



EP 7 Habits Advisory Program

Handbook for Habit 3

**Adapted from The Leader in Me Activity Guide
and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*

Student Name:

Advisory Teacher:

This packet should be read by:

Habit Three: Put First Things First

Teens today are busier and working harder than ever. We see it every day. Between school, extracurricular activities, teams, clubs, student government, athletics, helping to raise a younger brother or sister, and on and on, there's barely time to breathe. A lack of hard work? Ha! Milking cows and mending fences doesn't sound any more difficult than juggling the multifaceted life of a modern teen.

Let's face it. You've got a lot to do and there just isn't enough time. After school you have rehearsal, followed by another activity. And don't forget to give your friend a call. On top of that, you should exercise. The dog needs a walk. And your room is a wreck. What will you do?

Habit 3, Put First Things First, can help. It's all about learning to prioritize and manage your time so that your first things come first, not last. But there's more to this habit than just time management. Putting first things first also deal with learning to overcome your fears and being strong during hard moments.

In Habit 2, you decide what your first things are. Habit 3, then, is putting them *first* in your life.

Sure we can have a nice list of goals and good intentions, but doing them, putting them first is the hard part. That's why Habit 3 is called the habit of *will-power* (the strength to say yes to your most important things) and *won't-power* (the strength to say no to less important things and to peer pressure).

The first three habits build upon each other. Habit 1 says, "You are the driver, not the passenger." Habit 2 says, "Decide where you want to go and draw up a map to get you there." Habit 3 says, "Get there! Don't let roadblocks or pit stops knock you off course."

Packing More Into Your Life

Have you ever packed a suitcase and noticed how much more you can fit inside when you neatly fold and organize your clothes instead of just throwing them in? It's really quite surprising. The same goes for your life. The better you organize yourself, the more you'll be able to pack in. More time for family and friends, more time for school, more time for yourself, more time for your first things.

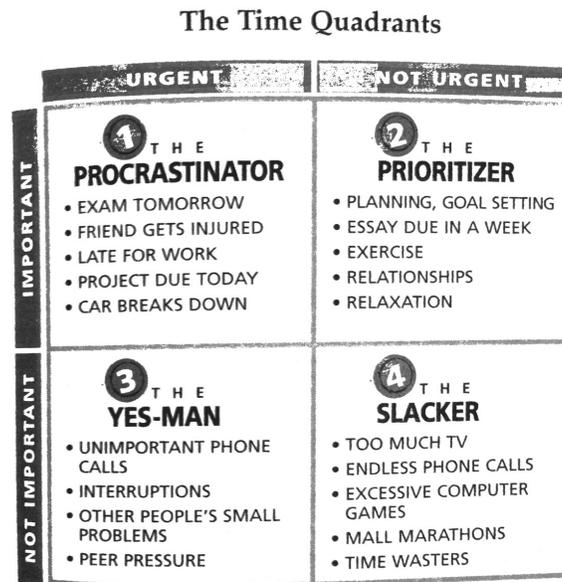
Let's look at an amazing model call the Time Quadrants that can help you pack more in (especially important things). It's made up of two primary ingredients, "important" and "urgent."



Important - your most important things, your first things, activities that contribute to your mission and your goals.

Urgent - pressing things, in-your-face things, activities that demand immediate attention.

In general, we spend our time in four different time quadrants, as shown below. Each quadrant contains different kinds of activities and is represented by a type of person.



If you haven't already noticed, we live in a society that is addicted to urgency. It's the NOW generation. That's why we have instant pudding, Minute rice, crash diets, fast food, On Demand, cell phones, and so on. It reminds me of the girl in *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, who keeps saying, "Now Daddy! Now! I want an Umpalumpa now!"

Urgent things aren't bad, necessarily. The problem is when we become so focused on *urgent* things that we put off *important* things that aren't urgent, like working on that report in advance, going for a walk in the park, or writing an important letter to a friend. All these *important* things get pushed aside by *urgent* things, like phone calls, interruptions, drop-ins, deadlines, other people's problems, and other "in-your-face-do-it-now" things.

Quadrant 1: The Procrastinator. The results of too much time in Quadrant 1 are stress and anxiety, burnout, and mediocre performance.

Quadrant 2: The Prioritizer. We'll save the best for last.

Quadrant 3: The Yes-man. The results of too much time in Quadrant 3 are a reputation for being a "pleaser", lack of discipline, and feeling like a doormat for other to wipe their feet on.

Quadrant 4: The Slacker. The results of too much time in Quadrant 4 are a lack of responsibility, guilt, and flakiness.

