

How Important is It?

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In view of the high-speed tempo of living as experienced by most of us these days, it is highly important that each of us spend some thoughtful time in analyzing our various duties, activities, and general mode of living to see if we still cannot accomplish, by a slow-down process, the things really worth doing.

Too many of us are chronic “joiners”. Let’s learn to say NO to many, and concentrate on the few where our talents can make the greatest contributions.

Each of us has just so much time, energy, and mental capacity available to use for our individual advancement and welfare and to devote the necessary attention to our families, our friends, our job obligations, and to the public. Far too many of us are traveling at such a fast pace that we injure our health, develop “grouch attitudes”, tend to become cynical, and miss out on a lot of good things in life. One reason is that, along with the *really important* things we are trying to do, we are cluttered up with so many things we *must* do (or at least we or someone thinks they are “musts”, but which really don’t amount to a —) that we have little time and energy left for the things *worth* doing.

Instead of continuing the frantic pace of trying to attack all of our problems and obligations simultaneously, we should sit down and spend some time analyzing our apparent obligations and sort them out in the order of *real* priority. I sometimes think we could use the following three classifications:

1. Important (must do)
2. “Medinary” (this made-word includes “medium” and “ordinary”)
3. Trivial (if neglected long enough these will probably take care of themselves)

Possibly we could separate into piles on our desks all letters, orders, reports, questionnaires, personal job assignments, etc., under the above

three classifications, and work down through these successive groupings as time, energy, and ability permit. At any rate it is something to think about.

Insofar as public officials are concerned, and that includes many of us in related occupations, our work and activities are shaped and controlled too much by the "arm-twisting" of our constituents. What seems of first importance to individuals or groups of our constituency may be of only average or minor importance to *all* of those whom we are serving. In many situations it takes courage to face up to the facts of life and place first things first in our dealings with the public, but in the long run I believe it will pay dividends.

Another crying need of this day and age is sufficient time to sit down alone to think and to plan a proper course that should be followed for the months ahead. This cannot be done under constant interruptions by office visitors, telephone calls, fruitless committee meetings, conferences, etc.

If our job is administrative, are we nullifying the obligations of our position by doing what is essentially common labor, janitor service, clerical work, etc.? In this connection I am often reminded of a statement by "Luke McLuke", whose "sayings" appeared daily during the previous generation in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, as follows: "If you lie down, they will walk all over you; but if you stand up, they will walk around you!"

In my estimation a man's real worth to the organization which pays his salary should be gauged more by the *worth-while* things he accomplishes in the interest of said organization rather than by the multiplicity of minor details and similar exacting activities that fritter away his time and energy in a shameful and wasteful manner.