

SKILL 1 – COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING



1) DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

Name of the tool: The Time Jar

The Time Jar idea is predicated on a time-management strategy that assigns duties and obligations a numerical priority. Jeremy Wright proposed the hypothesis known as the "bucket of rocks theory" or "jar of life theory" in 2002. It is based on the idea that time is a limited and finite place. To put it briefly, the pickle jar serves as a metaphor for our normal day, while the rocks, pebbles, and sand stand in for our daily activities. Additionally, water is added to the analogy in some accounts as a symbol for one's private life. We can put various jobs and activities within the jar. However, we have to stick to a set a timetable and order for every task.

Time: 15 minutes

2) OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOL

- Cultivate prioritization skills by critically analysing what's most important.
- Visualize your time to enable you to manage your time wisely.
- Complete the tasks at hand.
- Understand time allocation
- Identify time-wasting activities

3) CONNECTION OF THE TOOL WITH THE SKILL

Engaging in time management exercises at work can improve team performance while having fun and fostering camaraderie. Encouraging team members to effectively manage their responsibilities in their spare time can yield numerous benefits for both the employer and the employee.

4) RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Large jars (according to number of people)
- Rocks

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- Pebbles
- Sand
- Water

5) HOW TO APPLY THE TOOL

Rocks: These are the important tasks with serious consequences if left unattended, representing your major goals and critical projects. Examples include quarterly planning and preparing for significant client meetings.

Pebbles: Tasks in this category provide substantial benefits but are less time-sensitive. They support the "rock" tasks and include activities like attending meetings and weekly planning.

Sand: These tasks are necessary but don't directly contribute to your primary goals. Examples include email responses and social networking. While essential, they don't require significant time or immediate attention.

Water: Symbolizing your personal life, "water" tasks encompass activities like exercise and family responsibilities. While not part of the original theory, they're crucial for maintaining work-life balance and overall success.

Rules

1. Prevent overcrowding in your jar by avoiding an excess of big tasks. Focus on what truly matters to prevent overwhelming your day. Ensure your most important task is included, limiting big rock tasks to less than four.
2. Allocate time for personal life amidst managing your Time Jar. Remember to dedicate time to hobbies or relaxation to maintain a balanced approach to time management.
3. Set aside a portion of your Time Jar for unexpected or emergency tasks. Having a buffer ensures you can handle urgent matters without disrupting your overall plan. Utilize this "emergency time," such as the 30 minutes allocated for emails, to address unforeseen issues swiftly.
4. Group similar tasks together and tackle them in batches to streamline your workflow. Task batching reduces the mental strain of switching between different activities and enhances efficiency.

Create your schedule by following these steps:

1. Start by placing 2 or 3 rocks in the "jar," representing your main daily goals. These will likely require more time than other tasks.
2. Then, carefully arrange a few pebbles around the rocks to fill the gaps. Keep these tasks concise, aiming for 30-45 minutes each.
3. Next, add a handful of sand to the jar, representing shorter tasks that can be completed in around 30 minutes.
4. Finally, fill the remaining space with water, allocating time for breaks throughout the day, including lunch.

Here's an example of a daily Time Jar schedule:

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7:00 am **Water:** Morning meditation for mental clarity
8:00 am **Rock #1:** Complete research for upcoming project
9:15 am **Water:** Stretch break to re-energize
9:30 am **Sand:** Respond to urgent emails and messages
10:00 am **Pebbles:** Collaborative brainstorming session with team
10:30 am **Rock #2:** Draft proposal for client meeting
12:30 pm **Water:** Enjoy a healthy lunch and take a walk

6) WHAT TO LEARN

To effectively apply the bucket of rocks theory to your life, meticulous planning of activities is key. If you begin your day by filling your jar with distractions like casual conversations or social media, followed by less crucial urgent tasks, your jar quickly fills up, leaving little room for the rocks – the most critical activities of the day. Consequently, your day ends up lacking productivity.

To reclaim productivity, prioritize filling your "jar" with the most crucial tasks first (up to 4 items). Then, gradually address urgent yet less important tasks. Finally, handle distractions.

By prioritizing important tasks initially, you ensure their completion before addressing other matters. It's important to note that highly productive individuals adhere to this approach.



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