

the Happy Hour

- THE EISENHOWER MATRIX -

The Eisenhower Matrix is a time management tool that uses a four-quadrant matrix based on two variables: importance and urgency of the task at hand. You might say, "everything is important and everything is urgent!" Two things to think about: 1) when you think of the word "important," I encourage you to think about what is important that you do vs. someone else on your team does; and 2) really challenge yourself on what is truly urgent. Get another opinion from a trusted source if it helps.

When it comes to feeling overwhelmed, there are a few keys to remember:

1. WRITE IT DOWN

Transferring your to-do list from your mind to a piece of paper has several benefits. It allows you to record anything and everything that has your attention, which in turn, creates a mental off-loading and subsequent shift in your stress levels. There is a short period of transformation in which your brain goes from chaos to the first stages of organization. This action sends a signal to your brain: you don't have to remember all of this.

2. GIVE YOURSELF SPACE FOR DISCERNMENT

Now that you have everything down on a piece of paper in front of you, the sheer size of the to-do list might seem overwhelming. Take a pause! We suggest allowing yourself three intentional deep, slow breaths, or maybe tuning into your five senses as a moment of mindfulness. Being in the present helps with discernment. You are not going to get this whole to-do list done now, but feeling like you should might cloud your ability to sort out your list (that's how everything gets sorted into the first quadrant). By taking a pause, you are able to take a step back, get out of future worrying, and create a pocket of space where you can intentionally choose which items go where. All's this to say—take a beat and don't launch into your sorting.

3. LET IT GO

Don't be afraid to put items in the delete quadrant. If the permanence of delete feels too concrete or forever, that's ok! A helpful alternative is to replace 'delete' with 'maybe later'. This is another mental shift that can help you let go of the need to worry about it in the near future. By saying 'maybe later' you are not giving up on the item, just setting reasonable expectations around your capacity to get to it in this forthcoming season of your life. In reality, there are often times when items from a to-do list never get crossed off, and in the end, that's alright. By placing an item in the 'delete' or 'maybe later' quadrant, you are giving yourself the gift of releasing control. This item may turn out to be fine without your involvement or needing to 'do' anything. Let time reveal that!

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Let's start to break down our interpretation of each quadrant. Reminder, this is our interpretation. It is important for you to determine what each quadrant represents for you in order to make this tool as effective as possible. See key #3 for an example of changing up the terms or language of this tool.

DO

The items that go into this quadrant fulfill two qualifiers: they are important and they need to be done in the near future aka urgent. It is helpful also to think about placing the tasks that have a certain weight here. For example, paying a bill or following up on an important email. If these are forgotten or pushed aside, there might be some consequences. This quadrant can also be labeled TODAY/TOMORROW.

Pro tip: If you find everything is falling into the "important" category, ask yourself "is this important that it has to be done by me?" This might help you identify some tasks you can delegate.

SCHEDULE

These tasks are still important, but not as urgent. Think of these tasks as something you need to get done in the next week. If they don't get done today or tomorrow, that's ok! Items in the schedule quadrant are basically waiting on the bench to be put in the DO quadrant.

If there is some large-scale undetermined task on your to-do list that doesn't have any time restraints on it, hold on to it, we will find a place for it soon. This quadrant can also be labeled as THIS WEEK.

DELEGATE

These tasks are important and maybe even urgent, but it is not important that YOU do the tasks. Just as long as it is done, it doesn't matter who does it. If you are working on a team, maybe your co-worker or assistant will cover the task. If you are called into an urgent meeting, maybe you can share your information with a team member that is planning on going to the meeting. At home, this could look like delegating out household tasks. If you are saying to yourself "but I don't have anyone to delegate to." Well maybe you do. In a world where quite literally anything is at your fingertips, things like grocery shopping, meal prep, invoicing, or driving can be outsourced.

The key with this quadrant is that you have to check your expectations and control levels over how this task is complete. If it is really important that it is done in a certain way, then you might want to move it to "do" or "schedule". Delegating can be hard, but try it out, you may just find a world of freedom.

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DELETE

These are tasks that are not important and not urgent. These might be tasks that you would like to do eventually, but they stack up to all the other items on your list. Some examples include: getting your nails done, signing up for that 5th volunteer job at school, going to an optional meeting, or reorganizing your closet. Yes, sometime in the future you would like to do some of these tasks, but for efficiency's sake, they don't need to be taking up space in your schedule or in your mind.

Remember that large-scale undetermined task on your to-do list? This is where you would put it for now. This quadrant can also be labeled as MAYBE LATER.

Need a second, objective resource to help you on your first try at your Eisenhower Matrix?

Our coaches can help you get intentional and deliberate on what tasks should go where.
Just reach out to us at info@thehappyournash.com or 615-953-3934.

Source: <https://www.eisenhower.me/eisenhower-matrix/>

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