

# Tyme Management™

## Why People Do Low-Priority Tasks

Sometimes people do things simply out of habit and not because they're important. **You may do a low-priority task when you shouldn't because it:**

- ◆ Follows next in the order you received it.
- ◆ Is simpler, easier, or quicker than the other tasks that you have to do.
- ◆ Seems more urgent than your important goals.
- ◆ Was already planned or scheduled beforehand.
- ◆ Is requested or demanded by other people.
- ◆ Is something you like to do or find interesting.
- ◆ Has an impending deadline you can't put off any longer.
- ◆ Is a job you already know how to do.
- ◆ Will rid you of a "squeaky wheel" or other irritant.
- ◆ Requires resources you already have to work on it.
- ◆ Will have consequences if you don't do it.
- ◆ Will allow you to put off a job you don't want to do.
- ◆ Can be completed, providing you a sense of closure and accomplishment.

## Pinpointing Your Priorities

**E**very day you make choices about how you will spend your time. With each choice, you decide what has priority for you that day. The tasks you choose may or may not be important, but in essence, they become your priorities.

By learning to choose activities that are in line with your goals, you can use your time more effectively. **The following are tips for helping you identify your priorities:**

- ▲ Start with your goals. Before you decide what tasks to do, you must know what your goals are. Make a list of the primary goals you have to help give you perspective.
- ▲ Focus on the important – not merely urgent – things. When deciding your top priorities for the day, focus on tasks that will contribute to your goals, and weigh the importance of "urgent" tasks that come up during the day. Schedule time for the important things that may get crowded out by less important, "urgent" demands.
- ▲ Consider the benefits, consequences and time constraints of a task. If all of the things on your list seem equally important, ask yourself the following questions: What benefits will this task have if completed? What consequences will there be if it isn't? How long can I put this off and still finish on time? How many goals does this task meet?



- ▲ Make a "must do" list. Examine your current "to do" list, and pick out the top six items you must do that day. Keep a list of these "A" items visible on your desk. Work on your number-one item as much as possible before moving on to the next one. Even if you don't finish all of them, you'll still make significant progress.
- ▲ Divide your remaining "to do" list. Rank the remaining items on your list into "B" and "C" priorities. Refer to your "B" tasks once your current "A" ones have been tackled, and save "C" items for when you have spare time and are looking for something worthwhile to do.
- ▲ Question your motives. You may stray from your "A" priorities because it's easier to put them off by doing less challenging work. Ask yourself constantly if you're making the best use of your time. Are you doing something that you want or need to do at that moment? If not, work on something that will be more profitable.

## Becoming a Better Manager

As the world becomes “smaller” with technology, the marketplace is becoming potentially larger for an increasing number of companies. More managers are stepping into the global arena to contend in a highly competitive and constantly changing global marketplace.

So how does the ambitious manager aspire to rank among the heavyweights of world-class management? Earl Young, professor of management at DePaul University in Chicago, highlights **the following actions as prerequisite training for world-class managers:**

- Making a life-long commitment to management. Top managers must have the same dedication, passion and vision as people in other demanding fields such as medicine and law.
- Having a competitive attitude. In an increasingly crowded marketplace, a competitive spirit is necessary for company survival and success. Without it, you’re just waiting for your company’s eventual decline to marginal status or below.
- Internalizing the corporate mission. World-class managers integrate their own personal goals with the larger goals of the company so that as they strive to achieve the company’s mission, they are working toward fulfilling their own.
- Being dedicated to customer service. Top managers recognize that extraordinary rather than superficial devotion to customer service is essential. They realign every activity of the company to serve the customer.
- Pursuing excellence. Their goal is to be number-one and best in their class, not merely to have quality products or services.
- Choosing a long-term strategy. These managers aren’t preoccupied with quarterly performance. They’re willing to wait for the benefits of a long-



term strategy instead of premature profit-taking. They stick with the company’s strategic plan and don’t react to temporary adversity.

