

TIME MANAGEMENT BULLETIN – April 2017

How does Time Management connect to L'Arche's Mission and Servant Leadership?

Jean Vanier says: “We waste time, we spend time, we lose time and we make time. Vanier asks us to look at time differently; to become friends of time. In his words: “The friend of time doesn't spend all day saying: 'I haven't got time.' He doesn't fight with time. He accepts it and cherishes it.” Vanier reminds us that in God's time those people whom the world refuses to spend time with become the very focus of God's attention. God, as Stanley Hauerwas has put it, “takes time for the trivial,” and those who follow Jesus, God incarnate, are expected to do the same. There are no lesser lives in the Kingdom of God. Spending time doing what the world assumes to be trivial is the essence of the way of the heart and the spirituality of L'Arche.” (*A Embodied Theology* by John Swinton)

In an interview of Jean Vanier (*A Human Future*, Winter, 2013) ...

“I would say two things: Take time for silence. Every leader should take at least half an hour a day to be quiet and to meditate and to see inside of himself or herself the dangers that reside in wanting to have power, wanting to be stronger than others, and not really thinking about the gift that lies in their call. They need this time also to reflect on the mission they are called to, and to be humble in front of that mission. Second, I would urge leaders to develop their ability for listening to people who are different— people with different views in the world of politics and people who are different in other ways. We have to work together and think together for there to be a fulfillment of any mission.”

Time management is an issue for everyone but especially those whose heart is to show God's love to those in need (Servant Leader). Imagine that outside your front door at this very moment is everyone who, in the last week, has sent you a text, an email, called you on the phone, written you a letter, spoken to you about seeing them for a visit, invited you to a meeting and those you have chosen to spend time with...

How far around your neighborhood would that queue stretch and how long would it take you to see them if you saw them one after the other, even without a break?

The writer of Ecclesiastes 3 v. 1-6 tells us there is a time for everything, describing the endless ebb and flow of actions that can sweep us up in an endless flurry of activity that leads to stress. There is a time for everything, but that doesn't mean we have to do everything NOW, as much as we or others might want us to do so. Nor should we simply succumb to all the demands others place on our time. Although we cannot manage time, as we are not in control of its passage, time management skills enable us to manage the way we and others use our own time. As a servant leader we need to role model a healthy use of time for our own benefit and for those to whom we serve.

What do these passages say to you?

How does Time Management relate to Servant Leadership?

**How does the management of your time help you to meet the primary test of Servant Leadership?
...the creation of servant leaders on your team?**

Time Management Overview: Tips of Time Management

1. Review how you use your time.
2. Complete a To Do List
3. Prioritize your use of time.
4. Set expectations - consider those things that are urgent & not urgent
5. Take a team approach - how can your team support one another in better use of time?
6. Effective use of Calendar
7. Inbox Management - handle every piece of paper only once
8. Weekly Review -
9. Use meetings wisely- Do meetings have to happen? Do you have to be there the whole time?
10. Manage interruptions -It takes approximately 8 minutes to recover from being interrupted when in the middle of a task.
11. Avoid procrastination -Do the worst jobs first!!!

1. To-Do List.

A complete to-do list allows you to make decisions about what to do (and not to do) in light of all commitments.

If your list is not complete:

- Your mind will waste energy trying to remember or stressing about what is not written down in a trusted place.
- You're probably over-committing and failing to do everything you promise.

Most STRESS comes not from having too much to do, but from failing to keep commitments made with yourself and others. When your to-do list is complete, you are able to make an informed decision about whether to:

- Keep your commitments, or
- Un-make your commitments, or
- Renegotiate your commitments

To-do list items should be actionable concrete steps.

- Avoid just writing STUFF down. For example, items like "Doctor" or "Lamp" are just STUFF, not actionable steps.
- Take a few moments when you are writing down each item to decide specifically what your next step will be.
- Start each item with an action verb. For example, "Call Dr. Smith to schedule appointment 202-222-1234" or "Pick up lamp from Johnny Donor's shop" reminds you exactly what to do.

