



filling the time jar

GOAL SETTING WORKBOOK

Ruth Soukup

www.LivingWellSpendingLess.com

WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK?

Life moves fast. There is too much to do and seemingly never quite enough time to get it all done. If we're not careful we will squander our precious moments without ever having accomplished our dreams.

While there is no magic way to stop time, or even slow it down, there is a way to work smarter, faster, and more efficiently, all while maintaining a greater sense of purpose.

This goals and priorities workbook will not fix your life but it will help clarify the problems. Even more importantly, it will help you create a clear plan for solving them, as well help you develop a strategy for reaching your long term goals.

The rest, of course, is up to you!

xOxO,

Ruth



TIME
is what we want most, but what we use worst.
William Penn

BIG THINGS FIRST

I read a story recently about a professor who held up a jar of rocks to his class. He asked them, *is this jar full?* They all agreed that it was. Then he took a bag of small pebbles and poured it into the jar. The pebbles filled in the space around the jar and he asked, *now is it full?* Everyone again said yes. He then took a bag of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filtered through the rocks and pebbles until all the space was filled. *What about now,* he asked, *do you think it is full?* For the third time the class said yes. Finally he took a pitcher of water and poured the water into the jar until it was all the way to the brim and began spilling over the top. Now, he said, *we can say the jar is really full.* He then asked his class an important question: *Do you think, he said, if I had started with the water, then the sand, and then the pebbles, there would still be room for the rocks?*

If we think of our lives as a jar of rocks the illustration is pretty clear. **We have to fill our jar with the big stuff first or it will get filled up by all the little stuff and there won't be any room left.** When it comes to time management, that means we have to make time for the big stuff first, before we tackle the easy and the mundane.

Even though I had heard that illustration before, this time, as I was searching for a solution to my time management issues, it stuck. I started applying that strategy to my life. Almost immediately I started getting more done in less time, and had more time to do the things I really wanted to do.

Do you want to know what my secret was?

Writing it down.

The difference between a dream and a goal is often nothing more than a piece of paper. This workbook, therefore, will hopefully be the piece of paper that turns your wishes into reality.

If you want to make good use of your **TIME, you've got to know what's most important and then give it all you've got.**

Lee Iacocca

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STEP ONE: LIST YOUR PRIORITIES


You can't prioritize your time if you aren't clear--even if just to yourself--about what is most important to you. Is it your family? Your spouse? Serving your church or community? Getting your blood pressure under control or losing 50 pounds? Is it finishing your degree? Getting your house in order or remodeled or ready to sell? Getting in shape or training to run a marathon? Getting a promotion or establishing your own business? Getting your budget under control, paying off all your debt, or establishing an emergency fund?

Your priorities can and will change based on your season of life, but the first step in taking control of your time is determining what matters most right now. Take ten minutes to write down the 5-10 things that are most important to you in the season of life you are in right now. Don't base them on how you have been spending your time, but on what actually matters most to you.

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LIST AS MANY THINGS AS YOU CAN THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU (I.E. KIDS, SPOUSE, GOD, ETC), AS WELL AS ALL THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU CURRENTLY SPEND YOUR TIME (I.E. WORK, CRAFTING, COMPUTER, ETC.):

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*In truth, people can generally make time for what they **CHOOSE** to do; it is not really the time but the will that is lacking.*

Sir John Lubbock

Next, with a **red marker** circle the five things that currently take up the most of your time. With a **green marker**, circle the things that are most important to you. How many of your green and red circles overlap?

NOW USING YOUR GREEN CIRCLES AS A GUIDE, LIST THE FIVE THINGS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN ORDER OF PRIORITY:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

These are your priorities. This is where you should be focusing most of your time and energy. Refer to this list often, or post it in a spot where you can see it every single day--on your phone, next to your bed, in your Bible, in your planner. The more clear you are about your priorities, the easier to make wise choices about your time.

Most of us spend too much time on what is urgent and not enough time on what is important.

Stephen R. Covey

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STEP TWO: SET SPECIFIC GOALS

Close your eyes and imagine your life in detail five years from now. Where do you live? Where do you work? What is your job title? What do you look like? What does your house look like? How much money do you have in the bank? Where did it come from? What is your relationship with your kids and spouse? How do you spend time together? What do you do in your free time? What are your hobbies? Where do you volunteer? Spend a few minutes day-dreaming about what your ideal life would look like five years from now, then write it down.



You must have long term goals to keep you from being frustrated by short term failures.

