



Unit: Time Management

Skill 9: Prioritizing Tasks

Activity B: Life is a Jar of Golf Balls

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion or personal reflection

Leadership Skills:

Understanding what the key priorities of your life are, and how these relate to time management and setting daily task priorities

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Do Ahead:

- Make copies of story.

Source:

Developed by:

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Based on:
An e-mail story

BACKGROUND:

Suppose you have your planning system and know the basics of time management, and yet you still find yourself struggling to determine what gets addressed first? How do we step back and take a larger perspective to determine what our life priorities are? And then, how do we make sure we are considering this larger life perspective when going about our daily planning?

(Read the story – separate page)

WHAT TO DO:

This activity may be done with individuals, and then shared in small groups or with the whole group.

Now that we've read the story about the jar of golf balls, pebbles and sand, let's make the comparison to our own lives. Using the worksheet, list the things in your life that are golf balls – family, friends, health, passions. Then consider what makes up the pebbles – those things that are still important but not critical – job, house, car, etc. What things are sand?

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Was this easy or difficult? Do you have more golf balls or sand?
- How do these categories – golf balls, pebbles, sand – relate to the daily planning ranks that were used in Activity 21 (A=urgent and important, B=important, C=can wait if necessary)?
- Do you always put golf balls first?
- Do pebbles and sand get in the way? Why?

Apply:

- How can you better keep your life's golf balls in mind when going about daily planning and prioritizing?
- How do people respond when you say you don't have time?
- Can you change the volume of the jar? (No! We all have the same amount of time in a day.) But making everything fit requires selecting the right order – the right priorities.
- What other analogies have you heard about life's larger perspective? (Example – will it matter when you're on your death bed? Will you look back and say, "Gee, I wish I had spent more time working late at the office?") Do these expressions affect our daily practices, or are they just nice ideas?

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Notes:

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Ask students to apply the golf balls story to their own lives for a week. What critical things – golf balls – would they make time for? What tasks – sand – would they say no to or defer from their daily schedule? How did this priority-setting exercise change their perspective about what is really important?

Resources And Web Links:

<http://www.time-management-guide.com>

<http://www.mindtools.com>