



Episode 135: Escape the Urgency Trap

Working on the front line inevitably means dealing with urgent situations. Sometimes, it can even feel like the 24 hours you have in a day is still not enough to accomplish everything on your plates. And as you tick off all these 'urgent' tasks on your to-do list, the line between urgency and importance can become blurry.

In this short episode, Rachel talks about how to escape the urgency trap. Urgency and importance are two very different things. The urgency trap makes us feel productive at the moment, but it hinders us from accomplishing bigger projects and goals in the long run. If you want to escape the urgency trap and become more productive in life and work, this episode and workbook are for you.

Podcast links

[Deep Work](#) by Cal Newport

[THRIVE Weekly Planner](#)

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[Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Check out the [Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management](#) if you want to attend the Leaders in Healthcare conference and attend my face-to-face workshop on leading without rescuing.

Are you interested in joining our You Are Not A Frog retreat? Or perhaps you have some questions for us. Drop us an email at hello@youarenotafrog.com to let us know!



Quote to remember:

‘The thing about the urgency trap is that while we're doing it in the short term, it feels good. We feel like superheroes because we are ticking things off on our to-do lists. “I'm getting that done. I'm getting this done. I'm ploughing through it. Look at me, I'm really productive here.” But in the long term, when we look back on those days where we've just spent our time doing urgent stuff, we think, “What did I actually accomplish that day?” and we've still got those big things that are niggling at us.’

What You Will Learn

We only have 24 hours in a day. With everything we need to do, it's easy to feel like we have no control over our time. We try to tick off one task after another on our to-do lists to feel productive and accomplished. However, we fail to see we're creating the perfect formula for falling further and further into the urgency trap.

In the end, we end up leaving out bigger, more important projects for later. We only get to them once they become urgent, and which, at that point, we have already sacrificed their quality. It creates a domino effect in our long-term growth, personal and career-wise. Thus, it's crucial to escape this urgency trap, and this activity will challenge your principles in task prioritisation.

Using the Urgent-Important Matrix, you can discern the difference between your urgent and important responsibilities. While urgent-important tasks are essential, it's often the non-urgent but important projects that support our growth. Our training as healthcare workers makes it difficult to remove the guilt that the urgency trap puts on us. But as Rachel shares in the episode, it's possible to escape this trap with the right tools, mindset, and strategy.

As you complete this activity, you'll learn how to harness the power of deep work, delegation, and time-blocking. By reflecting on your practices around accomplishing



tasks, you'll be able to flip the switch on your mindset and break free. Soon, you'll can take more control of your responsibilities and schedule in life and work.

Activity: Urgent-Important Matrix

Q1. Describe your typical schedule for a day.

My Schedule	
Time	Task



Q2. Write your to-do list for the week. Include both 'urgent' and 'non-urgent' tasks you plan to accomplish.

To-Do List

Q3. Examine the tasks on your to-do list. How will you group them according to the Urgent-Important Matrix?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		





NOT IMPORTANT

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Q4. Based on the Urgent-Important Matrix, which tasks only feel urgent but aren't actually important? Which tasks can you delegate to someone else? Elaborate on your answer.

Q5. How will you spend more time on the tasks in the non-urgent but important quadrant?





Q6. Describe the best time and place where you can do deep work. It should be a period without disturbance or interruptions.

Q7. What are some tasks on your to-do list that require deep work? How will they support your growth in the long run?

Q8. List the things that are bothering you right now. Then, come up with your own solutions to address them.

Problem	Solution



Q9. From what you've learned in the episode about time-blocking, create a new schedule that will allow you to do deep work for non-urgent, important tasks.

My New Schedule	
Time	Task

CPD time claimed:

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