

PRIORITIES WORKSHEET for people in 12-Step Recovery

For Gaining Perspective and Balance (First Things First)

Currently, your life's priorities are whatever you spend time doing. Are they really the 'next right thing to do' for you? If you're not quite sure of your values and what you stand for, this project may help. Stay focused; keep clear of distractions. Procrastination can cause you to lose focus with your goals and sabotage them. It can be tough to push yourself out of your comfort zone; it's easier to sink back into old habits. Think, Pray, & Meditate while working on this.

1. CORE CIRCLE.

First Things First. Clarify what really matters to you. These are the things that are so important to you that if they were lost or missed you would be devastated or it would change your life for the worse. Then take some time to consider what things you want to do, see, or accomplish in your life. When you know what (and who) is most important, you can plan the steps to achieve those things and assess the demands on your time that do not support your life priorities.

Examples: Higher Power. Conscious contact. Spiritual growth. Sobriety/no illicit drugs. Intimate relationships (spouse, partner, children, parent). Service work. More time just for you or to spend with your kids... with your spouse or partner. Good health. Better mental health. Get a job or a new career. Long-term friendships. Peaceful home environment. Travel and adventure. Financial freedom.

The openings from circle to circle are for God, Principles of the Program, and support people to flow throughout all your life and decisions – "we practice these principles in all our affairs." Action items also flow within their circle to support more than one priority.

2. SECOND CIRCLE

Actions and steps that will support your core priorities. The second circle includes the other things that are important, but are not irreplaceable; as well as actions that support your core priorities. Take the time to figure out what would be the next best action(s) to follow through on each priority. Ask yourself, "What's the next step I need to take?" instead of just blindly going forwards. Look for the people, situations, actions, and things that support your core values and priorities. Seek guidance from a mentor or spiritual advisor.

Examples: 12-step meetings. Daily meditation. Regular talks with sponsor/mentor. Read recovery literature. Work on Steps. Read sacred writings. Attend church, temple, mosque, or other place of worship. Learn better life skills from mentors. Sign up for classes. Look for work. Fill out applications. Update a resume. Quit smoking. Eat healthier. Eat enough. Visit your doctor or therapist. Service work. Creative pursuits. Read a book about _____. Walk the dogs. Spend time with someone; activities with family. Keep house clean. Look for a new home. Look for meaningful work. Recreation and fun. Community service. Personal growth. Better transportation. Get license. Save or invest money.

3. THIRD and FOURTH CIRCLES

The third circle includes more supportive actions plus lesser priorities. Break actions/tasks down into smaller steps to keep from feeling overwhelmed or fearful of what to tackle next. The fourth circle is for lesser activities and interests that you can live without, but things you'd like to do if your main priorities are taken care of. This is also the circle for small, bite-size steps toward a bigger goal.

Keep it simple. Simplify your life. Is there a better way of doing the things you've decided are life priorities? By thinking of more efficient ways to do things, you can free up your valuable time. Make a Daily To-Do List. Think about how you're doing something now – Can you spend your time more efficiently? Look at how much time you spend running errands or how involved you are in 'fixing' other people's problems, etc. By getting groceries or doing laundry during the week you can give yourself more time on the weekend to do something you want to do. Batch small tasks or errands together and do them all at once. Are you spending time accomplishing other people's priorities, but not your own? Do less, but focus on the important stuff. Slow down and let go of being in total control.

4. OUTSIDE THE CIRCLES

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff. The outside area is everything else – the small stuff. If you do the small stuff first, there is no room for the more important things. These are outside issues and concerns; other people's projects or crises; activities that don't support your values and goals.

This is YOUR GUIDELINE for choosing demands on your time. Don't let anything or anyone come between you and what truly matters most to you! If you know where each life-priority stands in relative importance to the others, it will help you to make appropriate decisions in the moment of choice – the moments you "pause, reflect, and pray."

Rethinking Your Life Priorities. Choose 5 or 6 important items for the inside circle – these are your top priorities. Write other items that support these top priorities into the next circles. These should be appropriate for you and your level of recovery. The outer circle can be for the ‘smaller stuff’ that doesn’t need to take up too much of your energy and focus. A suggested time to draw up a new page is when you do your annual, pre-anniversary self-inventory.

