

TWU Counseling Center

Prioritizing

Doing the "balancing act" in your everyday life requires careful and thoughtful planning of how to spend your time and energy. In order to plan effectively, however, it's important to know what your priorities are.

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT PRIORITIES:

1. Your priorities are based on what you value (achievement, intimacy, personal satisfaction, independence, caretaking, etc.) and what your goals are (establishing/maintaining a career, raising a family, finding/maintaining a committed relationship, etc.)
2. Since you are a unique individual with your own values and goals, your priorities will be somewhat different from those of others. They may conflict with the priorities of those close to you; it is important to understand what your own priorities are before you decide to adjust to others priorities.
3. You are the ultimate decision-maker about your life. Even when you compromise, you are deciding to compromise.
4. Priorities are relative to each other. What you are saying is that for you at this time, activity X is more important to do than activity Y.
5. As your life changes, so do your priorities. Keep yourself aware of what your priorities are as life changes.

THE PROCESS OF PRIORITIZING:

FIRST, THERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT AN ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO ASSESS WHERE IT LIES IN YOUR LIST OF PRIORITIES

1. What are the costs vs. the benefits of doing it?
2. How well does it fit into my goals?
3. Is there a deadline for doing it?
4. How enjoyable is it?
5. Have I promised/agreed to do it?
6. What need(s) of mine will I satisfy by doing it?

PRIORITIZING YOUR DAY

1. Before you go to bed, on a blank piece of paper (a 3x5 card will do) write the six most important tasks you have to do tomorrow.
2. Number them in the order of their importance to you.
3. Carry this sheet with you.
4. In the morning look at item one and start working on it. Pull the sheet out of your pocket every 15 minutes and look at item one until it is finished.
5. Tackle item two in the same way, then item three, etc.
6. Don't be concerned if you only finished two or three, or even if you only finish one item. You'll be working on the important ones. The others can wait.
7. Spend the last five minutes of every day making out a 'must' list for the next day's tasks.

PRIORITIZING LONGER PERIODS OF TIME

1. You can use the same basic system for any period of time.
2. For any period, write down the six most important tasks to do to complete the desired objective.
3. Prioritize them.
4. Work on them one at a time.
5. Review your progress each day and re-prioritize as needed.
6. Grant yourself a reward when you accomplish important tasks.