It is helpful to keep several categories of lists:

- **Projects:** This list includes anything you want to do that involves more than one step. For example, "Coordinate spring fundraiser" will involve multiple steps. Most people have 15-50 active projects at a time. Each project you are working on should also have a Next Action. You can't "do" a project but you can "do" an action.
- **Next Actions:** Next actions are things that you can do in one step. For example, "Email announcement to listserv." This is the list you work from.
- **Someday/Maybe:** This list includes things that are not currently a priority, but you don't want to forget them (or waste energy trying to remember). The Someday/Maybe list is a great way to prune your Next Action list down to things you are ready to do now.
- **Waiting For:** This list includes anything you are waiting for from someone else. You can then refer to the list and follow up.
- **Agendas:** Agenda lists hold topics you want to discuss at upcoming meetings. It is helpful to have one for each person who you report to or who reports to you.

Consider your current to-do list. Is it complete? Is there anything from these tips that you would like to use?

2. Prioritization.

We give priority to things that are URGENT or IMPORTANT.

Important activities have an outcome that leads to the achievement of your mission and goals. Urgent activities demand immediate attention. US President Dwight Eisenhower said, “What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”

Dr. Stephen Covey, in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, organized urgency and importance in what he called the “Time Matrix.”

TIME MATRIX

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	ACTIVITIES: I Crises Pressing Problems Deadline-driven projects Production problems	ACTIVITIES: II Prevention Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning Recreation Production capability problems
NOT IMPORTANT	ACTIVITIES: III Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Popular activities Pressing matters	ACTIVITIES: IV Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities

If you concentrate your time in Quadrant I, you are a “manager by crisis.” “As long as you focus on Quadrant I, it keeps getting bigger and bigger until it dominates you. It’s like a pounding surf. A huge problem comes and knocks you down and you’re wiped out. You struggle back up only to face another one that knocks you down and slams you to the ground.”

If you spend much time in Quadrant III, you let yourself be interrupted, accept invitations to attend all kinds of meetings, and are vulnerable to participate in every so called “popular activity.” You are a follower of priorities established at random and by a third party.

Concentration on Quadrant IV activities usually indicates lack of maturity. These are the non-value-added functions that hinder growth, effectiveness, and needs.

“Quadrant II is the heart of effective personal management. It deals with things that are not urgent, but are important. It deals with things like building relationships, writing personal mission statements, long-range planning, exercising, preventive maintenance, preparation – all those things we know we need to do, but somehow seldom get around doing, because they aren’t urgent.”

What could you do to spend more time in Quadrant II?

3. Calendar

Your calendar should be used for actions that must be done on a certain day at a certain time.

Dr. Covey recommends planning your week in advance by placing “big rocks”—important things that take blocks of time—on your calendar. (But beware of filling your calendar with tasks. It can become frustrating and stressful when you can’t keep up with the tasks you thought you could complete before meeting the realities of the tasks and your week.)

Use “ticklers” on your calendar to remind yourself of future tasks that can’t be done now.

4. Inbox Management

Your inboxes—e-mail, snail mail, voicemail—can absorb all your time and energy if you’re not careful.

Your inboxes are NOT good to-do lists. Determine what is actionable. Non-actionable items should be trashed or saved outside your inbox for later reference. Actionable items should be done immediately if they can be completed quickly (2 minutes or less) or added to your to-do list.

Avoid using the best hours of your day managing your inbox. It is tempting to spend the first hour of the day checking email, but that is the most productive time for many of us. Save email and snail mail tasks for times between meetings and later in the day when you would be less able to focus on larger, high-concentration projects.

5. Weekly Review

On a regular basis, preferably weekly – same time, undistracted place

- Make sure your to-do list is complete and current
- Try to get all your inboxes to zero
- Review your calendar for the next week (or 2) to make sure you have everything you might need to do for upcoming events on your to-do list

What tips from this page do you follow or would you like to follow? Are there any you disagree with? Are there techniques you’ve tried that you found don’t work? Are there other tips you would offer fellow L’Arche leaders that you have found helpful?

What prevents you from managing your time effectively?