

PRIORITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

How we determine our priorities can be just as important to our personal lives, as to a business. Assessing priorities involves intelligently planning, juggling, and organizing a number of dynamics. We cannot just assume that everything we need to do, personally, will fall into place and provide us our greatest security or advantage. Prioritizing wisely can sometimes require serious detailing, similar to preparing for a government audit.

Measuring priorities necessitates an enterprising and resourceful understanding of its methodology. In science, engineering, physics, etc., there are some absolute rules and laws that professionals must adhere to and cannot ignore. Assessing our priorities also has similar requirements. Our ability to follow these guidelines depends upon how conscientious we are about such a responsibility. We may not be prioritizing well or may be avoiding precautionary measures because we don't understand enough about their importance. Thus, we can miss valuable priorities when we just don't realize the critical efforts that such assessments require.

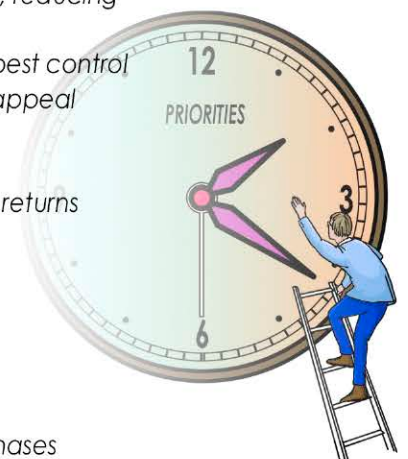
A multitude of books, articles, websites, and other resources are available to help us improve our prioritizing skills. However, the Institute is devoted to *cutting to the chase*, so that our students can spend the majority of prioritizing time on actually getting things done. Thus, this lesson supplement is designed to assist you in identifying, sorting through, and then quickly working on your most important tasks.

As mentioned in the 4D Lesson, the first step is to create a thorough list of what needs attention. Writing lists is a management skill that helps us uncover a clearer perspective while formulating a game plan. Without written lists, it is almost impossible for the mind to even grasp that we have such a thorough list of tasks to accomplish.

For easing the list-making process, this supplement categorizes essential possibilities that should prompt your memory. To start, write each numbered category heading listed below in bold type on a sheet of paper or computer file. Allow space below each heading to list the related tasks noted in *italics*. Be sure to add other tasks that come to mind. List everything to the best of your ability that you are aware needs accomplished. Please note that these categories are neither listed in priority order, nor are they intended to be thorough list of possible priorities that would fit everyone's situation.

STEP 1: LIST PRIORITY CATEGORIES

1. **SAFETY:** *radon detectors, fire extinguishers, fireplace/equipment maintenance, licenses, insurances*
2. **PHYSICAL HEALTH:** *exercise, diet, cleanliness, medical-dental check-ups, tests, medical-life insurance, immunizations, will/trust*
3. **EMOTIONAL HEALTH:** *emotional education, improving relationships, increasing motivation, reducing stress, scheduling realistic relaxation*
4. **INTERIOR OF HOME:** *repairs, maintenance, filing, check-ups, batteries, filters, cleanliness, pest control*
5. **EXTERIOR OF HOME:** *planting, weeding/pest/disease control, fertilizing, cleanliness, curb appeal*
6. **IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS:** *attending, volunteering, dues, donations of funds/items*
7. **WHAT OTHERS NEED/CAN DO:** *handyman, contractor, general services, laborer*
8. **FOR OTHERS:** *family/ friends/ pets, quality time/attention, generosity, fairness, helpfulness, returns*
9. **VEHICLES:** *repairs, maintenance, trip check, cleanliness, insurance, recalls*
10. **PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT:** *classes, lectures, equipment, tools, reading materials*
11. **PRACTICE:** *musical instrument, brain exercises, EQ skills*
12. **WHAT SHOULD SELL:** *furniture, clothing, tools, books, equipment, miscellaneous*
13. **WHAT SHOULD PURCHASE:** *safety, health, other insurances, update*
14. **WHAT NEEDS RETURNED:** *what borrowed, not using, wrongly purchased*
15. **WHAT REWARD IS BEST FOR FINISHING A PRIORITY:** *dinner, movie, adventure, special purchases*



