



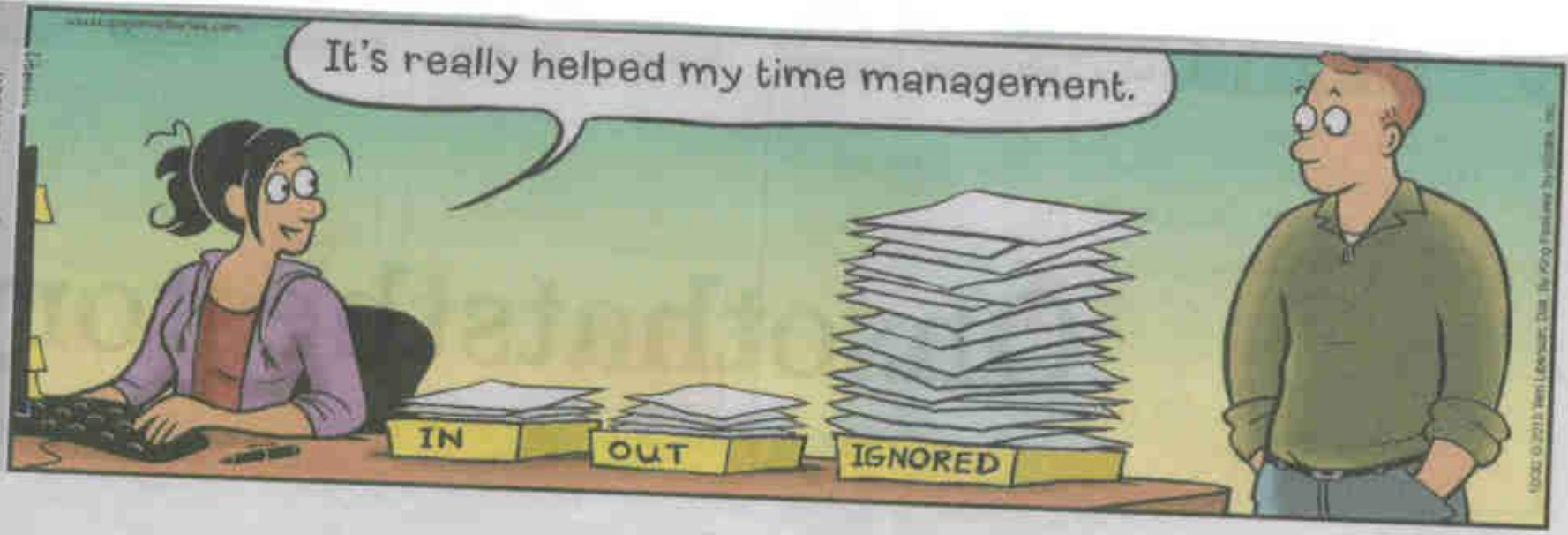
# TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR ACADEMICIANS

Monica Gandhi MD, MPH  
Director, UCSF CFAR  
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www.LibensonDiaries.com

It's really helped my time management.



# Definition of the problem

- “Too much to do” described as single biggest stress by **early career faculty**<sup>1</sup>
- Of 21 workplace “stresses“, 40% were time-related
  - ▣ Nearly 80% felt stressed by both lack of work-life balance and “too many time pressure“
  - ▣ Nearly 70% already concerned about burnout
- Specific concerns
  - ▣ Too much paperwork,
  - ▣ Not enough time for research and other academic pursuits
  - ▣ Lack of control over how time was spent.

# Principles of the time management problem in early career faculty

- **New problem:** Medical training very structured and faculty position, fellowship or post-doc may be 1<sup>st</sup> time mentee is managing their own time
- **Takes time to gain time:** Learning time management skills from workshop, book may help but takes time to learn
- **Some people don't want to change:** Chaos may be way of life for some, and they can't change

*Simply telling someone to be more efficient does not work –  
Susan Johnson MD, U. of Iowa.*

# Basic principles

- Our supply of time cannot be expanded,
- We do not have time to do everything in which we are interested
- Thus, how we choose to spend our time is critical to successfully accomplishing our goals.



