



Unit: Time Management

Skill 8: Personal Scheduling and Planning

Activity A: Keep Track of Your Time

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding how to maintain a personal calendar and schedule time with others to get things done.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Blank calendar pages.
- Pens or pencils to write.

Do Ahead:

To save time, lists of “To do’s,” “Fundamentals” and “Extras” can be developed ahead of time. (Optional)

Source:

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BACKGROUND:

There is an old adage that states, “If you want to get something done, give the job to a busy person.” Why do some people seem to be more productive than others? What’s the secret to keeping track of your time and staying productive? What does it mean to be productive?

Everyone has the same amount of time. It is a limited resource, and once it’s gone, we can’t get it back. Therefore it’s important to make the most of it! Think of time much like money; there is a finite budget. Work to manage and spend your time as you would manage and spend money – responsibly. This activity will review the basics of maintaining a personal calendar and coordinating time with other people.

WHAT TO DO:

This activity may be done in one large group if numbers are small, or in small groups of 3-5 people. Ask students to brainstorm a list of tasks and responsibilities that make up a typical week. Note that these will vary depending on the audience; students might have items like school, chores and homework, while adult professionals might have such items as carpool, work, PTA meeting, church, taking kids to soccer practice, etc.

(NOTE: To save time the brainstorming step can be omitted.)

This list can be called the “TO DO’s.” Establish some parameters for the tasks on the group’s list; e.g., school happens Monday-Friday from 7:30-3 p.m., or soccer practice happens Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 4:30-6 p.m. Everything should have a start and *end* time. Now have the small groups create a weekly calendar that incorporates everything on the list. Have them consider additional issues like: how long does it take to get there? Do I need special clothing or equipment? Is there preparation to get ready for the task or commitment?

Once all the required things are on the calendar, have the groups factor in other life issues – sleeping, eating, exercising, etc. These can be called “FUNDAMENTALS.” How do these fit into the week’s schedule? Now have the groups add the enjoyable parts of life – being with family, playing a game, reading a book, hanging out with friends. These items can be called “EXTRAS.” What time is left for these extras?

Have the groups then share their weekly calendars with the whole group, and discuss.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What things get compromised or even left off the calendar?

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Notes:

- Does everything fit? What do you have time for, and what do you not have enough time to include?
- Are some of your “EXTRAS” actually more important to you than some of your “TO-DO’S?”
- What items on your calendar require coordination with other people? How do you handle this? Where is the time on your calendar to coordinate with others?

Apply:

- How do people stay productive and get all their “TO-DO’s” addressed, but not compromise their “FUNDAMENTALS” and “EXTRAS?”
- Do you know people who seem to be really good at this?
- Do you keep a calendar? Do you think keeping one would help you stay productive?
- Next time you are thinking about leaders, how would this exercise change your perceptions?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Ask students to prepare a weekly or monthly calendar for their own “To-Do’s,” “Fundamentals” and “Extras.” Ask them to consider how such a calendar could help them and write a brief paragraph. Which items on their calendar require coordination with others?

Resources And Web Links:

Mind Tools. 2005. “Time Management Module,” Essential Skills for an Excellent Career. www.mindtools.com

Butler and Hope. 1996. Managing Your Mind. Oxford University Press.