overview of success	8
Rohn	Jim	The Weekend Seminar	Cassettes	12	Self-Improvement	Excellent overview on success techniques	8
Rohn	Jim	The Power of Ambition	Cassettes	6	Self-Improvement	Excellent author and good tape on ambition	8
Rohn	Jim	Challenge to Succeed, A Philosophy for Successful Living	Cassettes	6	Self-Improvement	Excellent tape program on elements of success	8
Robbins	Tony	Giant Steps	CD/Cassettes		Self-Improvement	Robbins is animated presenter with great ideas	8
Robbins	Tony	Awaken the Giant Within You	CD/Cassettes		Self-Improvement	Robbins is animated presenter with great ideas	8
Robbins	Tony	Lessons in Mastery	CD/Cassettes		Self-Improvement	Robbins is animated presenter with great ideas	8
Robbins	Tony	Unlimited Power	CD/Cassettes		Self-Improvement	Robbins is animated presenter with great ideas	8

Recommended Books and Audiobooks



Recommended Books and Audiobooks

Date: 10/20/2008 8:52 Contact: Joel.Oppenheimer@stvinc.com (410-281-2850)

Author	Title	Media	No.	Subject	Description	Rating
Waitley	Denis	The Psychology of Winning	Book/Cassette	6 Self-Improvement	An outstanding classic by an excellent presenter	10
Sommer	Bobbe	How to Set and Achieve Your Goals (CareerTrak)	Cassettes	4 Goal Setting	A good seminar on goal setting.	8
Canfield	Jack	The Success Principles	Book/CD	Self-Improvement	A book on all principles for success by author of Chicken Soup for the Soul	10
Canfield	Jack	Self-Esteem and Peak Performance	Cassettes	6 Self-Improvement	The value of self-esteem on peak performance	9
Maxwell	John	Today Matters	Book	Time Management	Excellent writer on variety of self-improvement	8
Maxwell	John	Developing the Leader In You	Book	Leadership	Excellent book on leadership	8
Maxwell	John	Winning with People	Book/Cassette	Relationships	Excellent book on people skills	8
Bach	David	The Automatic Millionaire	Book/CD	Finances	Excellent book for young adults to manage finances	10
Stanley	Tom	The Millionaire Next Door	Book/Cassette	Finances	Interesting facts about average millionaires	10
Clason	George	The Richest Man in Babylon	Book	Finances	Easy reading timeless classic from 1920's	10
Solin	Daniel	The Smartest Investment Book You'll Ever Read	Book/CD	Finances	Excellent overview on investing for long term	9
Orman	Suze	The Courage to Be Rich	Book/CD	Finances	All of Suze Orman books are excellent & clear	8
Orman	Suze	The Nine Steps to Financial Freedom	Book/CD	Finances	All of Suze Orman books are excellent & clear	8
Orman	Suze	The Laws of Money, The Lessons of Life	Book/CD	Finances	All of Suze Orman books are excellent & clear	8
Orman	Suze	You've Earned It, Don't Lose It	Book/CD	Finances	All of Suze Orman books are excellent & clear	8
Orman	Suze	The Road to Wealth	Book/CD	Finances	All of Suze Orman books are excellent & clear	8
Kiyosaki	Robert	Rich Dad, Poor Dad	Book/CD	Finances	Very interesting discussion on finances	7
Byrne	Rhonda	The Secret	Book/CD/Movie	Self-Improvement	Focuses on the Law of Attraction for success. Exce.	8
Souza	Brian	Become Who We Were Born To Be	Book/CD/Tape	Self-Improvement	General rules for success with people case studies	9
Ben-Shahar	Tal	Happier	Book/CD	Self-Improvement	Study on how to be happier	8
Shimoff	Marci	Happy for No Reason	Book/CD	Self-Improvement	Study on what leads to happiness	9
Izzo	John	The 5 Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die	Book/CD/DVD	Self-Improvement	230 wise, elderly people commonalities on life	10
Collins	Jim	Good to Great	Book/CD	Business/Ldrshp	Study of what makes great companies great	8

Learn Success



- Take a Successful Person Out to Lunch
- Read Books Highlighting Attributes of Successful People
 - “Think and Grow Rich” by Napoleon Hill
 - “The Secret” by Rhonda Byrne
 - “The Five Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die” by John Izzo
 - Be True to Yourself: Follow Your Heart
 - Leave No Regrets
 - Be Love
 - Live the Moment
 - Leave More Than You Take

8 Time Wasters



- Cluttered/Messy Desk and Office
- Phone Interruptions (E-Mail Interruptions)
- Drop-in Visitors
- Meetings
- Firefighting
- Procrastination
- Socializing
- Indecision with Paper and Tasks

Organize Your Life



“Clutter is a pile of unmade decisions.”

