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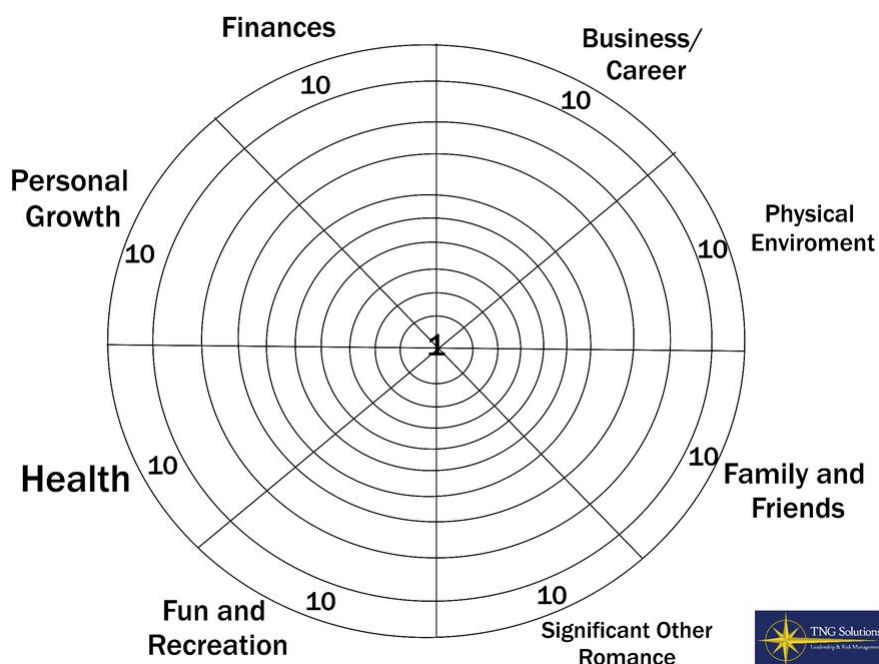


Managing Priorities

How to manage your priorities and time to avoid conflict, achieve bigger goals, and become more productive.

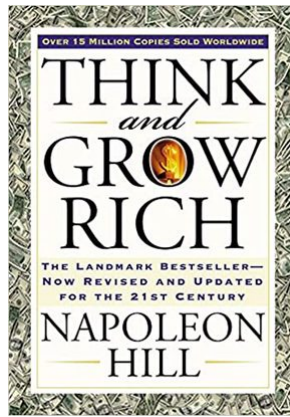
You would think after 40 years I would have become an expert on the subject of time management, heck I've even trained government employees on the subject.

First, identify your priorities and where you want to spend time. In past training sessions I would handout a Wheel of Life diagram that would list eight areas of your life, and as you go around the wheel you would identify the amount of time spent in each area, a scale of 1 to 10 with ten being the highest priority (most time). The exercise provided a visual as to the amount of time spent in each and often point out glaring deficiencies.



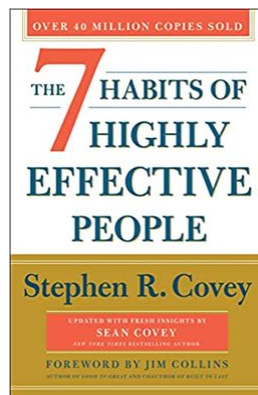
One of my first mentors in priority management was Napoleon Hill, although a prolific writer, his most famous book, *Think and Grow Rich* is filled with dozens of ideas and concepts on how to become productive and avoid the many distractions in life that seem to soak up time. He would say budgeting time is based on your Definite Major Purpose.

"Having a Definite Major Purpose is the starting point of all achievement. To be successful in any endeavor you must have a Definite Major Purpose, goals and an action plan. A Definite Major Purpose is a stumbling block for ninety-eight out of one hundred people because they never really define or discover their Definite Major Purpose or develop any personal goals. The choice is yours. You can choose to be a victim of life or a victor in life. You can choose to be a winner or a loser." NapHill.org



He would go on to say that those who fail to develop a Definite Major Purpose would become *Drifters*, individuals who allow others to think for them and control their lives. So was Hill the only one to identify the importance of creating personal and professional goals in order to prioritize time?

Of course not, let's take Dr. Stephen Covey, in his book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, he draws on the readers ability to start thinking about the "End in Mind," what is it the individual wants to achieve? Covey goes through a process of helping the individual by having them develop a *Personal Mission Statement*. I had the privilege to attend an in-person workshop with Dr. Covey in Utah years ago, when he had us work through the exercise. I still have the original mission statement, and look at it now and then just to remind myself how far I've come in my journey. In habit 3, Covey describes a matrix which allows the individual to determine what is important and not important and what is urgent and not urgent, which by design guides the person through a sort of decision-making process.



As a certified member of John Maxwell's team, I've had the opportunity to study and learn from him the necessity of not only goal setting but the requirements to manage priorities. In his book, *Success is a Choice*, John says, "you are the choices you make, so make good choices." Is believing in myself enough, no it isn't, but he continues by providing a list of attributes required for success:

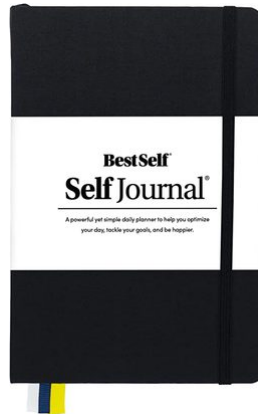
- Being passionate about your goals
- Taking action even when you don't feel like it
- Developing a strong character and many more.

Today there are so many resources to aid in the goal setting process, but the fundamentals of success isn't setting the goal, but carrying out the actions to achieve the goal. Constraints to taking action include:

- Procrastination
 - Lack of a definitive plan of action
 - Appropriate daily and weekly planning
 - Allowing external interferences
 - A perceived lack of progress.
-

Choosing a Planning System to Stay Motivated

After broaching the subject of managing priorities/time I feel compelled to write about planning systems. From experience, I've probably tried a dozen or more, each offering the time-tested approach with variations to appeal to individual preferences. If you haven't tried a system that works for you, I would recommend one that encourages journaling, provides at least a weekly prioritization section and space to write long term goals down (whatever long term means these days). I'm currently using the self journal created by BestSelf because it incorporates the things I like best; a place to annotate what I'm grateful for, my goals and targets for the day, and the ability to reflect on my day and give it a "mood" score.



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