

#4 Self-Managing Your Goals and Priorities

To manage priorities means to decide which things need to be done in what order. To reach your long-term goals, you must establish priorities. Otherwise, minor diversions will keep getting in the way of more important things.

Two main criteria for setting priorities are urgency and importance. They are not the same.

* Something that is urgent requires immediate attention — do it right away.
* Something that is important, but not needed right away, can wait — finish urgent priorities first.

The following four categories of urgency and importance will help you make decisions about long-term goals:

**Category A: Urgent and Important** — Everyone agrees that tasks in this category need to be done right away and well. These are top priorities.

**Category B: Important but Not Urgent** — Most long-term goals are in this category. They include things like graduating from school, finding a job, and starting a family.

**Category C: Urgent, but not Important** — Some phone calls, meetings, and personal appointments fall here. They need attention, but are not truly important.

**Category D: Neither Urgent nor Important** — Daily activities such as opening your junk mail, making coffee, or downloading the latest music fall into this category.

Unfortunately, many people spend a lot of time on Categories C and D and neglect Category

B. So we make little progress toward our long-term goals and we feel frustrated and dissatisfied.

**Action:** Which category (A, B, C, or D) do the following actions fall into? **Type the letter beside each entry. Save this file to your computer or screen shot it and submit as per your coordinator’s instructions.**

1. Helping a displeased customer **6.** Meeting with a coworker about next month's plans
2. Stamping the mail **7.** Calling a friend to check in on last night's date
3. Going to lunch **8.** Making plane reservations for tomorrow's last-minute trip
4. Returning a phone call from your boss **9.** Opening today's mail
5. Removing a spot from your shirt **10.** Emailing a coworker the agenda for next week's meeting

*Note to teachers:* Today's lesson was taken from *Self-Management and Goal Setting*, written by Career Solutions Publishing for Cengage Learning.

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