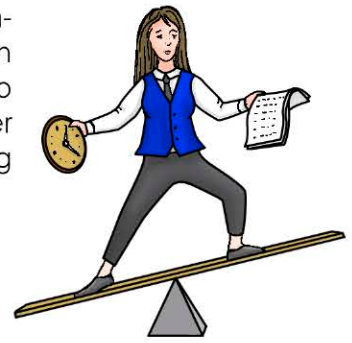
Depending on how well you have been prioritizing what really matters, you may be creating an annual list, rather than a week or month's worth of projects needing attention. For increased self-awareness, honestly note any reason for not accomplishing particular tasks, as well.

STEP 2: CONSIDER MAINTAINING BALANCE

As you prepare to measure the value and schedule the tasks on your list, you must consider responsibilities, security, education, and other matters of balance, as well as ways to improve harmony. The effect you have on others is also a relevant factor to measure when prioritizing. The questions below will help you determine just how much time you have to work on priorities each day. Your tallies from time and finance logs, as well as your blooper log should have provided increased self-awareness related to balance and for answering these questions.

How much time should I spent each day:

1. with others?
2. working toward professional advancement?
3. doing what I enjoy?
4. performing daily responsibilities?
5. catching up on priorities?



STEP 3: WEIGH VALUE WITH ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Grasping what to do exactly when needing it done is not easy. Assessing a situation is difficult without considering the complex variables and meticulous details involved. Improving how we prioritize requires us to develop a keener eye for recognizing, weighing, and effectively acting on value. The list of questions below should assist you in narrowing down which tasks need to be accomplished first, deciding what tasks can be delayed for a short while, and recognizing less important tasks that can wait even longer.

WHICH TASKS INVOLVE OTHERS?

1. Which tasks would often be seen by other people? _____
2. Which tasks are other people waiting for me to complete? _____
3. Which tasks first require further investigation or a consultant? _____

WHICH TASKS ARE THE MOST DISINTERESTING?

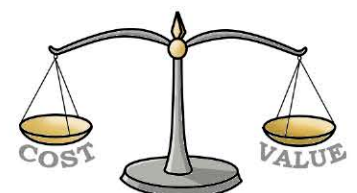
1. Which tasks do I find annoying? _____
2. Which tasks require an adjustment to my attitude? _____
3. Which tasks are frustrating because of their difficulty? _____

WHICH TASKS WOULD WARD-OFF PROBLEMS/ BALANCE MY LIFE?

1. Which tasks would worsen if ignored? _____
2. Which tasks are close to being finished? _____
3. Which tasks would provide healthy relief? _____
4. Which tasks have been postponed the longest? _____
5. Which tasks would have value in an emergency? _____
6. Which tasks involve warranties that may expire? _____
7. Which tasks would my wisest voice tell me to do first? _____
8. Which tasks would save me time, money, or provide dividends? _____
9. Which tasks could I continue to postpone without repercussions? _____
10. Which tasks are required for taking care of myself and my surroundings? _____

As you attempt to clarify value and rank each item/task on your list, consider using this 5 star system to mark the value of each item/task:

- 1 star * Tasks/items you can do whenever you have time.
- 2 star ** Items/tasks you can delegate to others who can handle such responsibility.
- 3 star *** Tasks/items that are of value to do, but are not as imperative as four and five star tasks, because they don't have consequences if not accomplished.
- 4 star **** Tasks/items you should do, but are not as paramount as the five star tasks, because they only have minor consequences if not completed.
- 5 star ***** Most vital tasks/items that could result in serious consequences if not done.



This gauging process should assist you in separating vital tasks from less important ones. Most likely, you will have more than one priority in each category. You may use stars to further delineate the priorities in each group, making them different colors.