Julie Morgenstein

“Organizing from the Inside Out”

Organize Desk

- Clear your desk
 - Pilemania – Eliminate clutter
 - 60% of papers on desk, no value
 - Save 30 secs. every 5 mins = 1 hour per day
 - Save 30 mins. per day = 3 weeks per year
- Start every new task with clear desk
- New Tasks – Pull out what you need



Best Practices



- Handle each piece of paper only once
- Handle each e-mail only once
- Answer mail when picked up
- Don't let things end up on your desk

Best Practices – Quiz Question



- Two letter word that saves more time than any other word?
- NO
- “Say no to others in order to say yes to ourselves.”

Best Practices



- To-Do List
 - Daily: Accomplishments anticipated
 - Large tasks broken into component parts
 - Prioritize A, B, C; then A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.
 - Set time frames
 - Set Daily List at end of day for next day
 - Long Range Plans and Projects
 - Prioritize
 - Move to Daily To-Do Lists
- Keep List in Visible Location
- Review before leaving office & before bed

Simplified Method To Do List



- Write out 6 most important items to-do
- Prioritize the list from 1 to 6
- Work on Item 1 until completely done, then Item 2, & so on...
- Rewrite the list at end of every day
- Review before going to sleep and first thing in the morning

Best Practices



- Know your peak performance period
 - Schedule most important / most difficult tasks
 - If morning, go to work 1 hour earlier
 - Hold calls, close door, avoid e-mail
 - Avoid little tasks

Best Practices – People Interruptions



- Intercept people by standing up
- Walk them out of your office
- Walk to their office to continue
- Avoid having desk visible from door
- Turn desk so no eye contact from door

Best Practices – Phone Interruptions



- Screen calls
- Establish times for taking calls
- Bunch return phone calls in less productive times
- Call others before lunch, before leaving
- Plan out important calls
- Do easy jobs while on phone
- Don't interrupt someone else

Best Practices – E-Mail



- More Polite than Phone Calls
- Multiple People Can be Copied
 - Copy those Who Need to be Copied
- E-Mail is “forever”
- E-mailing across Internet, Request Reply as Evidence of Receipt
- E-Mail provides interruptions

Best Practices – Meetings



“Meetings are indispensable when you don’t want to do anything.”

John Kenneth Galbraith

Best Practices – Meetings



- Share Expectations In Advance
- Schedule in advance to prepare
- Distribute materials in advance
- Agree upon desired products/results
- Attendees List
 - Hourly costs = value of meeting
 - Number of People
 - Know What is Expected
- Attend Meetings not to Discuss Issues but to RESOLVE Issues

Best Practices – Meetings



- Distribute Agenda in Advance
 - Objective
 - Proposed Attendees
 - Location
 - Items to be Addressed with Time Limits
- Start on time
- Meeting Minutes
 - Distributed 2 Business Days
 - Actions Items Addressed
 - Who is Responsible
 - When is the Action Item To Be Completed

Procrastination



“Things that are easy to do
are easy not to do.”

Jim Rohn

Best Practices – Avoid Procrastination



- Think on paper. Prepare thoroughly.
- Gather materials and tools in advance.
- Do one small thing to get started.
- Salami slice the project.
- Swiss cheese technique - punch hole in it.
- Start at outside and move to core.
- Start from center and do hardest task.
- Do task that causes most anxiety.

Best Practices – Avoid Procrastination



- Reward yourself at intervals.
- Start with most unpleasant task.
- Think of negative consequences if not done.
- Think of benefits of completing task.
- Set aside a designated time.
- Don't be a perfectionist.
- Develop compulsion to finish.
- Maintain fast tempo.

DO IT NOW!!!