Charles C. Noble

With this vision of the distant future fresh in your mind, it is time to set your long term goals. List five major things you would like to accomplish by this time next year. Be as specific as possible. Use dates and locations and quantifiable goals whenever possible. Thus, if you want to run a marathon, write down which marathon on what date. If your goal is to read more, write down how many books, or better yet, how many fiction, non-fiction, biography, etc. Don't list more than five or you might forget some of them.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now that your long term goals are in place, give some thought to your short term goals. What is it that you want to get done in the next month? Is there any small chunk of your long term goals that you could do right away? Set five manageable goals for the things you would like to accomplish in the next month, then repeat this process every 30 days.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

A year FROM NOW you may WISH you HAD STARTED TODAY.
Karen Lamb

STEP THREE: EAT THE FROG

I read a book a few years ago that totally changed the way I approached my daily task list. It was called [*Eat That Frog: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get Things Done*](#) by Brian Tracy. It got its name from a quote by Mark Twain, who famously once said something to the effect of “if you eat a live frog for breakfast, chances are that will be the worst thing you have to do all day.” The point of the quote—and the book—was that if you start your day by tackling your hardest but most important tasks, even if you don’t do that much for the rest of the day, you will still have accomplished a lot.

Life moves fast and it is far too easy to get sucked into mundane--albeit essential--tasks of the everyday. We spend our time putting out fires or escaping into the time-wasting vortex of social media and email. It all seems so important, so urgent, but before we know it, we’ve spent the whole day reacting to other people rather than proactively reaching our own goals.

My own life changed dramatically when I changed the order in which I completed my task list. Most importantly, I stopped checking email first thing in the morning, and instead focused those first few hours of my day on long-term projects and goals. As a result, my productivity skyrocketed and I was finally able to start accomplishing the things I really wanted to.

If you want to jumpstart your productivity, take a moment to decide which important tasks you will do first thing every day, and which less important tasks you will put off until later. Make it a goal to set aside a certain amount of time, whether it be 30 minutes or two hours, to focus each day on your long term goals.

BEGINNING TOMORROW, I WILL SET ASIDE _____ MINUTES FIRST THING EVERY SINGLE DAY TO WORK ON MY LONG TERM GOALS AND MOST IMPORTANT TASKS.

UNTIL I HAVE “EATEN MY FROG,” I WILL NOT DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING LESS ESSENTIAL TASKS:

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning.
Chances are it will be the worst thing you do all day.

Mark Twain

STEP FOUR: RESET YOUR HABITS

I read another book recently called [The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business](#) that has also greatly impacted how I structure my day. One of the many interesting points the book made is that our brains are wired to form habits. These habits can become good or bad, but once something has become a true habit, a different part of our brain takes over and we begin to perform that particular habit on autopilot. This means we no longer have to use mental energy to perform the task, which leaves our brain free to focus on getting other things done.

I used to get frustrated with myself because it seemed like I would start out my day so well, but at the end I would just fizzle, with no energy left to put towards any sort of productive endeavor. After reading this book, I realized that because my willpower in a given day is limited, the more good habits I create for myself, the more willpower and energy I will have leftover to use towards other things. I decided to make a list of the things I wanted to do automatically every morning. My list included drinking a glass of water, planning my day over a cup of coffee, having personal devotion & prayer time, then writing for at least 90 minutes. After several weeks of doing this every day, I finally stopped thinking about it. I would find myself in the kitchen drinking my water before I was even fully awake. It takes almost no effort to get my day started off right, and at the end of my writing session, when I take a morning break, I still feel refreshed and ready to conquer the rest of my day.

LIST THE 5 MORNING HABITS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

LIST THE 5 EVENING HABITS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

Aristotle

STEP FIVE: ELIMINATE THE UNESSENTIAL

I think for me getting rid of the things I don't really need to be doing is probably the hardest part. Everyone has a few time fillers they could probably eliminate from their day, whether it be baking something from scratch when it could be store-bought, spending an hour watching TV or drooling over Pinterest, or even taking on a few too many commitments.

This is where the priority list and goal setting becomes so important! If when you look at your day, you find that much of your time is filled with things that don't match up to your priorities or your most important goals, then something has to give. Start small--eliminate 3-5 things in your life that are taking up time but not adding much value. Just stop doing them. Yes, I know it is easier said than done, but making a conscious decision paves the way for change.

GO BACK TO STEP ONE AND EXAMINE ALL THE THINGS YOU LISTED THAT ARE CURRENTLY OCCUPYING YOUR TIME. **CIRCLE IN YELLOW** THE ONES THAT ARE UNESSENTIAL--THE ONES THAT EITHER DON'T FALL IN LINE WITH YOUR GOALS OR FIT WITH YOUR PRIORITIES. OF THOSE CIRCLED IN YELLOW, WHICH FIVE THINGS COULD YOU ELIMINATE FROM YOUR LIFE COMPLETELY?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

"THINGS WHICH MATTER MOST MUST NEVER BE AT THE MERCY OF THINGS WHICH MATTER LEAST."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

PROGRESS

Regular self-evaluation is the key to long-term success. Use this page to evaluate your progress once a week. How has your life changed? Have you been more productive? Where have you seen success? What has been most difficult? What goals have you reached?

WEEK ONE:

WEEK TWO:

WEEK THREE:

WEEK FOUR:

WEEK FIVE:

“It is necessary ... for a man to go away by himself ... to sit on a rock ... and ask, 'Who am I, where have I been, and where am I going?'”

Carl Sandburg