- Mastering a functional area. World-class managers are both generalists and high-level specialists. They must be knowledgeable in every aspect of the area they manage, yet also be able to organize the entire area overall so that each part works together efficiently.
- Developing exceptional team-leadership skills. Managers must harness a team’s energy into a cooperative effort instead of an individual, competitive one. They must be adept at synthesizing team members’ varied skills and disciplines for the complex tasks of today’s business world.
- Emphasizing continuous improvement. This is one of the most successful management strategies in Japanese business. Every aspect of the company, including structure, processes, products, services and personnel, is scrutinized and improved incrementally.
- Managing the future. Managers must continually investigate emerging trends and events in the marketplace and discern the potential effects on their company. They must implement a response without waiting for the assurance that others have already profited by taking the same action.

## Smart Failures

Intelligence isn’t the only trait a good manager needs, according to research by Baron and Sternberg. They suggest **10 reasons why intelligent managers may fail:**

- ▲ Poor motivation and lack of perseverance
- ▲ Inability to transfer thought into action
- ▲ Unfamiliarity with company products and strategies
- ▲ Fear of failure, excessive dependency and self-pity
- ▲ Personal problems
- ▲ Overextending themselves and poor time management
- ▲ Poor concentration
- ▲ Procrastination and inability to initiate projects
- ▲ Lack of follow-through on projects
- ▲ Much academic intelligence, but little practical intelligence

Intelligence alone isn’t the secret of successful managers. They know how to apply their high-level critical thinking skills into practical plans and actions.

## A Time-Wise Interview

When interviewing someone for a job, it’s important to use your time wisely.

**The following timetable will help you cover the necessary items for an interview in a time-efficient manner:**

12 minutes on work experience

8 minutes on education

5 minutes on interests

5 minutes on self-assessment

Then, spend the remaining time sharing information about the position and your organization. Always close the interview positively.



## Relieve Your Stress with a Good Night's Rest

In an age of high-speed, high-stress technology, the need to be alert increases. But the more stressful life gets, the more difficult it seems to relax and get the rest you need.

So how can you maximize your capacity to recharge? **Here are some tips to get some good ZZZ's:**

- ◆ Get enough sleep. Adults need five to nine hours of sleep each night with seven to eight being average. Five hours is the minimum needed for young adults and this lowers to four hours minimum after age 30.
- ◆ Establish a consistent sleep schedule. The body's biological cycles flourish on a regular sleep pattern. The most essential hours of "anchor sleep" are from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m., according to some studies.
- ◆ Get up the same time every day. Sleeping in disorients your body clock. Too much sleep makes you feel less alert and reduces the number of hours you're awake so that it's harder to fall asleep the following night. If you insist on sleeping in, limit it to no more than an extra hour.
- ◆ Be smart about losing sleep because of work. When you have to skip a night's sleep because of work, avoid trying to sleep longer periods ahead of time to make up for it. This may lower performance and increase grogginess. Instead, take one or two short naps (at least 10 minutes long each) sometime in the day.
- ◆ Exercise regularly. Improved sleep quality is linked to physical fitness. Physical and mental inactivity are two of the primary causes of



- insomnia.
- ◆ Try not to go to bed hungry. A drop in blood sugar during the middle of the night can hinder sleep. A moderate-sized dinner followed by a small mid-evening snack high in carbohydrates and low in fat and protein aids a smooth transition into sleep. Avoid alcohol and caffeine near bedtime.
- ◆ Keep business out of the bedroom. Write down concerns and plan steps to deal with them tomorrow. Then let them go. Prohibit arguments and brainstorming sessions from the room to enhance an association of rest.
- ◆ Relax before trying to sleep. If you don't release the tension that has built up over the day, you won't have restful sleep and will wake up fatigued or groggy. Try listening to music or to static "white noise" at the end of the FM radio dial. Bringing to mind your spiritual beliefs with a quiet time of reflection can also help.
- ◆ Make sure you have fresh, circulating air and a level bed firm enough to support the lower back. These things promote a comfortable sleeping environment.