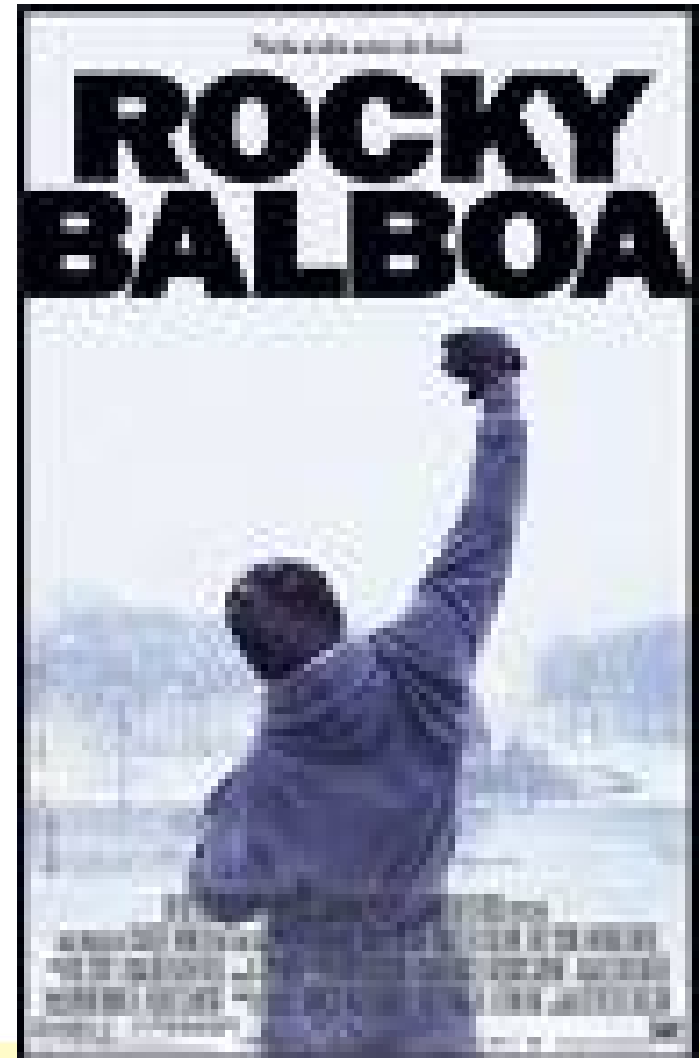
Building a Better Life – Concrete Steps for Success

Part 4

Putting It All Together

Starting the Day Right

- Opportunity Clock
- Pump Hand into the Air
- Think the Right Thoughts



Starting the Day Right



- Opportunity Clock
- Pump Hand into the Air
- Think the Right Thoughts
- “Something wonderful is going to happen today!”
- Attitude of Gratitude
- Skip Listening to News
- Exercise Mind, Exercise Body
- Breakfast
- Waking kids
- Saying goodbye to family members

Starting the Day Right



- Driving to Work
 - Audiobooks
 - Go Lights
- Arrive at Work 1 Hour Early
- Review Work Goals
- Prioritize To-Do List
- 2 Hours Uninterrupted on Highest Priority Task

Continuing the Day Right



- Lunch
 - Healthy Bag Lunch
 - Off Peak
- Organize Tomorrow's Priorities
- Leave on Time, Clean Desk
- Take Index Card of Tomorrow's Tasks

Concluding the Day Right



- Healthy Dinner, Healthy Conversation
- Exercise
- Read
- Time with Family
- Review Goals
- Review Task List for Tomorrow
- Early to Bed

Some Final Thoughts

Key to Time Management:

- Not finding more time but making better use of time we have



Some Final Thoughts



Attitude – Proactive, Positive, Responsible

- Set your goals
- Know your priorities
- “What is the most valuable use of my time right now?”

Conclusion



“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

Fred Smith

Conclusion



“When you do the things you ought to do when you ought to do them,
The day will come when you can do the things you want to do when you want to do them.”

Zig Ziglar

Conclusion



“Happiness is a journey,
not a destination.”

“The Station”

Robert Hastings

Contact Information and References



Contact Information:

Joel Oppenheimer (STV Incorporated)

E-Mail: joel.oppenheimer@stvinc.com

Phone: 410-281-2850

REFERENCES:

- Stephen Covey – “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”
- Brian Tracy – “How to Master Your Time” (6 Audiocassette Tapes)
- Zig Ziglar – “Goals” (6 Audiocassette Tapes)

The Station (by Robert Hastings)



Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that spans the continent. We are traveling by train. Out the window, we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at a crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides, of city skylines and village halls.

But uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into the station. Bands will be playing and flags waving. Once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a completed jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace the aisles, damning the minutes for loitering – waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.

“When we reach the station, that will be it!” we cry. “When I’m 18, that will be it!” “When I buy a new 450 SL Mercedes Benz!” “When I put the last kid through college!” “When I have paid off the mortgage!” “When I win a promotion.” “When I reach the age of retirement, I shall live happily ever after!”

Sooner or later, we must realize there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us.

So stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more and cry less. Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.