Quadrant 2: The Prioritizer

Now, back to Q2. Q2 is made of things that are important but not urgent, like relaxation, building friendships, exercising, planning ahead, and doing homework...on time! It's the quadrant of excellence - the place we want to be. Q2 activities are important. But are Q2 activities urgent? No! That's exactly why we have trouble doing them. For example, let's say you have a test in Science in a week. Have you already studied all the material a week in advance? It's important but most of us wait until a day or two before. Had we planned ahead, we would be ready for the quiz well in advance and ask our teacher questions we had the day or two before.

The results of living in Q2 are taking control of your life, a sense of balance, and high performance.

Plan Weekly

Take fifteen minutes each week to plan your week and just watch what a difference it can make. In your planner, follow this three-step weekly planning process.

Step 1: Identify Your Big Rocks. At the end of each week, sit down and think about what you want to accomplish the upcoming week. As yourself, "What are the most important things I need to do this week?" These are your big rocks. They are sort of like mini goals and should be tied into your mission statement or long-term goals. Not surprisingly, you'll find that most of them will be Q2's.

Another way to identify your big rocks is to think through the key roles in your life, such as your role as a student, friend, family member, individual, and whatever else you do. Then come up with the one or two most important things you want to get done in each role. Planning your life around roles will help you stay balanced. Be sure to narrow your focus to 10-15 rocks.

Step 2: Block Out Time for Your Big Rocks. Have you ever seen the big rock experiment? You get a bucket and fill it half full of small pebbles. You then try to put several big rocks in the bucket, on top of the pebbles. They don't all fit though. So you empty the bucket and start over. This time the big rocks go in first at the bottom. Then, you pour the pebbles in and they fill in the spaces and cracks between the big rocks and then cover them. The pebbles all fit in the bucket this time! Sometimes there is even room to spare. The difference in the order they were put in the bucket made it work.

The same thing works for your weekly schedule. Put your most important things, or big rocks, into your plan first. Once you take the time for your big rocks, you will have plenty of time for all the little everyday things that suck up your time. Things like chores, busy work, phone calls, and interruptions. The moral of the story is, if you don't schedule your big rocks first, they won't get done.

Step 3: Schedule Everything Else. Once you have your big rocks booked, schedule in all of your other little to-dos, daily tasks, and appointments. Here's where the pebbles go.

Adapt Daily

With your weekly plan in place, adapt each day as needed. You'll probably need to rearrange some big rocks and pebbles now and then. Try your best to follow your plan, but if you don't

accomplish everything you set out to do, no big deal. Even if you only get a third of your big rocks accomplished, that's a third more than you had before.

The Comfort Zone and the Courage Zone



Putting your first things first takes courage and will often cause you to stretch outside your comfort zone. Take a peek at the Courage and Comfort Zone diagram.

Your comfort zone represents things you're familiar with, place you know, friends you're at ease with, activities you enjoy doing. Your comfort zone is risk free. It's easy. It doesn't require any stretching. Within these boundaries we feel safe and secure. On the other hand, things like making new friends, speaking before a large audience, or sticking up for your values makes your hair stand on end. Welcome to the courage zone! Adventure, risk, and challenge included! Everything that makes us feel uncomfortable is found here. In this territory waits uncertainty, pressure, change, the possibility of failure. But its also the place to go for opportunity and the only place in which you'll ever reach your full potential. You'll never reach it by hanging in your comfort zone. That's for sure.

Never Let Your Fear Make Your Decisions

There are a lot of sick emotions in this world, but perhaps one of the worst is *fear*. When we look back at all the things we have failed in our lives because our fear got the best of us, its enough to make us sick. Maybe there are classes you never spoke in, friends you never made, and teams you never played for - all because of these ugly, yet very real, fears. Shakespeare says in *Measure for Measure*:



*Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt.*

Let's look at Nelson Mandela, who was instrumental in ending the oppressive apartheid system in South Africa. Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years (imagine that) for speaking out against apartheid before being elected as the first non-white president of South Africa. What if, because of his fears, he had never dared to fight the system? Or consider the unyielding courage of Susan B. Anthony as she led the long struggle that finally won women the right to vote under the U.S. Constitution. Surely all great deeds, whether by famous people or by everyday people, were accomplished in the fave of fear. Don't let your fears make your decisions. YOU make them.

Winning Means Rising Each Time You Fall

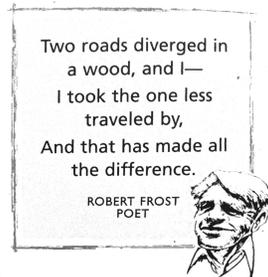
We need to worry less about failing and more about the chances we miss when we don't even try. After all, many of the people we admire most failed many times. For instance, Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times. Albert Einstein didn't talk until he was four. Beethoven's music teacher

said, "As a composer, he is hopeless." Below are events in the life history of a man who failed many times but kept fighting back. See if you can guess who it is. This man:

- failed in business at the age of 22
- was defeated for the state legislature at the age of 23
- failed in business at age 25
- coped with the death of his sweetheart at age 26
- suffered a nervous breakdown at age 27
- was defeated for speaker of the House at age 29
- was defeated for congressional nomination at age 34
- was elected to Congress at age 37
- lost renomination for Congress at age 39
- was defeated for the Senate at age 46
- was defeated for the vice-presidency of the United States at age 47
- and was defeated for the Senate at age 49

This person was none other than Abraham Lincoln, elected president of the United States at age 51. He rose each time he fell and eventually reached his destination, gaining respect and admiration of all nations and peoples.