- ◆ Place a woolen pad between the mattress and your bottom sheet. According to medical studies, this helps people sleep more soundly. Wool cushions the body and allows the skin to breathe so that you stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
- ◆ Sleep in a dark room. Even dim light can cause unnecessary eye movements that detract from sound sleep.
- ◆ Sleep in a comfortable position. Experts most often recommend the "semi-fetal position" in which you lie on your side with knees drawn partway up. Keep your head in a neutral, relaxed position by pulling the corner of your pillow between your chin and the top of your shoulder that's on the bed.
- ◆ Wake up gently. Jolting to turn off an alarm can trigger the body's emergency responses of a racing heartbeat and muscle tension. Just by stepping out of bed, two pints of blood go into your legs, your blood pressure rises 30 points and hormones flood into your system. Try waking up to low-volume music and lie in bed a minute or two to make the transition.

### Save Time on the Phone

**Here are 10 things you can do to save time while on the phone at home:**

- Clip newspaper or magazine articles
- Put away dishes
- Review your calendar
- Sew on a button
- Look through catalogs
- Trim your nails
- Unpack groceries
- Put laundry in the sink to soak
- Pull out ingredients for dinner
- Update your grocery and to-do lists

It's also handy to put little jobs in a basket by the phone so you can do them and enjoy phone time at the same time.

### The Afternoon Advantage

According to a report in *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, people generally get a more intense workout in the afternoon when the body's strength and aerobic capacities are slightly greater.

# PERSONAL SUCCESS

## Can You Achieve Success?

You can answer this question in the affirmative if you know your strengths and weaknesses and can recognize the opportunities for and threats to your success along the way.

**To prepare yourself for the battle for success, answer the following questions:**

- ◆ What are your advantages?
- ◆ What do you do well?

*These are your strengths, what you do best.*

- ◆ What could you improve?
- ◆ What do you do badly?
- ◆ What should you avoid?

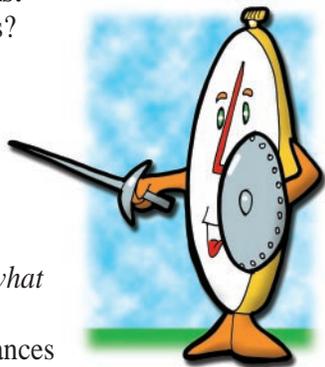
*These are your weaknesses, what you want to avoid.*

- ◆ Where are there good chances for you?
- ◆ What are interesting trends that might affect you?
- ◆ Are there technological or market changes that could help you?
- ◆ Are there governmental changes that could positively influence you?
- ◆ Are there social patterns, population migrations, lifestyle choices, or local events that could help you?

*These are the opportunities you should look for.*

- ◆ What hurdles do you see?
- ◆ What are competitors doing differently?
- ◆ Is your job, product, service, or market soon to undergo a change?
- ◆ Will technology adversely affect you?
- ◆ Do you have cash flow or debt problems?

*These are the threats to success you must overcome.*



## Work to Eliminate “To Do’s”

You can eliminate tasks from your “To Do” list. **Ask yourself the following questions:**

- What will happen if I don’t do this? If you can live with your answer, drop the item from your list.
- Can anyone else do this task just as well or better than me? If so, delegate it.
- Can the task be put off for a period of time? If so, reschedule it for later and reevaluate it then.
- Can it be done more simply? Look at the big picture and use your creativity.

## Keep Your Mind Sharp

**T**here once was a lumberjack who cut down 10 trees his first day, 15 trees his second day, and, by the end of the week, 25 trees in one day. When he started, he had a brand new ax. By the time the second week started, he started to notice that he still cut 25 trees but was more fatigued by the end of the day. By the end of the second week, he was only cutting 20 trees per day. By the beginning of the third week, he worked even harder and cut even less per day.

