

Maximize your Effective Time

4 – Critical steps

Would you like to manage time? Then the first thing to do is to learn how to control the speed with which the earth revolves around the sun. You can't do that? Then how can you manage time? The first lesson in managing time is to accept that time can't be managed. People can't manage time because they are trying to manage something over which they have no control. So what can you manage? You can manage how you use time. You can manage what you do with the time you have. You can manage your activities. You can manage the priority that you want to give to each activity. So let's see how to do this in such a way that we can maximize the benefit we can derive from time.

Step 1

The first step is to determine your purpose in life. You may define this in any way you like, but a good way is to first define it in an overall lifetime context and then to break it down into smaller goals over shorter periods.

For example my life purpose is; **"To help people to make their dreams come true."**

Defining your Life Purpose is critical because everything else hinges on it. This is the criterion by which you will judge whether the time you spend in any activity is well spent or not. There are several ways to get to your Life Purpose.

The best way is to ask yourself the question: **What do I want to be remembered for?**

Here's a small exercise that may help you to arrive at your Life Purpose. Imagine that today is the last day of your working life. Your colleagues (everyone who ever worked with you) are having a party to felicitate you and several of them who know you intimately having worked closely with you are speaking about how you impacted them, their lives and environment.

What would you like to hear them say? Write all these thoughts down and from it, extract a crisp clear statement that says what you exist in this world to do.

Remember that your Life Purpose has to give meaning only to you, make sense only to you and energize and inspire only you. It is your own private statement and is not an imitation of someone else's statement that you may have heard or read about. It is not some proverb or similar holy-motherhood statement. It is you, in essence. Your dream for yourself. If your Life Purpose statement does not light a fire in your belly, then it is not right for you, no matter how neat it may sound. So please be true to yourself when you do this first and most critical of steps.

Step 2

Now do a calculation: **Total Time – Maintenance Time = Available time.**

Example

Total Time = 24 hours

Maintenance Time
Sleep, eating, bathing, toilet, driving to work, TV, surfing the net etc: = 16 hours

Available Time = 8 hours

Step 3

Calculating 'Effective Time'

This step allows you to take a snap shot of how you spend your time currently so that you can diagnose for yourself any changes that you may need to make.

Create a Time Log

Simply think of a normal working day. Start from the time you woke up and go on to the time you go to sleep. Write down what you were doing every half hour.

Time	Activity
5.30	
6.00	
6.30	
7.00	
7.30	
8.00	
8.30	

Record what you did every half hour for the whole day

You will find when doing this that there will be times when you can't recall what exactly you were doing. Leave that slot blank. Also make sure that you put specific activities only in each slot. For example don't write 9.00 am to 5.00 pm: At work. You need to write down what exactly you were doing for each half hour of that time. Remember, it is your life.

Now analyze the times that you can recall doing something specific and see which of these activities were those that help you to achieve your Life Purpose. Add all of those together.

The total number of hours you come up with is called your Effective Time per day.

Step 4

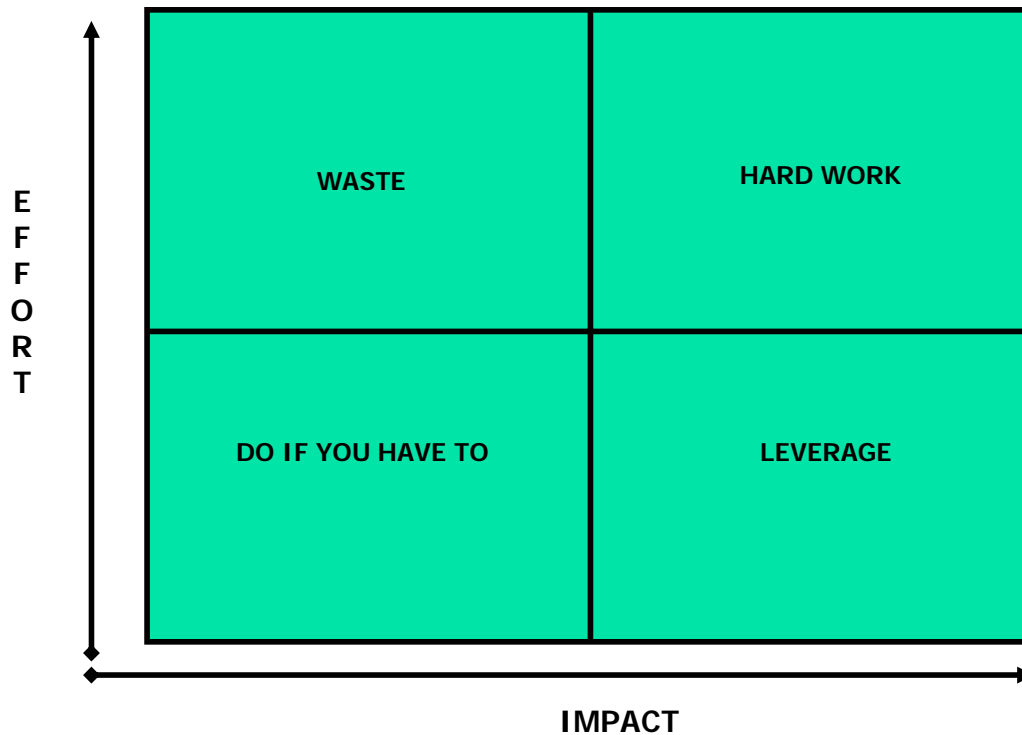
Finally make a Life Expectancy calculation. For instance, take a work life expectancy of 70 years being the age at which you will probably need to retire. Subtract your present age from this. What is left is the number of years of potentially productive life you have ahead of you. Now look at your Life Purpose and the total number of hours of Effective Time per day you have and ask yourself if this amount of time is sufficient for you to achieve your Life Purpose.

If not, then you will need to do something about increasing the number of hours of Effective Time per day. Otherwise the purpose of your life that you defined for yourself will remain unachieved. Remember that the saddest words in any language are, "If only". Because if one has to say these words, it is understood that the time when s/he could have done something is past and apart from crying impotent tears of regret, there is nothing that one can do.

After doing all the calculations above if you believe that perhaps you need to make some changes in how you spend your time, here are 2 tools to maximize your Effective Time.

Tool 1: Effort – Impact Analysis

20% of what you do, produces 80% of the results



Look at your Time Log and analyze every activity based on the effort/time it takes and the impact it creates. Write each activity in the quadrant where it belongs. Then take action:

1. Eliminate all Waste activities.
2. Delegate the Do If You Have To activities. Or if they can't be delegated minimize the time spent in doing them.
3. Maximize the Leverage activities.
4. Plan and invest in the Hard Work activities especially as they will take more time.

Tool 2: Prioritize based on Impact daily

1. Everyday make a list of 3 activities you need to do in order of priority according to impact.
2. Then start on the 1st and continue until you finish it. If you are interrupted, go back to it and complete it. Then go on to the next.
3. If any are left over, re-write the list the next day in the same way.

Remember that managing time is about managing yourself. It depends on your own ability to discipline yourself and your own commitment to your Life Purpose. The best way to keep yourself on track and to energize yourself when you seem to be losing steam is to remind yourself that the chief beneficiary of this effort is YOU.

Remember, it is NOT about time at all. It is about LIFE. YOUR LIFE

For more information and a full day seminar, please contact yawarbaig@gmail.com