# First step in time management – saying “no”

# NO

- Mentees often get into trap of saying yes to everything
- We can mentor to say “no” to
  - ▣ **Chapter writing** (peer review articles are a better use of time)
  - ▣ Joining a **committee** (that provides no direct career benefit)
  - ▣ Devoting excessive extra time to **patient care** activities (ouch, sorry)
  - ▣ Collaborating on **someone else's grant** (when the research is not central to mentee focus).

# NO

## How to say no

- Mentees find it difficult to say no to senior colleagues, don't know what is in your best interest, fearful of missing opportunities
- Research mentor and CFAR mentor can be a sounding board to offer advice for each new activity
- Help provide a cover story – “My Division Chief won't let me do this”
- Review mentee activities twice-yearly (**IDP**) and help take things “off the plate”

# Mentor should **HOPEFULLY** help create a work environment that promotes both productivity and well being

- Current academic structure demands
  - ▣ Constant email contact, no vacations, working long hours, little sleep

***Myth: The best way to get more work done is to work longer hours.***

- *No single myth is more destructive to employers and employees than this one. The reason is that we're not designed to operate like computers — at high speeds, continuously, for long periods of time.*
- *Instead, human beings are designed to pulse intermittently between spending and renewing energy. **Great performers — and enlightened leaders — recognize that it's not the number of hours people work that determines the value they create, but rather the energy they bring to whatever hours they work.***



# Mentor Development Program Management Matrix

		Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p>(MANAGE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crisis</li> <li>▪ Medical emergencies</li> <li>▪ Pressing problems</li> <li>▪ Deadline-driven projects</li> <li>▪ Last-minute preparations for scheduled activities</li> </ul>	<p>(FOCUS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation/planning</li> <li>▪ Prevention</li> <li>▪ Values clarification</li> <li>▪ Exercise</li> <li>▪ Relationship-building</li> <li>▪ True recreation/relaxation</li> </ul>	
	<p>Quadrant of Necessity</p>	<p>Quadrant of Quality &amp; Personal Leadership</p>	
Not important	<p>(AVOID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interruptions, some calls</li> <li>▪ Some mail &amp; reports</li> <li>▪ Some meetings</li> <li>▪ Many "pressing" matters</li> <li>▪ Many popular activities</li> </ul>	<p>(AVOID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trivia, busywork</li> <li>▪ Junk mail</li> <li>▪ Some phone messages/email</li> <li>▪ Time wasters</li> <li>▪ Escape activities</li> <li>▪ Viewing mindless TV shows</li> </ul>	
	<p>Quadrant of Deception</p>	<p>Quadrant of Waste</p>	

# Examples for Each?

## Exercise

What % of time do you spend in each Quadrant?

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<b>Quadrant I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crises</li><li>• Pressing problems</li><li>• Deadline-driven projects, meetings, reports</li></ul>	<b>Quadrant II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparation</li><li>• Prevention</li><li>• Planning</li><li>• Relationship building</li><li>• Re-creation</li><li>• Values clarification</li></ul>
Not Important	<b>Quadrant III</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Needless interruptions</li><li>• Unnecessary reports</li><li>• Unimportant meetings, phone calls, mail, e-mail</li><li>• Other people's minor issues</li></ul>	<b>Quadrant IV</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trivia, busywork</li><li>• Irrelevant phone calls, mail, e-mail</li><li>• Time-wasters</li><li>• "Escape" activities</li><li>• Excessive TV, Internet, relaxation</li></ul>

% of time in part depends on your job...

# Ideal proportioning of time

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<b>20-25%</b> 25-30%	<b>65-80%</b> 15%
Not Important	<b>15%</b> 50-60%	<b>Less than 1%</b> 2-3%

Quadrant 2 =  
most  
effective

Other  
quadrants=  
diminished  
ability to  
deliver on  
what's most  
important

# Strategies to Shift Focus and Time

- Need to shift our time to what is important but not necessarily urgent – Quadrant #2
- Key Techniques:
  - 1) Managing ourselves
  - 2) Managing our workloads
  - 3) Managing meetings
  - 4) Managing Emails

# 1) Managing Yourself

- ❑ Set aside time to strategically review priorities and accomplishments
- ❑ Work during your most productive times
- ❑ Don't do other people's work
- ❑ Watch tendency for perfection
- ❑ Learn to Say "No"



# Managing Yourself: Don't Multitask

- “Neurologically impossible to pay attention to two cognitively demanding things at once”
- Really you're just shifting attention in rapid succession from one task to the other, causing both to suffer
- Resource: ***Driven to Distraction at Work: How to focus and be more productive*** Dr. Hallowell author



## 2) Managing Your Workload – “4Ds”

### Drop

- What can I DROP?
  - ▣ Reports that are no longer required or necessary
  - ▣ Meetings that I don't need to attend
  - ▣ Reading that is nice to do but not essential
  - ▣ ???

