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Monday, October 13, 2014



As the protests showed us, you never know what life is going to throw at you, so it's important to be prepared. Chin Teik is the founder and president of Chin Teik Consulting based in Hong Kong. He has a long history of training business people on how to be more organised and improve their leadership skills, and is inspired by Stephen Covey's 1989 book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Teik sat down to share some of experience and knowledge, that you can apply to your school and daily life, to use your time more efficiently.

Everybody makes schedules - it's just

that many of them don't work. But there are some common mistakes people make when creating a schedule that you should know about - and more importantly, know how to fix.

A typical schedule has dozens of things we need to plan, and we often let the urgent tasks overwhelm the important ones. "First things first: take time to figure out what is important," says Teik. "Reflect on your purpose in life and what you value." It is important to list your tasks in order of importance to get your work done on time.

Your tasks can be categorised into four types: important and urgent, important but not urgent, urgent but not important, and not urgent nor important. Take tasks one at a time and decide which of the four boxes it belongs in. This takes time, but will make your schedule more effective.

Once your tasks are sorted, schedule the most important goals first - or as Covey calls them, "big rocks".

It's crucial to plan your schedule a few weeks before these big rocks to make sure you have enough time for important items such as exams, project deadlines, and special events. After you've made time for them, you can fit in the rest of your items. And remember, you

The internet and smartphones are the biggest distractions for teens ... these things use up so much of their time

have to update your schedule as new tasks come in.

Planning carefully like this helps limit the time you waste on distractions - those unimportant events or items.

"Don't allow other people to use up your time as we only have 24 hours in each day. Whatever is lost cannot be regained," says Teik, referring to the time adolescents give to social media - smartphones and the internet are the biggest distractions for teenagers.

Review your goals and see how effective

your schedule is. If you notice the mistakes you made, you'll be able to plan your schedule and categorise your tasks better.

A five-step guide

- 1 Set clear goals with "measurable outcomes" and deadlines based on their relative importance. Measurable outcomes are very important: if you set unreasonable goals, you'll be less motivated to meet them.
- 2 Put your tasks in one of the four categories based on importance and urgency. This shows you which the "big rocks" are, and what is unimportant.
- 3 Set a time and date each week to plan your schedule for tasks due three to four weeks ahead. It is important to set a rhythm for your planning; you're more likely to do it if it's at the same time every week.
- 4 Stick to your schedule! Be ready to say "no" to distractions and time-wasters like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Put your mobile phone away, and keep your computer - or internet browser - switched off when you work, so you give the task all your attention and focus.
- 5 Be aware of how you use your time, and know when it's not being used well. Finding these mistakes will help you improve your planning and get the most out of every day!

Your day can be super busy with extra tutorials, sports classes, and music lessons - and that's not even including homework! But all it takes is a bit of careful planning and you won't miss a thing, writes **YP cadet Rai Arlin L**

No more wasted time!