

THE IMPORTANT – URGENT MATRIX:

A Strategy for Finding Balance

How to Use This Resource:

- This worksheet can help you to manage your time. Use the four quadrants on the next page to help you determine your priorities.
- Write down your tasks and activities (for the day, week, semester – up to you).
- Reflect, evaluate, and review why you have placed these activities in separate quadrants.
- Make a plan for accomplishing, delegating and refocusing your tasks.
- Repeat as needed.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Necessity (Quadrant 1)	Productivity & Balance (Quadrant 2)
NOT IMPORTANT	Deception (Quadrant 3)	Waste & Excess (Quadrant 4)

Quadrant 1 : URGENT + IMPORTANT

- This is where you need to meet a deadline, trouble shoot, or engage in crisis management.
- Some things become necessity (they are both urgent and important) as a result of procrastination or lack of planning.
- Consider: You may be spending more time than necessary in this quadrant because you spend too little time in Quadrant 2.

Quadrant 2: NOT URGENT + IMPORTANT

- This is the quadrant of optimal performance, and productivity.
- In Quadrant 2, you plan, prepare, prevent crisis, clarify goals, improve performance, make time for exercise and relaxation, and experience more balance in your life.
- Because Quadrant 1 is both urgent and important, the only place to find more time for Quadrant 2 is by spending less time in Quadrants 3 and 4.

Quadrant 3: URGENT + NOT IMPORTANT

- This is the “phantom” of Quadrant 1, and it includes things that need to happen right now, although they are of little significance or benefit to you.
- Urgency creates the illusion of importance. But the actual activities in this quadrant, if they are important, are important only to someone else. Phone calls, emails, drop-in visitors and other people’s poor time management fall into this category.

Quadrant 4: NOT URGENT + NOT IMPORTANT

- This quadrant represents activities that zap precious time and energy from your day. This quadrant is characterized by “time wasters” (e.g. excessive TV, inappropriate social networking, phones, games.)

Adapted from Franklin Covey: “Focus; Achieving Your Highest Priorities” workshop, 2011.

The Important – Urgent Matrix

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crisis management• Problem managing (asking for extensions, handing in “less than” work, pulling all-nighters.• Anxiety peaks, sleep difficulties• Reactive responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive• Preparation• Prevention• Planning• Re-creating• Time for “fun” activities
NOT IMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other people’s request/issues• Phone, email, texting• Unnecessary reports• Others’ “drama”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trivial busywork• Irrelevant phone calls, email, texting• Time wasters• Escape Activities: Facebook, Twitter, internet

