



# Big Rocks Exercise

## Productivity & Priorities Tool



### THE STORY:

A teacher is addressing his class. He fills a jug with big rocks and asks the class if it's full. The class responds with a "Yes". So, he adds pebbles to the jug. He asks again if the jug is full, and again the class responds, "Yes". He says, "No" and now adds sand to the jug.

The sand and the pebbles represent the small daily tasks we fill our lives with. If we don't fit our big rocks in first, our lives will fill with only sand and pebbles. BUT if we start with our big rocks, we create room for what's important in life - and the sand and pebbles can only fill the spaces *in between*.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This exercise helps you align how you spend your time with your "real" priorities, your "Big Rocks". Answer the questions below, then turn over to fill in your big rocks. Finally, complete the last page to see what changes you'll make from what you have learned.

1. Where or on what do you **currently spend most of your time?** (Make a list of whatever jumps into your mind)

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....
- iv. ....
- v. ....

2. What is the **SINGLE biggest thing that ZAPS your time** at present? .....  
(‘negative’ or unwanted time-zappers)

3. **What NEEDS to change?** .....

4. Take a few moments to consider what's TRULY important to you in life right now.

**What are your Top 3 Priorities in life?** (Make a list of whatever pops into your mind)

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....

5. What **one thing is MOST IMPORTANT** to you right now? .....



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#### Identify & Prioritise Your Rocks!

- i. Using the story we started with as your guide, write your KEY priorities/activities on the biggest rocks below.  
NOTE: Think carefully. What are your real "Big Rocks" in life right now? What's most important to you in life?
  - ii. Now fill in the smaller rocks - your pebbles - with your next (lower) level priorities/activities.
  - iii. Then, in the tiny gaps between the rocks, write your lowest priorities/activities.
  - iv. Finally, prioritise your "Big Rocks" from 1 to 5.
- NOTE: Use this tool regularly to prioritise your week or month - and to make sure you schedule your BIG ROCK items first!



*NEXT: Decide what changes you will make...*



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**Review your Learnings!** What changes will you make following what you have learned about yourself?

1. How does where you currently spend your time compare to your "Big Rocks" - your REAL priorities?

.....  
.....

2. What does this tell you? .....

.....

### What Needs To Change?

3. What *could* you be doing differently? .....

.....

**5. What are you WILLING to change to prioritise your time better?**

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**6. Smash those Obstacles:**  
What could get in the way? If you were going to sabotage yourself how would you do it?

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4. What is the **EASIEST** change/s you could make to prioritise your time better?

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.....  
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### What Will You Commit To?

7. What **WILL** you change or do differently? Take a look at the entire worksheet and identify 3 actions you will take to focus on your BIG ROCKS in life:

**1<sup>st</sup> Action**

..... By when .....

**2<sup>nd</sup> Action**

..... By when .....

**3<sup>rd</sup> Action**

..... By when .....

Now copy these out on *post-it notes* and stick them in your car, wallet, locker, fridge door, desk drawer or *any place where you will see them often.*

8. I am committed to achieving these 3 actions:

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....



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What is the BIGGEST thing you learned about yourself from doing this exercise?

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*"How you spend your time is more important than how you spend your money. Money mistakes can be corrected, but time is gone forever." **David Norris***