

DSC SPEED READS

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

# Time Management

Grainne Ridge



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DIRECTORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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# Introduction

## Who will this book help?

Perfect time management combines complete clarity of goals, excellent personal planning skills, a positive mindset and an ability to manage external factors. This book will help anyone who is faced with a backdrop of wide-ranging choices, commitments and an ever-changing scene to manage their time effectively.

## What will it give you?

This book encourages you to look at your time management habits, both at work and at home. You will find yourself facing your long-established practices and challenging their effectiveness. While this book focuses predominantly on the work aspect, the principles and strategies apply readily to home life. Its proposed approaches draw on the wisdom of real work-life experiences and successes. They consolidate tested and accepted best practice and some forward thinking initiatives. Ultimately, this book will provide you with motivating and workable approaches to new and old challenges.

# Chapter 1

## Your time management

*This chapter provides models and techniques to help you uncover the true source of the problem.*

### Time management checklist

How do you know whether your time management is poor or not? Tick as many of these boxes that apply.

- My manager said that I needed to go on a time management course.
- I regularly miss deadlines.
- I always end up working late to finish tasks.
- I rarely complete everything on my 'to do' list.
- I lose important information.
- My friends say that I hardly ever see them.
- My children complain that I am always telling them to hurry up.
- My partner feels that I work too hard and don't spend enough time with them or the family.
- My friends always call me first.
- I find it hard to enjoy being 'in the moment'.
- I feel tired or exhausted most of the time.
- I don't find time to relax or do some exercise.
- I feel that I have no time for myself.
- There are other roles that I would like to take on but can't see where I would find the time.
- I always seem to have too much to do.
- I find it hard to decide what to tackle first.

### Top tip



Consider the source of the problem, the impact and what will happen if you do nothing about it: simply organising tasks and commitments in the right order of priority and slavishly working through them will not necessarily deliver.

## Top tip



Use the 'SMART' principle to help achieve your goals. This means making sure that your actions are **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Realistic** and **Timeframed**. See page 30 for an example.

## Top tip



Identify and focus on those tasks that are really important. The **Pareto Principle** states that roughly **80% of effects come from 20% of causes**. For time management this means that **20% of your effort produces 80% of your results**.

These statements are examples of symptoms which we often diagnose as poor time management. The solution is typically to prescribe a time management course where you can expect to learn how to plan, prioritise and organise your chaos.

However, look at each of the statements you've ticked and consider which categories they could fall into:

- unclear job description
- poor personal planning, prioritising and organising
- inefficient working habits
- issues with organisational structure or management
- pressure caused by others' expectations
- unrealistic expectations of yourself
- a lack of goals or standards against which to measure progress or success
- external problems impacting on your work
- liking things the way they are
- not disliking the situation enough to change it.

## A diagnostic tool

Here is an example: 'My manager said that I needed to go on a time management course.'

When you ask some more questions to dig deeper, you learn that your manager thinks that you need a time management course because often you cannot accommodate her late requests for information.

What is the source of the problem?

- She doesn't plan or prioritise, so action works only when it becomes urgent, even when it needs input from others; or
- I don't anticipate these requests and allow contingency time in my day in spite of my experience with her.

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## Time Management

Perfect time management combines complete clarity of goals, excellent personal planning skills, a positive mindset and an ability to manage external factors. Drawing on the wisdom of real work-life experiences and successes, this book will help anyone who is faced with backdrop of wide-ranging choices, commitments and an ever-changing scene to manage their time effectively.

**Grainne Ridge** delivers workshops and training programmes in sales skills, personal and interpersonal skills in both the voluntary and private sectors. She is a coach, trained facilitator and member of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management.



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