In total frustration, he went in to see his foreman. The foreman looked at his ax and noticed the edge was dull. The foreman asked why the ax was so dull. The lumberjack said he was so busy (trying to cut 25 trees per day) he didn’t have time to sharpen his ax.

Most people, whether they’re lumberjacks, business people, educators, or creative individuals, aren’t as productive when they lose their edge. Positive thinking acts like a sharpening stone for an ax; it sharpens your mind and hones the edge you need to perform your best.

If you think you’re too busy to think positively, remember the lumberjack who was so busy cutting that he had no time to sharpen his ax. He lost his edge... avoid losing yours.



## Have The Time of Your Life

Did you know that most successful people have a touch of laziness? That’s right, *laziness*. They’re great at determining the least amount of work they need to do to get their job done well. They then delegate the remainder of the work to someone else. They focus on high priority items and let low priority things slide. They accept that there will always be more to do than they can possibly accomplish in one day. They realize that no matter how fast they work, there will always be more work for tomorrow. They’ve shifted their focus from the details that need accomplishing to the bigger picture of life. They know that their time is their life. They spend their time on the people, places and things that really matter to them. Do you?

*“Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”*

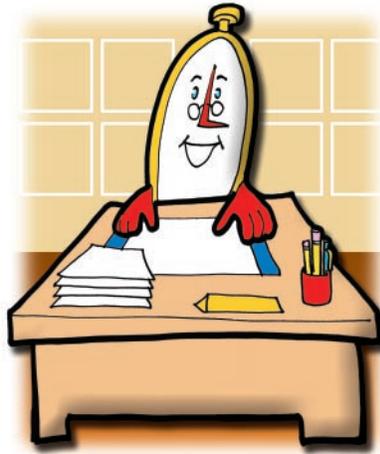
– **Albert Einstein**

## Eliminate Perfectionism in Your Life

**P**erfectionists have to do every thing 100 percent right even if it requires hours of extra time and effort that nets them nothing.

“Perfectionist traits,” if present in your life, should be avoided. Removing these habits from your life will add innumerable minutes to each day and even hours to each week of your life. You can then use this gained time for more productive purposes. **Look for these traits to eliminate in your life:**

- ▲ “Being indispensable” syndrome. You’re not the only one who can do it. If you are, then you’d be wise to take steps to change that. Delegate, pass on projects and share the work with others. Insist that subordinates notify you when it’s time to make a decision, a re-order, or a seasonal change but don’t remind them. Let go of more “stuff” and you’ll be pleased at how most of your peers rise to the occasion.
- ▲ Correcting everything. Unless a letter or memo is going to someone of great importance, a transposed letter or a slight misspelling won’t change your impression. After all, it’s the point that counts.



- ▲ Rewriting correspondence and reports. Learn to write them once and let them fly. Take a few extra minutes at the beginning to organize your thoughts or jot your thoughts down and have someone who’s proficient at writing compose the correspondence or report for you.
- ▲ Neatness to the extreme. Neatness and organization are not synonymous. Your pens don’t have to line up perfectly and it’s not necessary to remove all “clutter” from your workspace. It’s not clutter if it helps you work more effectively with things easy to locate.

## Utilize Commute Time Productively

Time spent driving your car doesn’t have to be a waste of your time. **Make it productive with these suggestions:**

- ◆ Use your commuting time as a meditation period. Psyche up for your work day on the way in and wind down from your struggles on the way home.
- ◆ Catch up on the daily news. Listen to an all-news radio station and you won’t have to read the newspaper when you arrive home.
- ◆ Listen and learn. Take along some cassettes or CDs to turn your commute into a learning experience. Entire books can be “read,” languages can be learned and assertiveness and positivity can be applied all during the 20 to 30 minutes you spend on your way to and from the office.



