



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

## ← TIME MANAGEMENT →

We make lists, we use date books, we scribble on calendars, and we still manage to miss appointments and lose track of our day. There just never seems to be an end in sight. Getting organized and taking a little time to do it sometimes involves more than a list and some color-coded marking pens. Our attitudes, habits, and thoughts affect how we manage our time, and changing them takes more work than we sometimes realize.

The key to time management is finding a system that works for you. Your attitudes and style are different than anyone else, which makes your management of time unique. Take a good look at your own daily regiment, and the suggestions that follow could very well save you a lot of time in your day.

### TAKING TIME OUT

One thing people tend to forget is to take time out every once in a while to refuel. Overextended college students are professionals in giving all of their time to the millions of things happening on campus. They are terrible at claiming some of that time for themselves. Even if it is just twenty minutes a day, busy people need down time. If we do not take a moment to recharge with a cup of tea, a quick nap, or just one deep breath in the course of our day, we are cutting down our trees with a dull ax. A quick sharpening does wonders for our productivity, and saves a world of time in the long run.

### MAKING LISTS

Everyone makes lists from time to time; some of us live by them, and some of us can never seem to even find them. The key to making lists is using them to organize yourself efficiently. Here are some suggestions from Mayer about using them, but remember, you need to find a system that works best for you.

- ◆ Keep your list on a large piece of lined paper. A notepad works well because it is not lost as easily as a scrap of paper.
- ◆ Write down all tasks as they come up. As an assignment is given or a phone call comes in that needs a response, write it down. Your list will not help you if it contains only some of the things you need to get done.
- ◆ Take your list with you to class and to meetings. This way you can add things to it as they come up.
- ◆ Do not waste time rewriting your lists. Just cross off what you have completed and continue adding jobs to the bottom. Don't over-organize. You will find great satisfaction in crossing items off your list.
- ◆ Keep your list on top of your desk or somewhere prominent. Throwing it in a drawer makes it inaccessible.

There once was a man. He got a job as a woodsman, cutting down trees. His brand new ax cut trees easily, and the woodsman soon became the best woodsman around. He cut more trees faster than anyone else. After some time his ax became dull and he was able to cut fewer trees. He was cutting fewer trees and taking more time to do it. Finally, a friend asked him why he did not stop to have his ax sharpened. The woodsman replied, "I have to cut down trees. That's why."  
-Mayer

- ◆ When your list is about 50% completed, transfer it to a second list. This will keep you organized and your piece of paper won't fill up. Just be sure that you don't lose anything in transit.

- ◆ Don't be intimidated by a long list. Roll up your sleeves and tackle it.

If you look on your list, each of your tasks will probably fall into one of three categories. Some of them are small, trivial things like phone calls that need to be returned and errands that need to be run. A few of them are more important than these, but there is time to complete them before their deadlines are up. And a couple of your tasks may fall into the urgent category; things which are due or overdue and need to be done right away. These are the tasks which cause us the greatest stress and ultimately burn us out. We like to do the trivial tasks because they take little time and crossing a couple of things off our list quickly makes us feel like we've accomplished a lot. The problem is that we often spend too much time on the little things and our larger projects suffer while their deadlines get closer.

The urgent tasks obviously need to be taken care of first. Once they are finished, focusing on the important tasks so they do not become urgent is essential. If we can keep items out of the urgent category, our peace of mind suffers less. Spending the majority of our time on the important tasks will keep us from feeling like we are always running to keep up with our responsibilities. This way we stay a step ahead of them.

- ◆ Following are a few other general hints to help you manage your time:
  - ◆ Find your prime study time. Use that time to study and take care of errands at less productive times.
  - ◆ Be sure to delegate. Executive officers carry a lot of responsibility, but they need not do everything themselves. Delegate tasks and allow others to feel a valuable part of the organization.
  - ◆ Once you're organized, stay organized. The time you spend on organization saves you time in the long run.

- ◆
- ◆ Art of Delegating  
Stress Awareness for Student Leaders

## REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

---

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.  
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*