## Episode 153: Think Differently About Your To-Do List

As busy professionals, we often have lengthy to-do lists. But no matter how fast we work, there's always more to do. It's not unusual to feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of tasks we have to complete, only to find that the day ends with important things left undone.

But perhaps we may have the wrong approach to our to-do lists?

We need to think differently about our daily tasks. To-do lists should help us create a fulfilled and happier life, not shackle us to obligations that might not be that important at all.

This workbook will challenge you to think about your priorities and how they manifest in your to-do list. It will guide you through the 4 F’s mentioned in the podcast episode and help you assess your current schedule and obligations.

Remember, saying no will give you the time and energy for what's truly important.

If you want to change your time "management" and finally prioritise what's important instead of being swept away by obligation after obligation, this episode and workbook are for you.

**Podcast links**

[Episode 130](https://youarenotafrog.com/episode-130/): How to Say F\*\*k It and Become Ridiculously Relaxed (Even about Stuff That REALLY Matters) with John C. Parkins

[The Earned Life](https://marshallgoldsmith.com/book/) by Marshall Goldsmith

[OLIVER BURKEMAN: 4000 weeks…it’s all we got in this lifetime, folks!](https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/oliver-burkeman-4000-weeks-its-all-we-got-in-this-lifetime/id1548626341?i=1000540508370) From the Wild with Sarah Wilson Podcast

[Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals](https://www.amazon.com/Four-Thousand-Weeks-Management-Mortals/dp/0374159122) by Oliver Burkeman

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**Podcast links**

Sign up for a [free self-coaching toolkit](https://www.shapestoolkit.com/selfcoaching)!

Check out our [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](http://www.permissiontothrive.org/) for doctors.

Find out more about the [Shapes Toolkit](http://www.shapestoolkit.com/) training, talks, and workshops.

[Sign up here](https://www.shapestoolkit.com/podcast-CPD-forms) for more **free** resources.

Join the [Shapes Collective FB group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2212687302308522/).

Become a member of the [Resilient Team Academy](https://www.shapestoolkit.com/resilient-team-academy)!

Email Rachel or reach her on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-rachel-morris/) or [Twitter](https://twitter.com/DrRachelMorris).

**Quote to remember:**

# *“There will always be more to do than you can actually fit into your time available and it's up to you to choose wisely...embrace the JOMO, the joy of missing out on stuff, knowing that you have chosen the things that are important to you, that will make you feel good, be a better person, knowing that you actually have time to do what you've chosen to do.”*

# What You Will Learn

We often see to-do lists as a bucket of things we need to do, the problem is that someday you might find yourself working harder and harder with a seemingly never-ending list of tasks.

Or maybe this is already your situation.

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Before we learn to cut back and prioritise, we must take a step back and assess ourselves. This involves looking at how our to-do lists came to be in the first place, how they make us feel, the frequency of unfinished tasks, and how hectic our lives are. Prioritisation can be challenging when we don't cut through the noise and identify what's important.

Delving into the 4 F's, we start with your big rocks. Often, we get roped into obligations that don't actually matter to us. Here's where it gets tricky: learn to differentiate what is important and what you think is important. You might find it hard to let go of obligations just because you believe you're required to do them by someone or something. Determining your big rocks will take time. If you can't answer immediately, don't worry — you can come back to the workbook anytime.

Next, F\*\*\* it or finish it. Figure out what you should finish and what doesn't matter. These things can range from actions to feelings, such as taking on more duties or having the mindset that you need to do everything perfectly. Whatever it is, remember that you don't need to feel guilty about setting boundaries and protecting what's important to you.

Moving to the 3rd F – Feelings. Certain obligations can fire us up or make us feel stressed and unpleasant to be around. Reflect on these obligations and pinpoint what you might feel about them in the future. Afterwards, combine them with the previous F's and check which ones you want to let go of based on your feelings, focus, and whether they matter.

Finally, we get to the last F: Fitting in the schedule. To-do lists often don't consider the time it takes to finish something. This is why we often have unfinished tasks — it's not an issue of ability, but a problem of how we think about time. Observing your daily activities over seven days will give you a better picture of what's happening. This data can help you assess what's important to you.

Remember, there’s only so much we can do in a day. You don’t need to do it all. It’s enough to focus on what gives you purpose and happiness.

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## Activity: The 4 F’s

**1. Prioritisation and Your To-Do List**

**Q1. How would you describe your daily to-do list? In the space below, describe them according to the following questions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Questions** |  |
| How hectic would you describe your daily routine? Use a scale of 1-10, with 1 being relaxed and 10 being hectic. |  |
| Do you often have to leave things unfinished? If yes, what happens to those tasks?  |  |
| How do you plan out your day? How do tasks go into your to-do list? |  |
| At the end of the day, what do you usually feel?  |  |

**Q2. Based on your previous answer and after listening to the episode, what do you think needs to change about how you go about your to-do list?**

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**Q3. What do you think is your biggest obstacle to this change?**

**2. The 4 F’s**

**Q4. Focus on your big rocks. What are the most important big rocks to you and why?**

**Q5. Finish it or Eff It. Based on your previous answers, what should you start to let go of?**

**Q6. Feelings matter. Reflect on your current obligations and think about your feelings towards them. Which ones stress you out, calm you down, or give you a sense of purpose?**

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**Q7. Combining the previous 3 F’s, which obligations can you let go off?**

**Q8. Fit in the Schedule. Start a simple time diary this week using the following format and list how long you tend to do certain tasks.**

You should also include any event that pulls you away from the task, such as scrolling through social media or emergencies. Feel free to change the time slots on the left according to your schedule.

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|  | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thurs** | **Fri** | **Sat**  | **Sun** |
| **5 AM – 6 AM** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6 AM – 7 AM** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **7 AM – 8 AM**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **8 AM – 9 AM** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **9 AM – 10 AM** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **11 AM – 12 NN** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **12 NN – 1 PM**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1 PM – 2 PM**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **3 PM – 4 PM**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**Q9. After completing all seven days, what have you observed about your tasks and how long it takes to finish them?**

**Q10. Return your previous answers about obligations and what you can let go of and consolidate them in the space below. For each obligation, think about all 4 F's to determine what you can let go of.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Obligations**  | **Focus on the Big Rocks.** *How important is this to me?*  | **Finish It or Eff It.** *Can I just let this obligation go?*  | **Feelings Matter.** *What does this obligation make me feel?*  | **Fit in the Schedule.** *Does this fit into my current schedule?*  | **Change***Do I hold on or let go? And should my schedule change for it?* |
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**CPD time claimed:**

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