

3 STEPS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR PRIORITIES

Pri-or-i-ty (prī- 'ôr-ə-tē, - 'är-l) n. *Something that is more important than other things and that needs to be done or dealt with first.*

For the last week, one of my top priorities has been to write a blog post about priorities. Priorities were on my mind because they're always on my clients' minds. A common denominator among my high-achieving clients and colleagues has been the challenge of prioritizing while also very aggressively trying to do it all.

Well, as the saying goes, "We plan, and God laughs." It has been a week, and I haven't completed this "top priority" article on priorities. *Ironic, no?*

This very common situation raises the question: was writing the article actually a "priority" last week? Or was it simply a great idea I would like to pursue when time permits? I suspect that had I stepped back to consider what needed to be accomplished last week, the article would not have made the cut... Unfortunately, it's possible to have too many "priorities."

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a "priority" as something important that must be dealt with first.

That's right: first.

Simple math dictates that only one thing at a time can be considered "first." Therefore, if you have too many priorities, they are no longer truly "priorities."

Through almost a decade in the trenches as an investment banker, law school, becoming a working mother of three, and now advising business owners and executives through my consulting work, I have learned a thing or two about prioritizing. Even among overachievers, the truth holds: on any given day, we should aim to accomplish three, work-related tasks at the most.

Here's how to tackle and prioritize your three, daily tasks:

- ▶ **1. First, "eat a frog for breakfast."** As Brian Tracy has written persuasively, you should begin each day by "eating a frog," or tackling your most difficult, least appetizing task. This complex task is often also your most important one. The sense of accomplishment from completing that one, big ticket item is immeasurable and becoming unburdened from that pressing item will supercharge the rest of your day.
- ▶ **2. Second, "just do it."** The second goal on the list should be another important to-do item—something that has to get done that day. The approach for your second task is practical and simple: just complete it and move on, no questions asked.
- ▶ **3. Third, a "nice to do."** The third task on your list should be a "nice to do" item—something you will complete if everything else in your day goes well, there are no flare-ups to resolve for others, and every train runs on time. If you don't get to this task (as you often won't), you've still accomplished your most important things for the day. Without guilt, today's "nice to-do" goal can become tomorrow's top priority.

Prioritizing in this manner (and sticking to it) will allow you to move through your days feeling productive, unencumbered, and guilt-free.

By Precious Williams Owodunni



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WEEKLY PLANNER

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, AIM TO ACCOMPLISH 3 WORK-RELATED TASKS:

1

“EAT A FROG FOR BREAKFAST”

A big ticket task that must be done *first*.



2

“JUST DO IT”

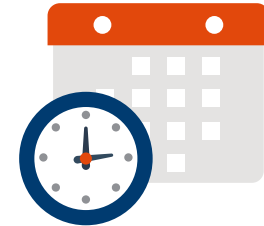
Another important task that must be completed by the end of the day.



3

“NICE TO DO”

A task that would be nice to accomplish.
If this "nice to do" task doesn't get done, move it to the next day's priority list without guilt.



MON

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