### Defer

- What can I DEFER?
  - ▣ To another time frame
  - ▣ Renegotiate part of a project

### Delegate

- What can I DELEGATE?
  - ▣ Identify people who can do the work (not limited to those you supervise)
  - ▣ Consider delegation a “gift” – key to development
  - ▣ Sometimes you can delegate to another department

If it will take little time – just **Do** it

# How can you apply the 4 D's

Encourage you to pause here and consider a few things that you can drop, defer or just do!





# Delegation



# Delegation is Challenging

- Easier to do it ourselves
- Worry about the work load of others
- We can do it faster/better
- Don't trust others to do it as well
- Like it "our way"

# Benefits of Delegating

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- More time for reflection or strategic work/long term planning
- Can get to the more important work
- Develop our colleagues and direct reports
- Ensures scalability – otherwise you can become the limiting factor

# Six Ps of Delegation

<b>Plan for delegation</b>	<b>What is the outcome, length of project, amount of authority?</b>
<b>Pick the best person</b>	Match skills to the project and assure a growth opportunity for them
<b>Prepare for delegating</b>	Have information together, tell them why they were chosen, explain authority to person as well as others in organization, allow for open discussion and differences, allow adequate time to discuss project/activity.
<b>Paraphrase while delegating</b>	Share all information and ask open ended questions to assure level of understanding.
<b>Progress review throughout the project</b>	Establish key milestones, set schedule to receive updates, determine reporting procedures
<b>Praise performance</b>	Provide positive feedback to person and communicate accomplishments to others in organization.

# 3) Managing Meetings



Two key things: Is this meeting necessary?  
If so, how to run it effectively?

# Is this meeting Essential?

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- Non-essential, under your control
- Essential, under your control
- Essential, not under your control
- Non-essential, not under your control

# Effective management of meetings

- Make sure the meeting is needed,
- Invite only the people who need to be there,
- Circulate an agenda in advance,
- Start and end on time,
- Stay on topic,
- Create explicit next steps at the end,
- Make sure it is clear who is responsible for each step or task, and
- Follow up to be sure these are done.

# 4) Managing email

- 1. **Turn off the notification announcing each email**
  - ▣ Distracts from task you are performing
  - ▣ Try to check email 3 times a day – beginning, middle, end.  
If need to more frequently, set timer to check every hour
- 2. **Put your contact information in automatic signature**
  - ▣ Encourage rapid phone calls to avoid confusing email chains
- 3. **Keep your inbox small**
  - ▣ Deal with and delete
  - ▣ Create 3 folders: “Waiting for” (waiting for reply), “Projects” and “Reference”



# Getting email under control

## - continued



- Short emails, convey factual information
- Do not convey emotion or discuss political issues (Traceable and best done by phone, person)
- Make subject line informative (not “hi”, but “Location of journal club changed to library”)
- Think carefully – do you need to “cc” that person?
- Unsubscribe - [Unrollme.com](http://Unrollme.com)
- Create drafts as a reminder of what to do
- Try Boomerang – send later

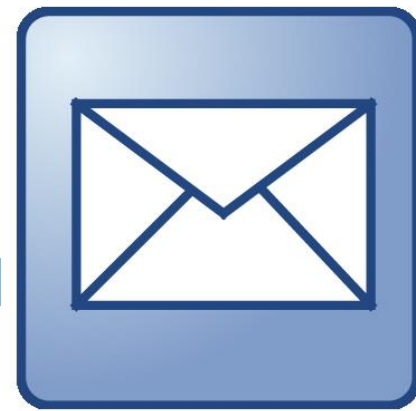
# Getting email under control

- continued



1. Complete at least one important task each day *before* you look at e-mail (finish the abstract)
2. Set a limit for the amount time you will spend on e-mail at a session – 10 minutes, 30 minutes, 2 hours. Do not get caught up in a never-ending session
3. Work through your messages one at a time, starting with either the most recent or the oldest– and **NO SKIPPING!**

