

There is an ancient Zen Master saying: “You should meditate for 20 minutes a day. Unless you are too busy. In that case, you should meditate for 60 minutes a day.”

Each person has the same amount of time in each day: 24 hours. It is our choice how we spend that time. 99% of the time, being “too busy” or “not having time” is NOT a matter of hours and minutes, but rather it is a matter of priorities.

When you “prioritize” something, it means you put it first. Black Sashes put first things first. They take time to determine what is the most important goal they have and what their top values are, and then give those things MOST of their time and energy. Black Sashes do the most important things BEFORE they do the least important things.

Humans are not meant to live under the constant stress of “not having enough time” to do the things they need to. Today’s world is very fast paced, and it takes just a little pre-planning and organization in order to stay ahead. This is why the Zen Master recommends taking a time to meditate each morning. Black Sashes meditate each morning to clear the mind of distractions and unimportant thoughts. This allows them to work efficiently, with more ease and creativity, which actually frees up more time for them.

If we are not actively deciding where our time goes, we are not being accountable for it. It ends up ruling over us and we feel frazzled, rushed, and unhappy with ourselves because we don’t accomplish the things we actually wanted to. So what are you putting your time into?

We can sort out our daily tasks using the 4-Quadrant System (explained on the back). There are 4 attributes, or qualities that each task will have. They are: IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT, URGENT, and NOT URGENT



IMPORTANT means it’s very important to you and your long-term goals, such as practicing meditation or studying for your math test. URGENT means it’s in your face asking for immediate attention, such as a phone call or a severe injury. Each task in your day will have two attributes.

Take the task of “playing on your tablet”. It might be fun, but it is decidedly NOT IMPORTANT. It is also not asking to be played, so it is also NOT URGENT.

How about the task of “practicing your kung fu form”? Since you have the goal to be a Black Sash, then this task should be labeled IMPORTANT. However, no one is going to physically force you to do it, so it is also labeled NOT URGENT.

Now try the task of “walking the dog”? Your pets are very important to you, so this task should be labeled (IMPORTANT or UNIMPORTANT?) Also, your dog will pee all over the floor if you don’t walk him so this task should be labeled (URGENT or NOT URGENT?)

CONTINUED ON THE BACK ---->

ACCOUNTABILITY ASSIGNMENT #3

NAME: _____

Complete the assignment to earn 1 homework stripe on your belt.

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The next task is the “watching an advertisement on Youtube”. You know you don’t care about the product being sold, so this task should be labeled as (IMPORTANT or UNIMPORTANT?) However, it came up, in your face, and is demanding to be watched if you want to see your Youtube video, so this task is labeled (URGENT or NOT URGENT?)

Ideally you want to do IMPORTANT/NOT URGENT things first. These are the things we need to do to take care of ourselves, like meditate, making the bed in the morning, getting proper sleep, practicing kung fu, reading a book, and studying in advanced for a test at school. We should do these things FIRST in order to make sure we are happy, healthy, and effective in our lives. Then with our extra time, with our work completed, we have time to relax.

When we procrastinate these things they end up in the IMPORTANT/URGENT category or they end up not happening at all. For instance, sleeping should be done at the proper time each night. If we don’t do that, we end up falling asleep at school at a bad time. What about doing your homework? If you do it early, then it belongs in Quadrant 2, where it is IMPORTANT but NOT URGENT. But if you wait until the last minute, it becomes URGENT, so it gets shoved over into Quadrant 1.

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: On a separate sheet of paper, record at least 10 activities or tasks you did in 1 day, and then sort them into the quadrants below. You may need help from your parent or other adult to help you understand the quadrants and where each activity goes. During Leadership circle, share 1 of your activities from each quadrant.

[Source: “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens” by Sean Covey]

| URGENT | | NOT URGENT | |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| IMPORTANT | <u>QUADRANT 1 - URGENT & IMPORTANT</u> | <u>QUADRANT 2 - NOT URGENT & IMPORTANT</u> | |
| | <u>QUADRANT 3 - URGENT & NOT IMPORTANT</u> | <u>QUADRANT 4 - NOT URGENT & NOT IMPORTANT</u> | |
| NOT IMPORTANT | | | |