## Set Aside “Alone” Time

When you’re facing a complex problem or a difficult circumstance, you may need to be alone for a period of time. This time alone can be used to think things out, to become accustomed to the changes in your life and to solve some of your problems. When you find yourself wanting to be alone, set aside the time it takes to sort out the problems or frustrations you feel. If you put it off, you may become more uneasy and cause your problems to multiply.

## Set a Daily “Quiet” Hour

Many people allow themselves to be interrupted too often. It’s perhaps the most prevalent problem in most organizations.

Many assume that being interrupted by subordinates, peers and supervisors is just a regular part of the work day. But, it doesn’t have to be. Instead try setting aside one hour every day as your “Quiet Hour.”

During this time, ask to be shielded from all calls and visitors and close your door. You’ll be thrilled and astonished at the amount of work you can accomplish in just one uninterrupted hour!

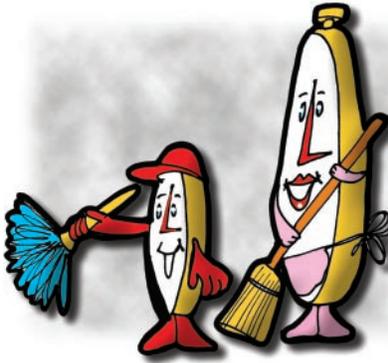
## Divide and Conquer!

Occasionally, tasks come along that appear to be too extensive to handle in the time allotted for them. With this situation, comes the dismal vision of long, hard, uninterrupted days of work. But, if you divide your big chores into manageable parts with fixed time limits, you can conquer it bit by bit without undue stress.

## Getting Chores Done Effeciently

**K**eeping your house organized and running well requires group effort. **Here's what you can do to get your kids more involved in doing household chores:**

- ◆ Offer options. Present your children with the jobs to be done, and ask them which ones they want to do. Distribute tasks evenly, but be considerate of age and ability level.
- ◆ Create a simple and consistent system. Have them do the same chores regularly until they become a habit, and post a chore chart as a visual reminder of their responsibilities.
- ◆ Reinforce with rewards. Reward young children with stickers for the chores they check off. Encourage your kids to plan ahead and finish their chores early, so they'll be able to play when they want to later.
- ◆ Stop picking up the slack for kids who know better. If older children are incurably messy, sit down with them, and outline an exact list of the



things you want them to do. Write a contract, and have them sign it.

- ◆ Teach young children how to do little things on their own. Little ones can learn how to make beds, put away groceries, feed pets, or operate a hand vacuum. This can be a great confidence booster for them as well.
- ◆ Play the "pick up" game. When the living room or other area is a disaster, have kids race to see who can pick up and put away the most things in five minutes. This will clear the way for you to do more serious cleaning.

## When Giving Your Kids Allowance

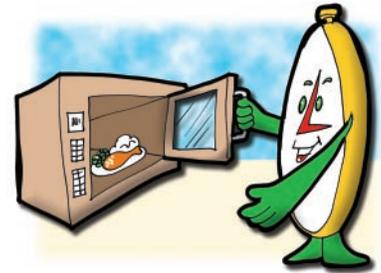
Giving your kids an allowance can be a great learning tool for teaching them how to plan, prioritize and set their own goals. **The following are things to take into account when giving children an allowance:**

- ▲ Settle on a reasonable amount. Rather than relying on how much you got when you were young, consider how much things cost today. Give an amount that will require them to save their money and choose what they want to buy.
- ▲ Designate an allowance day. You may want this to be a weekly, semimonthly, or monthly event. If your children run out of money before this day, teach them to budget their money rather than reinforce bad habits by giving them more.
- ▲ Establish parameters. Tell your kids the things that are off limits for them to buy, and require them to get your permission before buying expensive items that are over a certain dollar figure. Keep an eye on what your children purchase.
- ▲ Help them learn from their mistakes. Talk through the times when they make unwise purchases. Help them set goals to save money for the things they really want to avoid splurging on impulse buys.
- ▲ Encourage giving. Ask them to set aside a certain percentage of their allowance to give away to charitable causes. Fostering a generous spirit is a healthy part of encouraging a balanced approach to money.