# Working through email



For each message, do one of the following:

- 1) delete
- 2) file (reference or a project file)
- 3) respond / do the requested task, or
- 4) defer to a later time (**try to minimize deferred**)

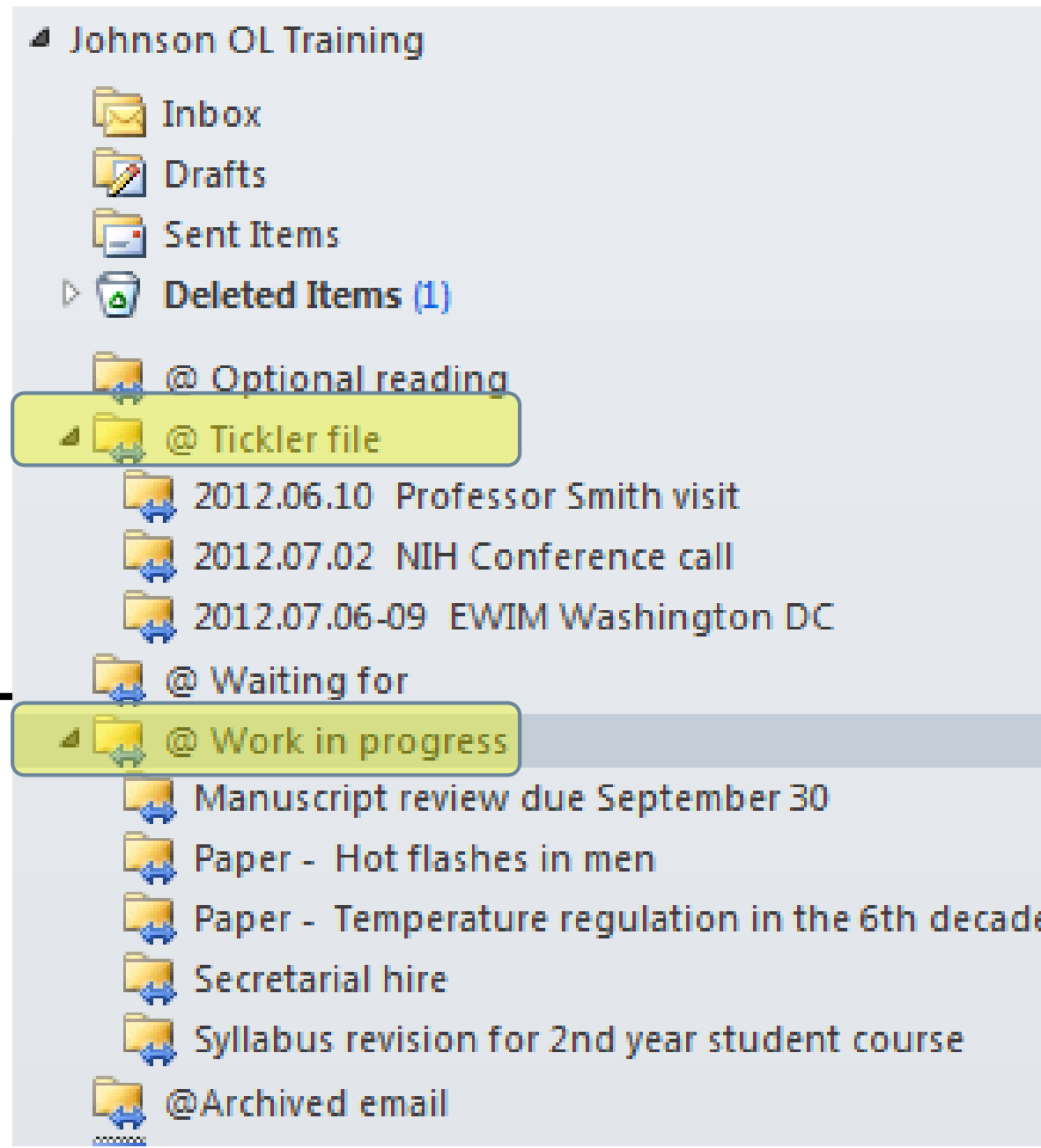
# Decide!