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		
NOT IMPORTANT		

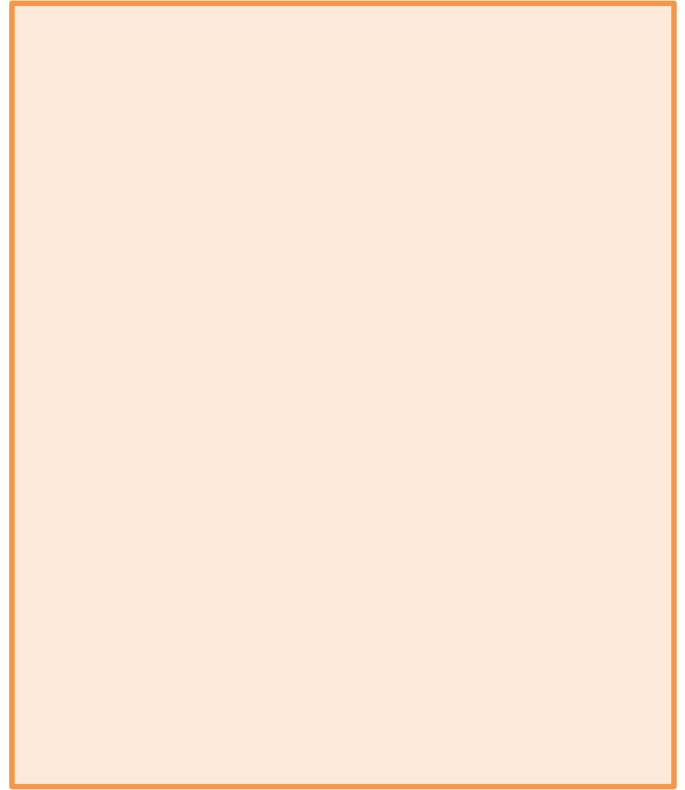
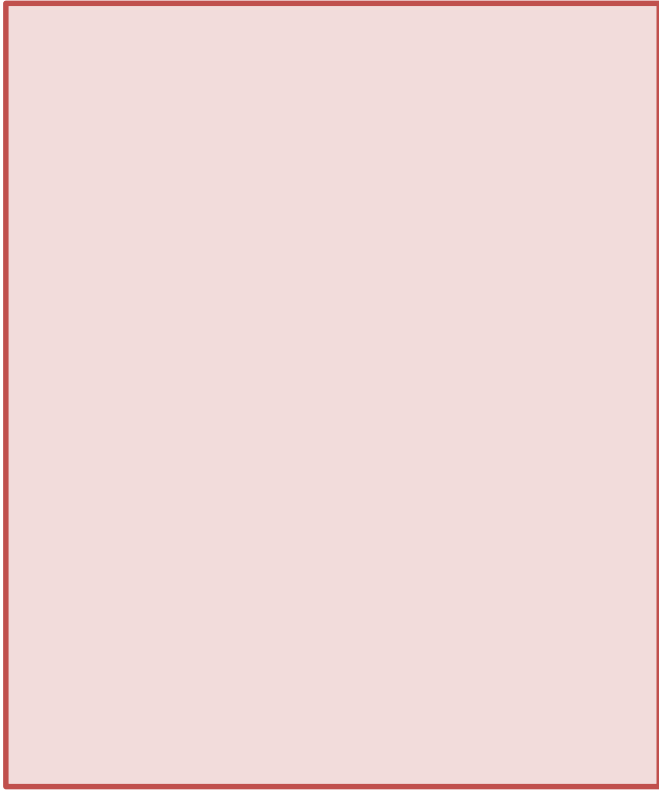
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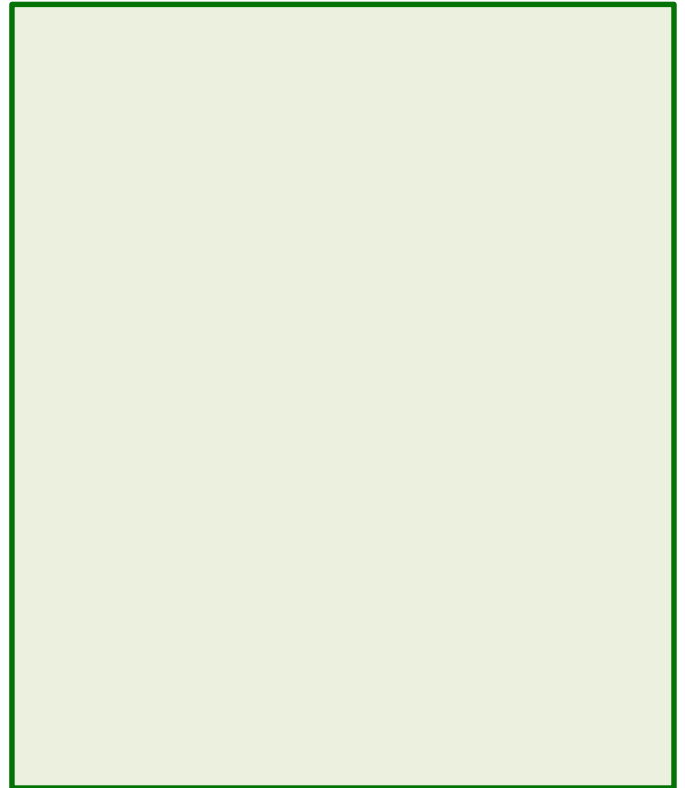
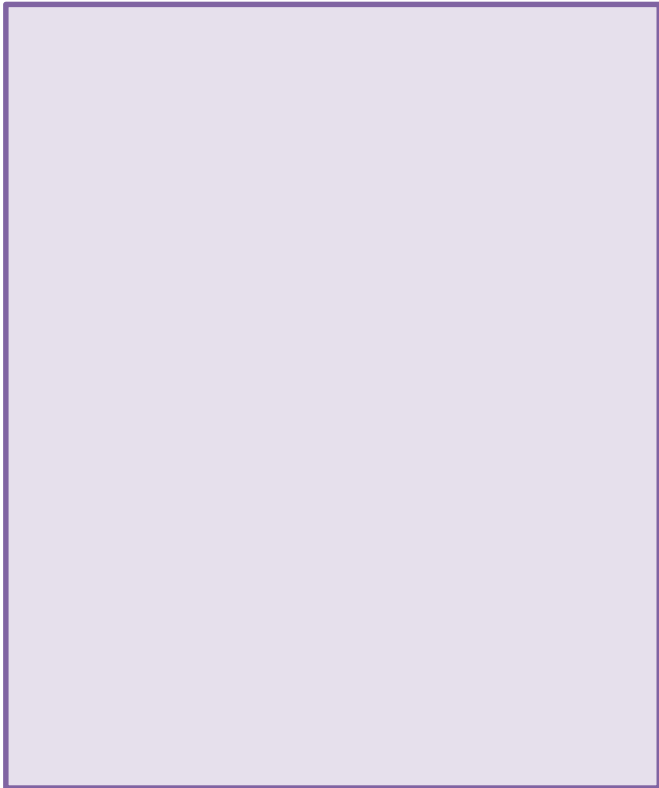
URGENT

NOT URGENT

IMPORTANT



NOT IMPORTANT



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