Be Strong In the Hard Moments



Hard moments are conflicts between doing the right thing and doing the easier thing. They are the key tests, the defining moments of life. How we handle them can literally shape our forever. They come in two sizes. Small hard moments occur daily and include things like getting up when your alarm rings, controlling your temper, or disciplining yourself to do your homework. In contrast to small hard moments, larger ones occur every so often in life. They include things like choosing good friends, resisting negative peer pressure, and rebounding after a major setback.

Be courageous at these key junctures! Don't sacrifice your future happiness for one night of video games, a weekend of excitement, or a thrilling moment of revenge. If you recognize that these moment will come (and they will), then you can prepare for them and meet them head on like a warrior and come out victorious.

Overcoming Peer Pressure

Some of the hardest moments come when facing peer pressure. Saying no when all your friends are saying yes takes raw courage. However, standing up to peer pressure, or "won't power," is a massive deposit into your PBA (Personal Bank Account). A counselor from a high school shared this:

A freshman girl rushed into my office before school with tears streaming down her face. "They hate me! They hate me!"

She had just been dumped by her group of friends who told her to get lost because she had been "too good" the day before to ditch school and ride up to Chicago for the day. She said at first she wanted to go but then thought how much it would hurt her mom when the school called home and told her that her daughter wasn't in school. She felt she just couldn't do that to her mom because she had made so many sacrifices for her. She couldn't let her down!

She stood up and said no I can't do it, and everyone just blew her off. She thought the next day that everything would be okay, but it wasn't - they all told her to find new friends because she was too good for them.

Through the tears and pain she began to see that she felt good inside, but lonely, as her friends didn't accept her. But she accepted herself and gained self-respect and inner peace despite outside rejection. A life lesson learned and a moment of standing up for herself.

Sometimes peer pressure can be so strong that the only way to resist is to remove yourself entirely from the environment you're in. This is especially the case if you're involved with a gang, a small club, or a tight group of friends. To overcome peer pressure, you've got to care more about what *you* think of you than what *your peers* think of you. Portia Nelson reminds us of this in a poem:

*Any day of the week
I would choose to be "out"
with others
and in touch
with myself...
than to be "in" with others
and out of touch
with myself.*

Why is peer pressure so hard to resist? It's because you are dying to belong. That's why teens are often willing to go through brutal treatment to become a member of a club or group of friends. Sometimes we simply need a wake-up call to snap us out of it.

Not all peer pressure is bad. In fact, much of it can be very good. If you can find a friend who puts positive pressure on you to be your best, then hang on to him or her for dear life, because you've got something very special. If you find yourself wanting to stand up but instead you are continually caving in to peer pressure, here are two things you can do.

First, build your PBA. If your self-confidence and self-respect are low, how can you expect to resist? You can begin today to build your PBA, little by little. Make a promise to yourself and keep it. Develop a talent. Renew yourself. Eventually you'll have sufficient strength to forge your own path instead of following the beaten ones.

Second, write your mission statement and set goals. If you haven't decided what your values are, how can you expect to stick up for them? It will be a whole lot easier to say no to cutting class when you are saying yes to your goal of getting good grades and making it to college.

The Common Ingredient of Success

In the final analysis, putting first things first takes discipline. It takes discipline to overcome your fears. It takes discipline to be strong in the hard moments and resist peer pressure. A man named Albert E. Gray spent years studying successful people in an attempt to figure out that special ingredient that made them all successful. What do you think he found? Well, it wasn't

dressing for success, or eating bran, or having a positive mental attitude. Instead this is what he found. Read it carefully.

Albert E. Gray's Common Denominator of Success:

All successful people have the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.

What does this mean? It means that successful people are willing to suck it up from time to time and do things they don't like doing. Why do they do them? Because they know these things will lead them to their goals.

In other words, sometimes you just gotta exercise your special human toll called *willpower* to get things done, whether you feel like it or not. Do you think a concert pianist always enjoys hours of practice each day? Does a person who is committed to earning her own way through college enjoy taking a second job?

An American collegiate wrestler was once asked what the most memorable day of his career had been. He replied that it was the one day during his career when practice had been cancelled. He hated practice, but was willing to endure it for a greater purpose, his love of being the best he could be.