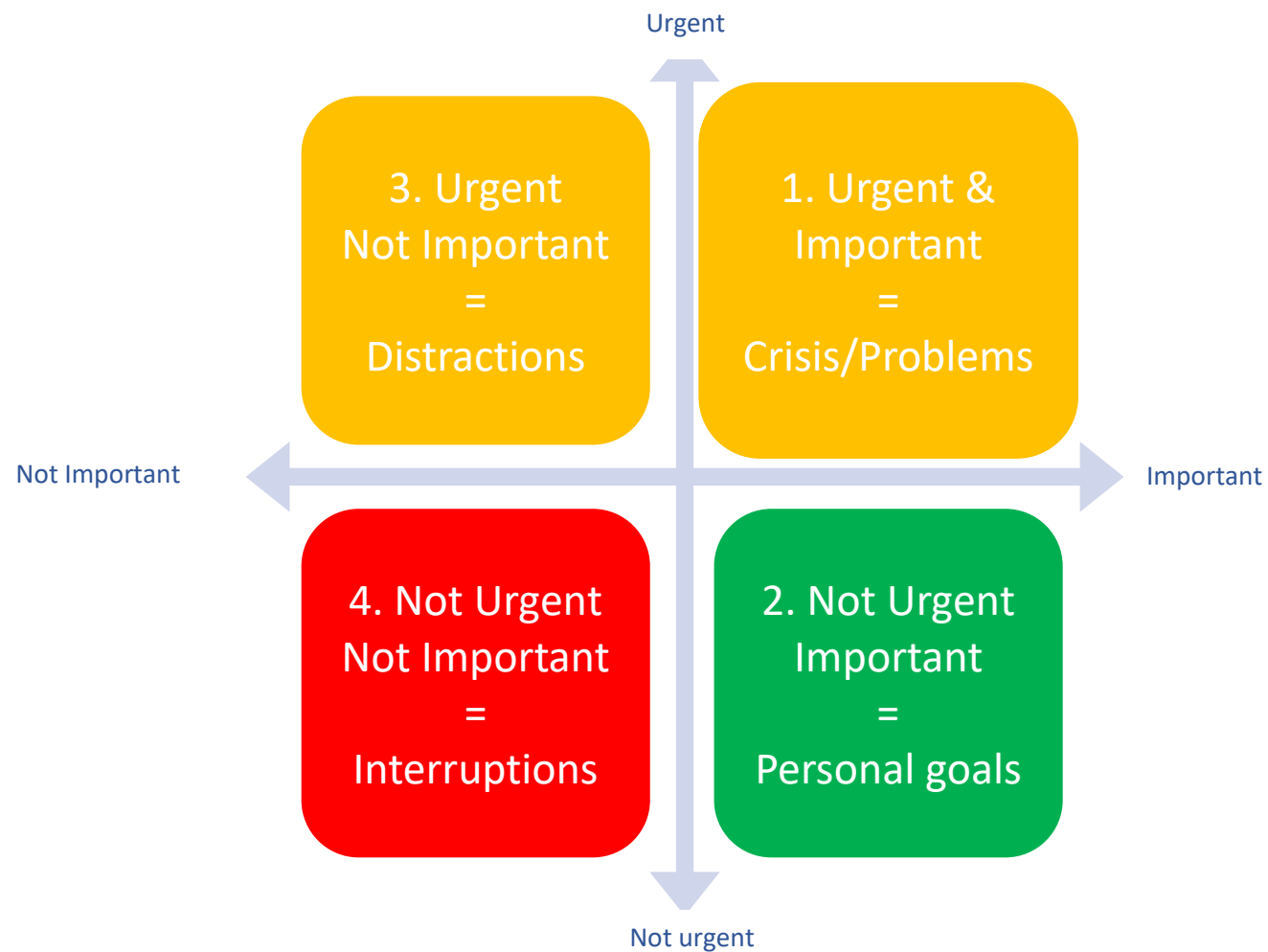


Time management - Eisenhower's important v urgent principle

Important activities tend to have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.

Urgent activities demand immediate attention but can tend to be associated with achieving someone else's goals. These are the to-do's that shout "Now!" Urgent tasks put us in a reactive mode, one marked by a defensive, negative and a hurried mindset.



1 Urgent and Important: These activities require our immediate attention. They consist of activities either unforeseen or left until the last minute. Living in this quadrant consumes us with problems all day long and we end up eventually seeking them out as it becomes our default, only finding peace in Quadrant 4 the “interruptions”. Living in this way is not sustainable, as you are always engaging your stress mode. Think about all of the activities in this quadrant and whether any of them could have been foreseen. If many of them are given to you by others, then think about how to resolve this through influencing skills.

2 Not urgent & important Ideally, we should strive to live in this box only tackling what is important to us, for our goals. It’s about what we need to do but never get around to such as taking time for ourselves, exercising, building relationships, developing, long term strategising. Moving to quadrant 2 results in fewer crisis and problems but you still need to ensure that you have time to deal with those actual unforeseen issues when they do come along.

3 Urgent & not important Activities that here often get mistaken for being important but urgent activities are rarely to do with your goals. Living in this quadrant means you are reacting to the expectations and priorities of others, in other words: distractions. Can you delegate, reprioritise or renegotiate? Perhaps try to arrange regular meetings with those who interrupt you the most and schedule their ‘urgent’ time more efficiently.

4 Not urgent & not important Activities have very little value, which takes time away from other activities. This quadrant is where surfing social media lie along with other timewasting activities.

1. Create a To-Do List and include all tasks you need and want to do within the next week or a period of time of your choosing.
2. Prioritise these activities based on importance to you and your goals, NOT urgency or others demands. Use a scale of 1 to 5 or re-order the activities based on importance; either option will work.
3. Sort all the activities into the appropriate quadrants based on the above.
4. Now evaluate where you are spending most of your time and consider how you can start working toward your personal goals rather than distractions, interruptions or being in crisis.