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Ranching For Profit

Healthy Land, Happy Families & Profitable Businesses

Rocks & Roles

The most frequent constraints Ranching For Profit School alumni cite to getting things done are not enough time and too many things to do.

Of course time really isn't the issue. We have all the time there is. Time is fixed. We can't make more of it, we can only be more effective with the time we have.

But how will we ever get to the important WOTB work if our days are filled with seemingly endless WITB? That's a good question and one I have struggled with myself.



Glancing over at my "to do" list, I see 19 separate WOTB projects on which I intend to make significant progress or complete this fall. They range from exploring partnerships with other organizations to establishing Schools in Mexico to my personal estate planning. I don't bring this up to garner sympathy, but only to suggest that I can relate to feeling like you have a lot to do and not enough time to get it all done...and I think 99% of our alumni feel that way too.

I have a tool that helps me stay on top of the WITB and make steady progress on the WOTB. I learned it in the [7 Habits Of Highly Effective People](#) course. This article shares one of the powerful techniques that I learned in the course and use daily to solve the dilemma of too much to do and not enough time to get it done.

We are all driven by the clock. But to be highly effective, we need to use a clock *and* a compass. Of course the clock represents time. The compass represents direction. The clock stands for efficiency. The compass stands for effectiveness. If we live by the clock our lives will be filled with urgent things and the WOTB work is likely to go undone. Using our compass for guidance it becomes possible to set priorities and do the WOTB.

You create a compass by identifying your purpose in the form of a mission statement. There are some very practical tools we use in the 7 Habits program to help people identify their purpose and write their mission statement. The process involves clarifying your priorities and identifying the principles and values by which you want to live your life. It involves recognizing your talents and strengths. It also requires that we identify the roles we play in our lives and the outcomes we want to achieve in each of those roles. We call the things we want to achieve in each role "The Big Rocks."

Roles

We each play many roles in our lives personally and professionally. For example at work I have the role of business owner, teacher, boss, negotiator, writer, salesman, mouse killer and a dozen other things. In my personal life I have roles of husband, father, brother, friend, hiker, musician (or, perhaps more accurately, noise maker) and more.

Rocks

In each of those roles there are outcomes I want to achieve and things I need to do to achieve them. These things are the “Big Rocks.”

If you are tired of letting WITB drive your life, I recommend you try this:

1. Identify 7 of the most important roles you play in your life. Make sure at least 3 of them are in your personal life and at least 3 of them are in your work life.
2. For each role imagine the ultimate outcome you'd like to achieve. It can be helpful to think of someone who would be affected by your achievements in this role. Ask yourself how you would like this person to describe your success in this particular role 20 years from now.
3. For each outcome identify one or more significant steps you'd like to take this month to make progress toward that outcome.
4. Schedule those steps on a calendar or planner. (We give each participant in the 7 Habits Course a Franklin/Covey Planning System Kit that includes a planner for scheduling their months, weeks and days.)
 - a. Use an annual planning calendar to show the blocks of time you will set aside for the big rocks through the year.
 - b. Just prior to each month show which tasks will be done in which weeks.
 - c. On a weekly basis, confirm the blocks of time each week that will be devoted to the big rocks and schedule the little rocks (WITB) around the big ones.
 - d. Each day take 10 minutes to translate the weekly schedule to a prioritized “to do” list for the day.

It is important to write the big rocks in your planner before scheduling the WITB. This way the WITB gets worked in around the Big Rocks, not the other way around.

One of the reasons we struggle with WITB crowding out the Big Rocks, is that we haven't clearly identified those rocks, nor have we clearly defined why they are important. Steven Covey argues that it is very difficult to say “no” to the things that clutter our lives unless we have a bigger “yes” burning inside of us. Identifying and scheduling the big rocks will help create that “yes.” Once you identify your big rocks, you will see that saying “yes” to the WITB, means saying “no” to your big rocks. That makes it a lot easier to say “no” to WITB.

It may seem like this takes a lot of time. Its been taking me 20 minutes at the beginning of each month to plan the month, another 20 minutes at the start of each week to plan my week and 5-10 minutes each morning to plan my day. All totaled that comes to less than 5 hours a month for me. That is less than 1% of my time. I find that spending 1% of my time to reduce my stress and increase my effectiveness during the other 99% is a good return on my investment.