

August 2016

Focus: Priority Scheduling

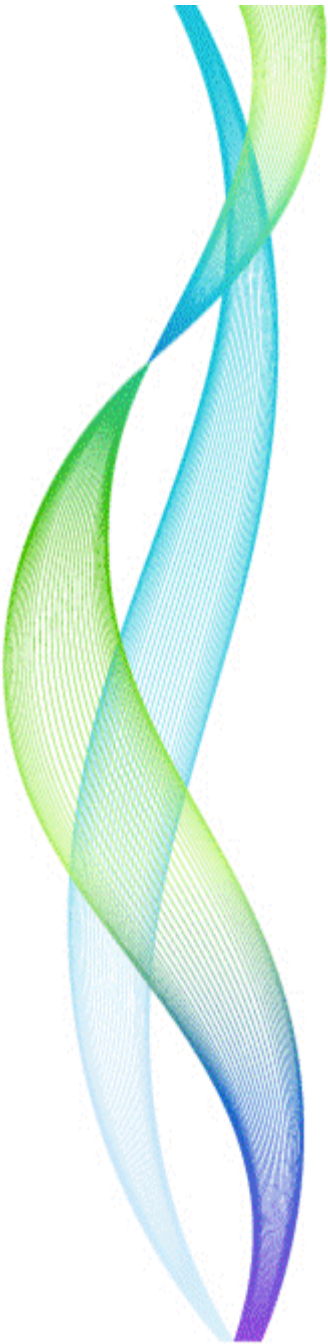
The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. - Stephen Covey

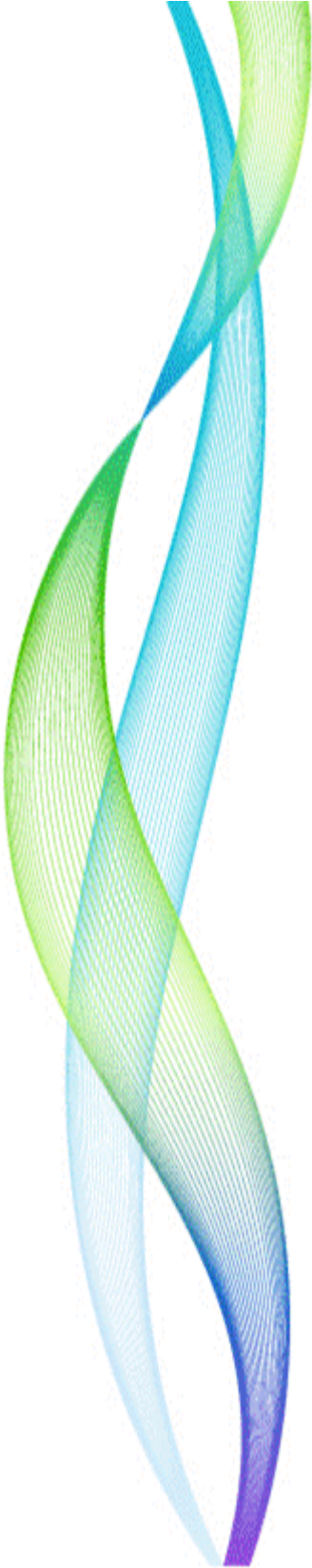
Summer can be wonderfully off-schedule, can't it? The kids are out of school, probably eating more ice cream and reading less books than they should, and relaxing vacations take front and center. We're also more likely to spend time spontaneously outdoors, barbecuing with friends and family or simply taking a walk. Even without children, summer somehow grants permission to take a little break from the remainder of the year's rigidity; perhaps it's a throwback to our own childhood summers.

And then, as the last clean swimsuit is put away and summer's bright blooms begin to fade, we're back to the daily grind. Things at work ramp up again, along with myriad opportunities to volunteer at our social clubs, churches/synagogues and children's schools. We're less likely to hesitate making commitments, as we did during summer's slower pace. Instead, we hastily add our names to seemingly endless sign-up sheets and before we know it, we're overbooked.

If back-to-back activities bring you more angst than joy—it might be time to hop off the hamster wheel. It's up to you *not* to fill every minute with “something” but to schedule in your priorities. What are your top three priorities? Do they include family? Spending time with friends? Exercise? Reading? Painting? Are you engaging in the things that fill you up on a regular basis? If not, *what are you waiting for?*

Your schedule isn't going to “calm down” until you start taking care of your priorities. In fact, it's the only way you'll be able to keep up with your schedule in the long run. Think first before saying “yes”. Say “no” to time chewers—no explanation necessary. And speaking of regular schedules, if you took some time off during the summer from your psychotherapist, now's the perfect time to check back in with him or her, too.





Reconnect: Take a Day Off *Together*

A single day off from work or home life can be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect for a couple that rarely gets to spend alone time together. Tell the boss ahead of time, drop the kids off at school, and then you and your partner can grab breakfast, see a matinee, take a nap (wink, wink) or enjoy a picnic. You know, just like you *used* to.

Bibliotherapy: *Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life* by Amy E Herman

Written by an art historian, *Visual Intelligence* provides an eye-opening (literally) view of how to more calmly and intelligently interpret the people and things that have an impact on us. From www.Amazon.com: “Whether you want to be more effective on the job, more empathetic toward your loved ones, or more alert to the trove of possibilities and threats all around us, this book will show you how to see what matters most to you more clearly than ever before.” In other words, this book will help you set your priorities.

Time-Out: Teaching Kids Not to Take Things Personally

He won't play with me! She said I'm a nerd because I wear glasses! Oh, how it hurts when our kids suffer from social exclusion and bullying/name calling. And while we, as adults, have hopefully learned not to take these types of things personally, it isn't easy getting kids to understand the importance of that lesson. Start by helping them figure out who they really are; ask questions about what they enjoy doing, and not doing. If they honestly prefer books to sports, then encourage them to read for enjoyment. Give them opportunities to show independence whenever possible. And remind them often that sometimes others *will* say and do things that hurt, but with a strong sense of self, the pain is much less likely to linger. Eleanor Roosevelt said it best: “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Self-Care Strategies: Lighting A Candle

We do it for weddings, birthdays, religious celebrations and ceremonies and dinner parties with friends and family. Lighting a candle signifies the beginning of something special and the end of something worth commemorating, so why not do it for yourself at the end of the day? You've worked hard, you've survived the day's activities. Enjoy a candle while preparing dinner, or taking a relaxing bath, or even when saying evening prayers or simple words of gratitude before bedtime.



Take Two: *Life, Animated*

“From Academy Award winning director Roger Ross Williams, *LIFE, ANIMATED* is the inspirational story of Owen Suskind, a young man who was unable to speak as a child until he and his family discovered a unique way to communicate by immersing themselves in the world of classic Disney animated films. This emotional coming-of-age story follows Owen as he graduates to adulthood and takes his first steps toward independence.” (source: www.angelikafilmcenter.com)

Our Time is Up: Stayed tuned for our September issue...