STEP 4: MAP OUT A STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION

Once your assessment is completed and you have given value to priorities, focus on mapping out a strategic plan to start tackling these chores. See the suggested tactics as well as motivational points worth considering below:

1. Devote an adequate number of hours per week toward priorities.
2. Establish a list of tasks to accomplish each day, week, or month.
3. Review timesaving tips, as such information may help you save more time for priorities.
4. Review the final list periodically, as invariably, other priorities will surface while some existing tasks may require more immediate attention than you originally thought.
5. If you sleep 8 hours per night, consider reducing 15 minutes each night for a month, then another, until you reach seven hours. If it is possible for you to reduce sleep from eight hours to seven per night, you will add seven extra hours per week that can be devoted to catching up on priorities.



LISTS OF REASONS WHY WE PRIORITIZE INEFFECTIVELY

There are a number of reasons why we don't prioritize very well. A few are listed below:

TOO DISREGARDFUL

1. We can procrastinate.
2. We can take careless risks.
3. We can ignore potential warning signs.
4. We may think that priorities will fall into place automatically.
5. We may just do what we normally do and not even consider prioritizing.
6. We can avoid priorities that are difficult or that we just don't want to do.

TOO INSENSITIVE ABOUT HOW WE PRIORITIZE

1. We can become absorbed in the wrong concerns.
2. We can become numb about prioritizing anything.
3. We can continue working on one priority and forget about other needs.
4. We may become irritated by every little task, while every little urge demands gratification.

TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING

1. We can justify trivial pursuits.
2. We may not have adequately learned how to motivate ourselves.
3. Without realizing, we can erroneously give a task the wrong value.
4. We may take too long to figure out how to deal with difficult priorities.
5. We can take care of immediate interests without realizing the need to prioritize other tasks.
6. We may not have learned enough about prioritizing to recognize or to follow wise direction.
7. We can place trivial tasks at the top of our list of priorities, without realizing the inappropriateness.

TOO ILL-EQUIPPED

1. We may miss to recognize or forget warning signs.
2. We may lack the amount of time, energy, or money for tackling important tasks.
3. We may encounter technical problems with equipment that is required for performing tasks.

TOO DISCOURAGED

1. We can become overwhelmed by too many priorities and freeze.
2. We may not be motivated enough for dealing with difficult, yet crucial priorities.
3. We may be depressed about the long list of priorities or other problems in our lives.
4. We may get discouraged when we realize that a priority is taking much longer than expected.



LISTS OF PRIORITIZING SELF-TALK STATEMENTS

DYNAMIC VALUE STATEMENTS

1. With practice, I can improve how I prioritize.
2. Prioritizing wisely promotes and supports efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Motivation and sacrifice are mature disciplines that empower the mind.
4. The way I prioritize is a major indicator of my emotional intelligence and EQ level.

IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS

1. Organization requires strategies.
2. Changing the way I do things can be difficult.
3. Some tasks can too easily be postponed or ignored.
4. It is easier to determine priorities arbitrarily than skillfully.
5. Be careful not to allow certain priorities to drag on too long.
6. Watch that I don't wait until the last minute to do important tasks!
7. If my priority list is long, I must be careful not to add unnecessary tasks.
8. The importance of some tasks may easily be exaggerated or discounted.
9. It's easy to avoid analysis and shy away from tasks that are uncomfortable.
10. It is easy to miscalculate how much time, effort, or money a priority will require.
11. I must recognize that certain tasks involving my time, efforts, and money can depreciate, while other tasks appreciate.
12. If I get overwhelmed by the number of priorities, I should take deep breaths and apply a generous amount of healthy self-talk!

POWERFUL SELF-COACHING STATEMENTS

1. Stay on track!
2. First things first!
3. I must pace myself.
4. Don't drag your feet!
5. A maze is never easy to sort through.
6. This won't get better by just looking at it!
7. It's best to get out of the way what can hurt me.
8. I can't just dilly dally around and ignore priorities!
9. I can't apply a sloppy approach and get dynamic results.
10. I must remember that I can only take one step at a time.
11. Watch for "I don't know what to do, so I won't do anything."
12. Don't allow feelings to have too much power over what you do and don't do.

Please note that this assessment supplement has provided a number of possibilities to help you more thoroughly consider what needs your attention, but do realize that it would be impossible to include every scenario possible for everyone who is trying to prioritize. Also take a few minutes to review a few priority quotes listed on google images.

