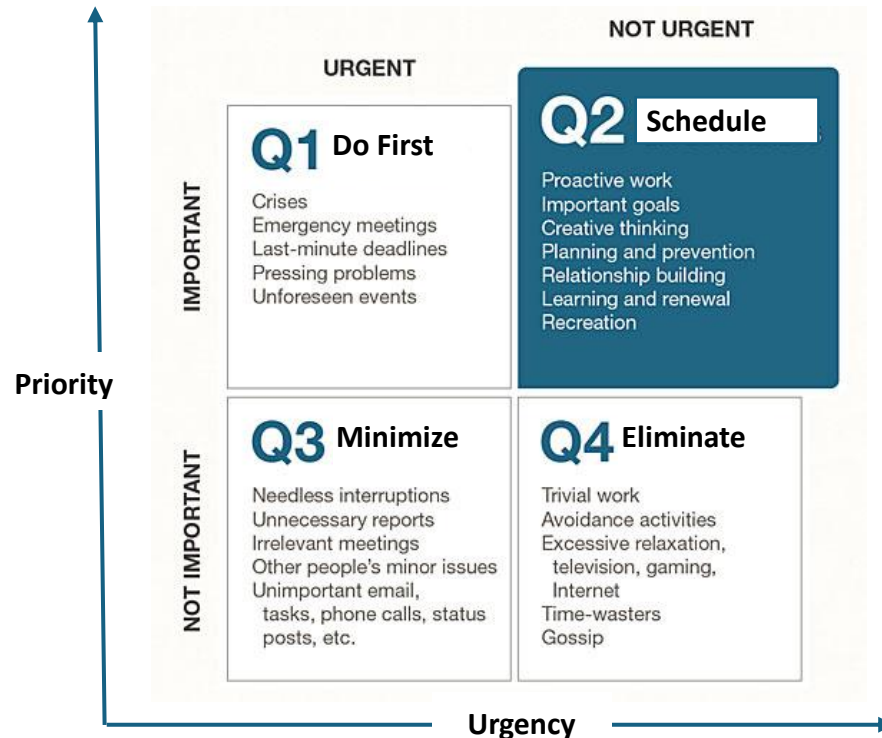


MIND: Organization

Handout #4: Tending Your Garden: Time Management as Good Stewardship

Time Management Matrix (Productivity)

Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix is a framework for prioritizing tasks based on their urgency and importance. His approach encourages focusing on important but not urgent activities (Q2) such as long-range planning and personal development in order to achieve goals and increase efficiency.



Key Principles

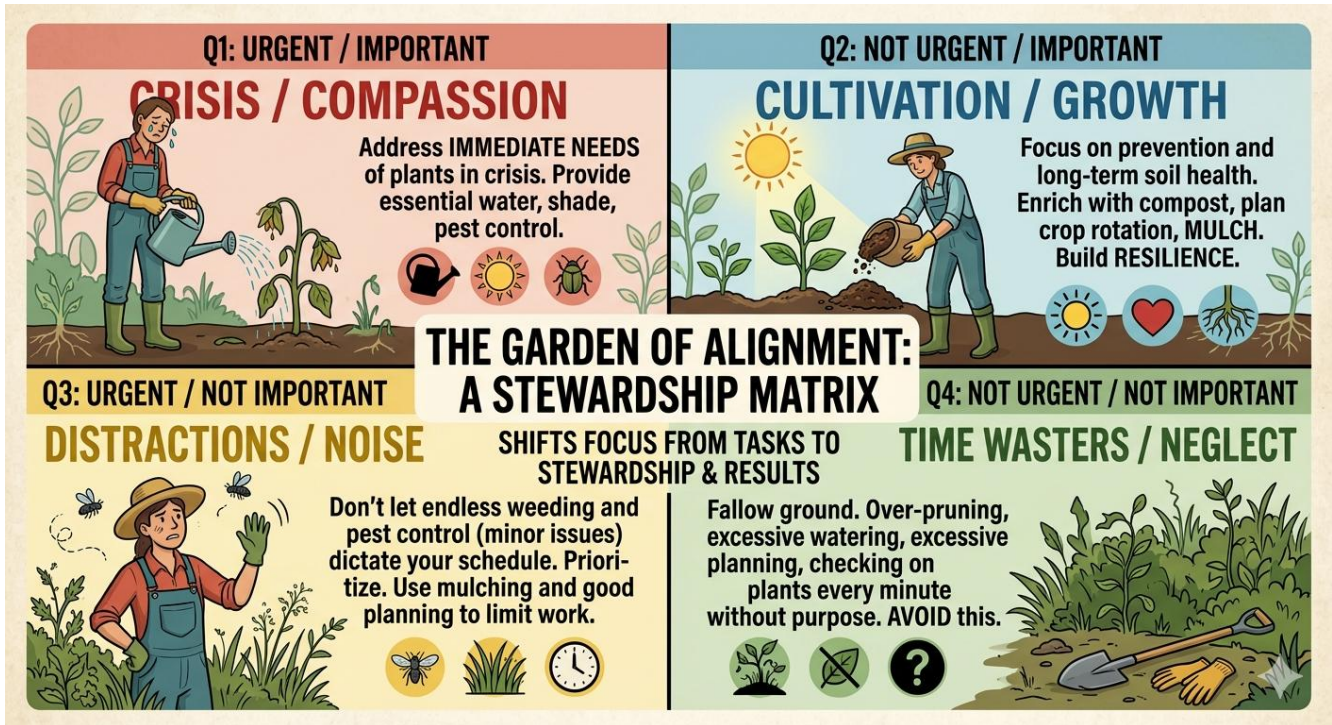
- **Priority Over Urgency:** The central concept is the distinction between what is important (aligned with your mission and values) and what is urgent (demands immediate attention but may be trivial).
- **The Power of Quadrant 2:** Covey teaches that the heart of effective personal management is spending time in Quadrant 2. This includes planning, relationship building, and preparation. You should schedule your most significant life goals into your week before the onrush of trivial tasks fills your time.

