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**Do What's Important Vs. Doing What's Urgent!**

**By Fred Black**

Many years ago, one of my brothers gave me a book on audio tape that I think was from the

Day-Timer folks. I don't remember the title, but the basic theme was how to make better use of your times. One thing I do remember was a chapter on doing what's important not what's urgent.

Do what's important, not what's urgent... What exactly does that mean? What's the difference? Aren't most things that are urgent also important? No, not necessarily. Most people reading this article lead busy, hectic lives. If you work and have children, especially young children, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You get up tired, work hard, go to bed late without doing everything you needed to get accomplished that day and you repeat the process day after day. You think on your feet, eat on the run, and plan your life using the "just in time" model. Most things come at you as urgent, with a "you've got to do this right now"

label attached (either literally or figuratively). It's easy to jump on problem after problem and soon you find that you've become a fire truck, putting out fires all the time.

How do you fix the things that start the fires? How do you do that when you feel like your life is a merry-go-round going 90 MPH and you're hanging on by your fingertips? You stop automatically responding to everything that's demanding your attention. You handle the important things first. You ask yourself, is this important? Will it be important a week, a month, a year from now? How will it affect my children? Will it put money in my pocket or take it away? Is it important to someone I care about? Will it make my marriage better or will it hurt my marriage? Will it make me healthier? The list goes on and on.

We're a society, both in our personal lives and in our businesses, that has instant gratification at the center of most decisions and activities. We should look farther down the road and try to see how decisions made today will have an impact on our future. Even decisions that may seem harmless can have drastic implications. For instance, I just did a quick search on Yahoo to find the average TV viewing time per person. I found one study that says according to the Total TV Audience Monitor (T-TAM), DVR (digital video recorder) owners watch an average of 29.25 hours of TV in a week. That's 1521 hours per year or 63 days. Two months of time wasted. Is that good or bad? I think its bad. How

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much happier we'd be, how much stronger our marriages and relationships with our children would be, how much healthier we'd be, how much smarter we'd be, if we turned off the TV. In many homes the TV is like a light bulb, it's on as soon as you come home and off when you go to bed. In some houses, there's a TV in every room of the house. Not all TV is bad, but for the most part it's a waste of time. If you leave it on while you're doing other things, then it's a distraction that you could do without.

It's my opinion that in addition to wasting time, most television programming chips away at moral values we desperately need to cling to and instill in our children.

Here's another example, the phone. Most of us have a home phone and a cell phone. If you're married, your spouse probably has a cell phone. If you have children, they may or may not have cell phones. That's a lot of phones! One nice thing about current phones is that they have caller ID. Usually you can tell who is calling. Well guess what, you don't HAVE to answer the phone when it rings. We've been programmed to think we must jump up and get the phone.

Why? True, sometimes it's important and before caller ID you really didn't have a way to know who was on the other end without answering the call, but now you do. It feels strange at first, almost a guilty feeling, when you know who's calling and you don't answer the phone. The phone is a device that yells out urgency when it rings, but you have the ability to only answer if it's important. If it's not important, don't answer it and return the call later, after you've finished whatever you were doing when the phone rang – but only if you want to.

When someone asks you to do something, or when you start to do something, even activities you've been doing all along, ask yourself is this urgent or is it important? Is there something that's more important that I could be doing, maybe something that's displaying a sense of urgency, but that is more important? You'll soon find it easy to say "no" to the urgent and "yes" to the important. And, you'll stop putting out fires all the time.

What can you do with the extra time? Spend it with your spouse and or your children, decide to learn something new such as how to make web sites, or build your future nest egg by learning how to make money on the Internet, or learn to play an instrument, or teach your children how to play an instrument, take singing lessons, plant a garden, visit a retirement center or a hospital... the list goes on forever.

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Sites.

**Make Time for Your Relationship**

**By Nisandeh Neta**

## Do What's Important Vs. Doing What's Urgent!

"We don't have to wait till Valentine's Day to think about relationships, whether we're in one or would like to be. Most people would agree that romance is the key element beneath the relationship pot.

