

Activity 16.2: Getting Organized.

Use this activity to assess and improve your basic organizational practices.

Part 1: Organization self-assessment

Suggestion. Place check marks next to all lines below that currently apply to you.

- I feel well organized most of the time.
- I feel frustrated because I have too little time to do the things I enjoy.
- I often feel overwhelmed, harried, hassled, or not in control.
- It frequently takes quite a while for me to find what I need.
- I miss appointments and forget deadlines.
- I have trouble remembering holidays and birthdays.
- I am a last-minute shopper.
- I spend my time off doing errands and getting caught up so I don't get out of control.
- My food often spoils.
- I just don't get important things done, or I don't get them done until it's an emergency.
- I have so many clothes or shoes that I often can't decide what to wear.
- I avoid or don't maintain a budget.
- I can't get my work done because of clutter.
- I have piles of newspapers, clothes, and other stuff lying around the house or office.
- I feel embarrassed to have people in my home.
- I struggle to get out the door on time in the morning.
- I have so much stuff that I have a storage locker or need to get one.

★ If you checked more than two items, it's very likely that you will benefit from reorganization.

Part 2: Benefits of being more organized"

Organization—particularly ongoing organization aligned with your priorities—is a key to concurrently feeling more control over your life and really having the control that perpetuates higher levels of accomplishment. Of the many benefits of organization, one is that you learn what you have, don't have, need, should replace or attend to, no longer need, or should get rid of.

Part 4: “Put First Things First.”

Living your life based on what’s most important to you requires ongoing commitment to your mission throughout your life. It empowers you to say, “No,” without guilt when an activity or request undermines your mission or your health. As outlined below, it involves continually focusing on what’s most important and discerning between (1) what’s urgent and important (things you have to address immediately), and (2) what’s important but is not urgent (prevention, relationship building, learning, organizing /planning, and self-care). It allows you to minimize the unimportant but seemingly urgent tasks (non-vital communications, meetings, some popular events) and disregard, as much as you can, the unimportant, non-urgent issues, such as communications you don’t need and things that you may enjoy but just aren’t you priority.

Steven Covey’s Time Management Matrix

| | Urgent | Not Urgent |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Important | I | II |
| Unimportant | III | IV |

Covey notes that effective people spend most of their activity in quadrant II; they are focused on important aspects of their life that are not in crisis. This doesn’t mean they don’t address urgent and important matters; it means they have their act together well enough that few of their important issues become urgent, as they’ve already proactively taken action to minimize emergencies. It also means that they’re very efficient with their limited time.

Source. Covey, S. (1989). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. New York: Simon and Shuster, p. 151.

How can you utilize this system or another to focus on what’s truly most important?

Part 5. Diagram what your organized self. What would you consistently be and do? What would occur because of your greater organization?

What's the most important organizational task to start with—the change that will either make the most difference or after successful completion will likely facilitate even more progress.

Is anything holding you back from making this happen? How can you overcome these obstacles?

Part 6. Commitments. What are the key things you will actually do because of this activity? When?

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