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# **First Things First – Time Management**

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**In Moore SY, Cameron-Lewis RG, Ferris FD (eds). Leadership Development Initiative Curriculum, 2014. © The Leadership Development Initiative.**

**ISBN: 978-0-9884318-0-5**

**Originally Presented by [Shannon Moore](#) & [Eileen Piersa](#)**

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The Leadership Development Initiative gratefully acknowledges the support of:

- International Palliative Care Initiative, Open Society Foundations, New York, NY
- National Cancer Institute Center for Global Health, Bethesda, MD
- The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, London, United Kingdom
- National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Alexandria, VA
- Pettus Family Foundation

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and editors, and does not necessarily represent the official views of any of the funders.

Acknowledgment and appreciation are extended to faculty and staff of the OhioHealth and the Institute for Palliative Medicine at San Diego Hospice (which housed the International Programs and the Leadership Development Initiative from 2009 to 2012). Special thanks to the Mentors, Consultants and the LDI Team who contributed so much to the LDI Curriculum.

### **Contact the LDI Team**

E-mail: [Frank.Ferris@OhioHealth.com](mailto:Frank.Ferris@OhioHealth.com)

Frank D. Ferris, MD

The Leadership Development Initiative

Kobacker House

800 McConnell Dr

Columbus, OH, USA 43214-3463

Phone: +1 (614) 533-6299

Fax: +1 (614) 533-6200

## Overview

It is common to hear complaints that there isn't enough time to get done all that is on a to-do list or calendar. With leadership, and the responsibility that accompanies that role, there will be a never-ending 'to-do' list, and the possibility of frustration. To optimize one's effectiveness and efficiency, it is helpful to find a self-management framework that helps prioritize items 'on the list'. From *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Habit #3 is First Things First. In the book, Covey describes an approach using a 2x2 matrix to analyze how time is actually spent (daily, weekly, monthly) versus how time might be 'spent' if mindfully determined. After identifying 'the first things' in your life, and filling in the rest of the quadrants (worksheet provided), the areas for change are clearer. The important / not urgent quadrant is the section where the most important and personal (legacy, loving, learning, living) components of life are found, and is the quadrant most often ignored.

The participants are invited to complete the analysis and make a commitment to change any item that is misaligned with personal values. An intentional 'yes' to engage in an activity supports making commitments that reflect the leaders' highest value; 'first things first'. A leader with well-aligned priorities and intentionality will be much more effective, and happier too.

## Objectives

After this presentation, participants will:

1. Identify the importance of time management based on values and priorities.
2. Identify and organize personal priorities by their relative importance.

## Important Teaching Points

- Time management is a learned skill (and is closely tied to self-management).
- What is 'urgent' is often not important.
- What is 'important' is often not urgent.
- What is 'urgent' is often not your priority.
- Learning to say "no" is an important step to control your time.
- Use "Let me think about that and I will get back to you" or other phrase that gives you assessment time.
- Multi-tasking actually diffuses one's focus; better to do one thing at a time and do it well.
- Aim for equanimity; steadiness of mind under stress.

## Resources / References

1. Covey, Stephen R. (2004). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.
2. Covey, Stephen R. & Merrill Roger and Rebecca (1994). *First Things First*. New York, NY: Free Press.
3. Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2008). *The Leadership Challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.