Be it a steamy, sizzling wok or a warm, steady slow-cooker, romance is the flame that generally gets—and keeps—the heat of love alive. But what exactly is "romance"?

When my wife and I were dating, we were ultra-romantic in the usual sense of the word. There were roses, love letters, surprise gifts, spontaneous adventures, and hours upon hours of talking and... you know, that other stuff.

To be honest, though, some of the initial romantic heat has cooled off a bit. Like couples everywhere, we find ourselves pressured by the demands of daily life: work, children, finances, household chores and commitments to extended family. Yet, through all our years together, we have somehow found a way to balance these things.

And while our definition of romance has changed somewhat according to our altered circumstances, we still manage to keep our relationship fresh and exciting. White-hot all-consuming passion has melted into love, consideration and affection.

But most of all, romance for us has become a way of making the "everyday" exciting. It doesn't take a lot of money or effort – just a commitment to making our relationship special by paying attention to it and a willingness to make (here is the four-letter secret)...

T-I-M-E

Romance keeps the spark alive. It keeps a relationship vital and interesting. And... it takes time!

Nurturing your relationship, enhancing it, and keeping it flourishing takes time, which is all too precious for many couples.

But by establishing priorities and setting goals, by making better use of the time you have, and by creating time you thought you didn't have, you CAN find more time for each other.

The first thing to do is prioritize!

You can spend your time in one of four ways, doing things that are: Important and urgent (such as caring for your child that has fallen down and is bleeding); Important but not urgent (sitting together sharing about your day); Not important but urgent (taking your suit for dry cleaning, before tomorrow's meeting); Not important and not urgent (switching on the TV and zapping between the channels).

When you look at all your time-consuming tasks, let go of any task that is not important.

By focusing most of your time on doing what is important but not urgent, you can eliminate a lot of the crises (important and urgent) as well as the unimportant things. Your perspective on what constitutes "urgent" will also change.

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Here are a few important, but not urgent, activities to put high on your priority list:

### 1. Have a regular daily chat.

Turn off the TV and the cell phone and sit together for a short time, uninterrupted and face-to-face, every day to share your thoughts and feelings. Tell each other the little details as well as the big news. Focusing on each other for as little as fifteen minutes can make a huge difference. You will both feel appreciated and heard.

### 2. Spend one evening together each week.

Plan a specific night each week for your special date. Get a babysitter or trade childcare time with a friend. Once scheduled, treat the commitment as if it were written in stone. Don't break the date!

Take turns planning the activity (and occasionally surprise each other). Take in a movie, go for a bike ride, have a bubble bath, dance in your kitchen. Whether it's a dress-up home-cooked meal or a picnic dinner on the living room floor, make it special. It doesn't have to be expensive, just generous.

### 3. Spend some "day" time together.

Get up earlier than normal and have breakfast together at a coffee shop. Commute together if at all possible. Meet at lunchtime for a quiet meal or a "stolen moment". Rendezvous after work for a drink and an appetizer before dinner. Meet at a park for a walk in the fresh air.

You'll be surprised how lively conversation can become when you're meeting in the middle of the day, away from the household chores.

The anticipation of a planned evening or activity can be fun and exciting, even if (especially if!) you've been together for a long time.

By making a date, you'll set aside the special time your relationship deserves and rediscover the romance that started it all."

Nisandeh Neta, author of the best-seller e-course for couples *The Art of Lovemaking*:

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If you wish to create a happy, successful and passionate relationship, subscribe now to his free Love & Marriage newsletter at:

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Make Time for Your Relationship

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How To Get An Instant Response To Your Urgent EMail!

Four Steps To Make Your Day Dynamic!

Quit and Retire Three Years Earlier!

TIME MANAGEMENT (PART ONE)

Ewen Chia's Website Conversion Secrets

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Help Your Child Succeed In School

Success Secrets

Time Stretching Tips



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