

Coaching Tip #626

Exceptional Leaders -

Do Important and Urgent Tasks First



Exceptional leaders know they should not be too busy to do the essentials. In today's fast pace, where you have to run to stand still, it is very easy to get sucked into doing non-essential, feel good, check the box tasks. Tasks such as checking emails, return texts, writing checks, post on social media rather than attending to important and urgent issues first.

We often let simple distractions distract us from moving forward, or improving ourselves from yesterday. We lose focus on what we set our goals for the day. "Busyness" should not be used as an excuse to avoid tough decisions, critical conversation, or setting time aside for reflection.

Being busy should not be a reason for not maintaining relationships in and outside the workplace that are important for your success. I learn that relationship is the "grease" that loosens "stuck gears and noisy wheels" in our highly relational society. Take time to converse with direct reports, peers, customers, and vital stakeholders.

Exceptional leaders know that focusing on important and urgent and important and not urgent tasks yield both short and long term progress.



Some strategies to Do Important and Urgent Tasks First

- Eisenhower Decision Matrix - I have been using this similar matrix for the past 10 years. This 2x2 square helps me prioritize my tasks and keep tracks of what else I need to do. See link for a copy of [Eisenhower Decision matrix](#).
- Manage Your Distractions - To help you focus on your tasks, minimize distractions such as checking your emails, texts, phone calls or even sitting in a high traffic area. Put these distractions on silent or sleep and block yourself at least 20 mins from looking at them. This 20 minute time block will give you the necessary focus you need to complete one task.
- Know Your Highs and Lows - Knowing your energy's peaks and valleys will greatly help you stay focus and awake from sleepy eyes and involuntary mental vacations. Are you a morning, afternoon or night person? Try to schedule important and urgent tasks during peak hours.