## Quick Meals

Life may be busy, but you need time to eat and to eat healthily. **To cut down on the time it takes you to make dinner:**

- ❖ Plan out the week's meals in advance. Note which nights you'll have more or less time to cook. Consult people's schedules to find out when they'll be eating at home.
- ❖ Stay on top of your shopping list. Post a grocery list on your refrigerator for adding items as needed, so you won't have to make more trips for the things you forget.



- ❖ Keep a recipe library to refer to for ideas. Arrange recipes according to the time they take to prepare, and underline or highlight perishable ingredients that you'll have to add to your shopping list.
- ❖ Stock up on easy-to-prepare food items. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables offer a healthy side dish to any meal as do precut salad greens, vegetables and cheeses. Frozen chicken breasts are an easy addition to rice, pasta, soups and salads.
- ❖ When you do cook, double the recipe. Freeze the extra servings in individual portions that you can heat up on nights when there's no time to cook. Or, spend one day a week cooking and freezing several meals at once.
- ❖ Multitask in the kitchen. While dinner is cooking, use this time to do the prep work for upcoming meals. Chop, peel and grate ingredients.

## Good Communication: Using the Right Words

**Y**ou often hear careless communicators attempt to rid themselves of responsibility for clarity with a comment such as, “Well, we’re just arguing over semantics now,” meaning, “You’re getting picky. Let’s drop the issue and move ahead.”

Semantics is no small matter. During the 1995 clean-up effort at the Oklahoma City bombsite, civilian officials asked for “d-con units” to protect rescue workers from disease as they climbed through the mangled rubble. Their idea of decontamination units were those in which they could hose down people leaving the disaster scene. The military reservists were hustling behind the scenes to find their version of “d-con units” – those worn as protection from nuclear contamination. Needless to say, the former kind proved easier and less expensive to locate than the latter.

If you’re told an organization has “limited resources,” does that mean they have a shortage of money, workers, or expertise? When someone says the project will be done “as soon as possible,” should you expect it by noon, tomorrow, or next week? And if you’ve been informed there’s been a “significant increase in productivity,” does that mean 6 percent, 16 percent, or 60 percent?

It all comes down to semantics – that word everyone’s heard of, but few understand. Webster defines semantics as “the meaning of speech forms.” Simply put, what we mean by what we say.

What could be more important than communicating effectively and being understood? The misuse of a single word can alter the entire results of an opinion poll, a set of directions, a personality profile, an apology, or an argument.

**The following are a few guidelines for understanding semantics:**

- ◆ Understand the message. What are the actual words being used? Do you know what each means? Are the words too technical? Too ambiguous? Too regional?
- ◆ Definitions come in two types. The denotative definition is the literal dictionary meaning, whereas the connotative definition is the meaning a word takes on with a particular use or in a certain culture. The denotative meaning of “adequate” is sufficient, ample. But when your manager tells you that your handling of a project or an account has

been “adequate,” you feel disappointed. Aristotle said, “The beginning of wisdom is the definition of term.” If we’re wise, we’ll dust off our dictionaries and brush up on our vocabulary.

- ◆ Know the messenger. Who is speaking? Is the person’s position that of a superior, a peer, or a subordinate? Do you know the person well enough to recognize unique styles or mannerisms? Just as no two people are alike, neither are the ways in which they express themselves. Knowing the “who” of your conversation can give you valuable insights into the “what,” “why” and “how.” You can bet that an

accountant from New York City communicates differently than a publicist from El Paso. The better you know the messenger, the better you’ll understand the message.

- ◆ Consider the context. In what environment is the communication taking place? Is it formal or informal? Serious or flippant? A large crowd or an intimate setting? What’s true in the real estate industry also applies to communication: location is everything. Conversations in copier rooms and fitness clubs are much different than those in boardrooms or at formal dinners.