Key Benefits

- **Crises Reduction:** By tending to "Not Urgent" matters early, you prevent them from becoming "Urgent" emergencies later.
- **Enhanced Relationships:** Because relationship-building is a Q2 activity, it is often the first thing sacrificed in a busy life. Covey's system ensures you "tend the soil" of your connections intentionally.
- **Improved Clarity and Vision:** Following the plan forces you to define what is truly important. This keeps you from being seduced by the "thick of thin things"—tasks that feel productive but achieve nothing.

Shifting to a Stewardship Mindset (Alignment)

As stewards, God has entrusted us with resources and opportunities to serve him in our lives. Just as a gardener must tend the garden by pruning, watering and nurturing it, so we must tend to our well-being and ensure we prioritize our time **in alignment with God's priorities**. Instead of asking "How can I get the most out of today?" we learn to ask, "How can I be the most faithful person I am meant to be today?"



Quadrant		Stewardship Shift	New Mindset	
Q1	Crisis Compassion	Caring over Tasking: Am I seeing interruptions as a nuisance to my plans, or as a plant that God is asking me to water right now?	Presence	Attend to the Now: Respond to immediate human needs with your full, unhurried attention.
Q2	Cultivation Growth	Cultivating over Efficiency: Am I tending my "soil" so I have the resources to offer shade and fruit to others when needed?	Devotion	Nourish the Soil: Invest in your inner spiritual roots, well-being, and connection with others so you remain fit and ready for service.
Q3	Distractions Noise	Calling over Clamor: Am I reacting to the loudest voices and saying "yes" to please others, or out of a true calling to serve God?	Discernment	Prune the Thorns: Identify and remove the "noise" of social pressure and trivial demands that consume energy but yield no true fruit
Q4	Time Wasters Neglect	Sabbath over Stagnation: Am I confusing numbness and escape with restoration and joy?	Discipline	Clear the Gound: Regularly clear away mindless habits and digital distractions to keep your space open for true rest.

Notes on Cultivating a New Mindset

Q1: Urgent / Important

- **Caring over Tasking.** You attend to an immediate human need because you are the hands and feet of Christ in that moment. Framing an interruption as a "plant that needs water" moves the guilt of a broken schedule and replaces it with the dignity of a divine assignment.
- **Presence.** In a gardening context, presence is about being fully attentive to the current needs of the living things around you. As a steward, you recognize that God often works through interruptions. Presence means choosing to see a child's question or a friend's phone call not as a distraction from your "real work" but as the work itself.

Q2: Not Urgent / Important

- **Cultivating over Efficiency.** Caring for your spiritual, mental, emotional and physical roots (i.e., wellness) isn't selfish - it's ensuring you have something of quality to offer. Reframing self-care as "tending the soil" makes it a responsibility: you aren't just resting for yourself; you're resting so you have "shade and fruit" to offer others.
- **Devotion.** Devotion is the act of nurturing the source. Just as a garden requires watering and soil care, your soul requires intentional time spent in prayer, worship, and rest. This isn't self-care for your own sake - it is an act of devotion to God. By tending your inner spiritual roots, you ensure that what grows outward in the other areas of your life is healthy and fruitful.

Q3: Urgent / Not Important

- **Calling over Clamor.** You recognize your limited capacity and refuse to let the "thorns" of social expectations choke out your fruit. This contrasts the quiet, steady call of God with the loud, urgent, but often unimportant noise of the world.
- **Discernment.** Discernment is the gardener's tool of assessment. It is the ability to distinguish between a fruitful branch and an invasive weed. Much of what calls for our time appears urgent but doesn't align with God's plan for us. Discernment allows you to say a "graceful no" to good things so you can say a "faithful yes" to better things. It is the process of eliminating noise to allow your true calling to flourish.

Q4: Not Urgent / Not Important

- **Stewardship Shift: Sabbath over Stagnation.** You value restorative rest that honors life's rhythms while avoiding numbing habits that keep you from being fully alive. Mindless or numbing activities often leave us more tired, whereas true Sabbath (restoration) actually energizes us.
- **New Mindset: Discipline.** In this framework, discipline isn't about rigid control; it's about consistent clearing. It is the daily effort to keep the fallow ground of your life from becoming overgrown with mindless habits and distractions. It takes discipline to prioritize true Sabbath rest over mindless numbing. This mindset should help keep you awake and alert to the world around you, ensuring you are always ready for God's next assignment.