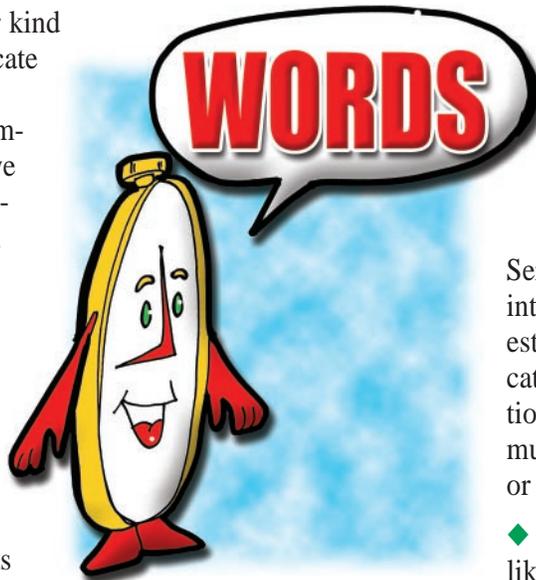
- ◆ Ask yourself what atmosphere you’d like to create in your conversations, and choose the surroundings accordingly. Just

as an awareness of a particular course gives a golfer a distinct strategic advantage, familiarity with the environments of your conversations can give you helpful insights. While boardrooms exude a no-nonsense atmosphere, personal offices are usually more informal. Conference rooms tend to be more neutral, and break rooms are more conducive to chitchat.

Effective communication isn’t just knowing the right words to use. It’s making the words we use make sense to others. Master words, and you master conversations. Master the art of conversation, and you build relationships.



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Publisher: Ronnie Marroquin

Managing Editor: Kimberly Denman

Illustrations by RMS Graphics

ISSN 1074-3006

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Dressing for Success

Here are some timely tips for maintaining your wardrobe:

- ◆ Assemble one complete outfit for emergencies. Keep it at the front of your closet for the next morning you're behind schedule.
- ◆ Never hang anything up in your closet that isn't ready to wear. Set aside items that need mending or ironing in a basket.
- ◆ When buying clothing, check the label first. If it requires dry-cleaning, it may cost you more time and hassle than it's worth.
- ◆ Carry makeup in a transparent pouch or case. Women can then spot exactly what they're looking for without having to dig through their entire purse.

*"The older I get the more wisdom I find in the ancient rule of taking first things first – a process which often reduces the most complex human problem to a manageable proportion."*

– Dwight Eisenhower

### Stack Your Priorities Today

Life is a continuous flow of old and new activities. To keep your priorities on top, you need a daily time-management system that can adapt to the new tasks that come your way. **Try these tips for keeping priorities on top:**

- ▲ Get a stack of 3x5 notecards. Write down each task you need to do for the week on a separate card.
- ▲ Divide the cards into categories. Make a pile for the things you must do and one for the things you want to do.
- ▲ Sort the stacks by priority. Put your top-priority card on top of the stack and the rest in descending order of importance.
- ▲ Do the task on the top card first. Keeping the pile on top of your desk will remind you not to procrastinate.
- ▲ When a new task presents itself, make a card for it. Reshuffle your stack as needed to reflect your priorities.
- ▲ When you've completed a task, toss the card in the trash. Relish in your accomplishment and then move on to doing the next card on top.
- ▲ Remember your stack of "want to" cards, too. Set a goal to do at least one thing from this stack each day.
- ▲ Resort your cards at the beginning of each day. Make sure first things stay first.



### Before You Stand in Another Line...

What's one of the top 10 ways to waste time? Standing in the wrong line. If you're in line and aren't sure if you're in the right one, save yourself some time. Instead of waiting until you reach the front to find out, ask the person standing next to you to hold your place for a moment. Then go to the front of the line and ask politely, "Excuse me, may I ask a quick question? Is this the line for...?" If it's not, you'll be glad you asked.