- Delete
- Save needed information
- File
- Move to Optional Reading folder
- Do / reply now (or move to “Waiting for”)

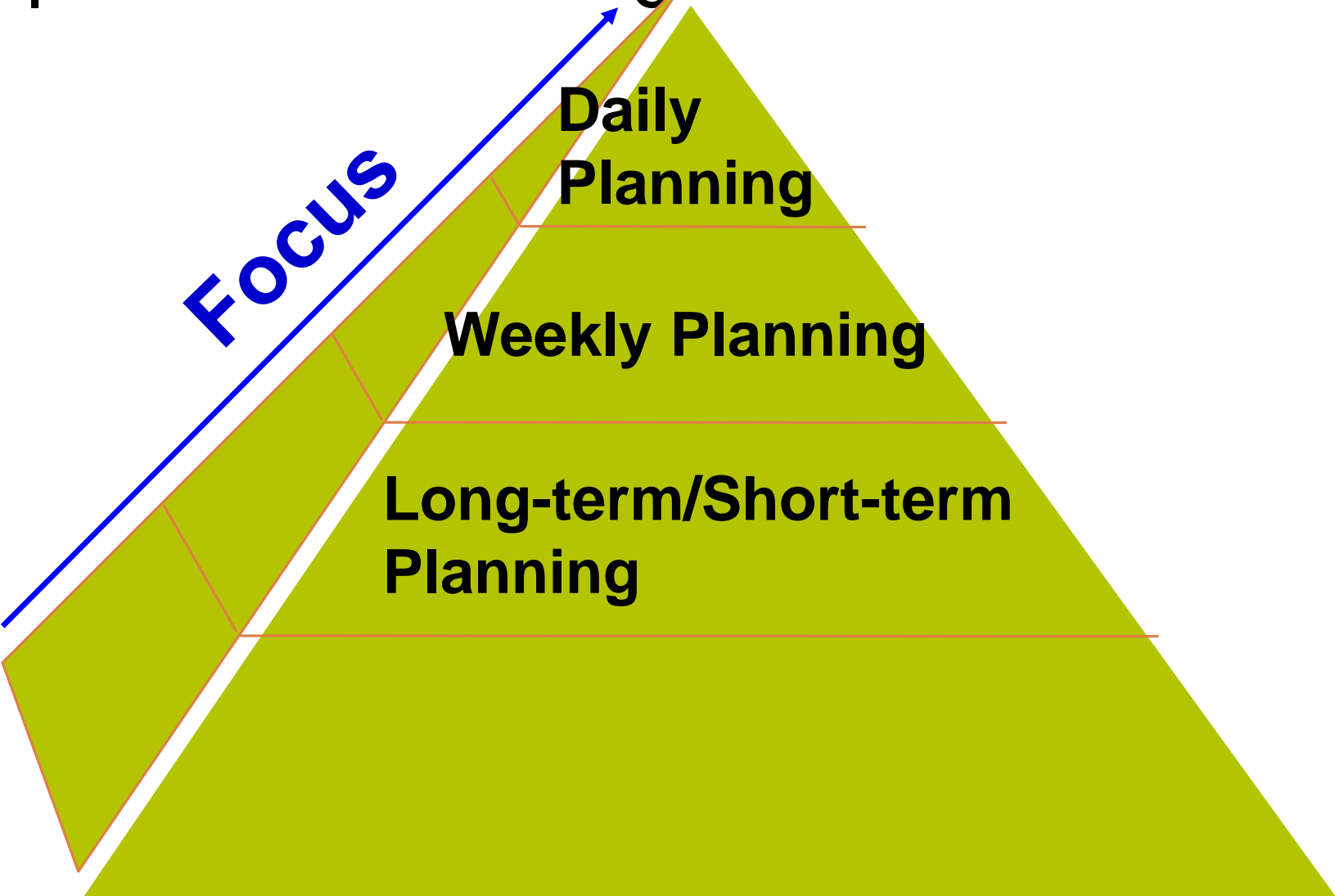
~ 90% completed

## Defer to later

- Ask “Why?” until you come with a plan to deal with



# Approach to Planning our Work



# Tracking work

## TODAY

①

The things you habitually do without needing a written reminder

②

**Calendar**

③

**Daily task plan**

## Master Project List

All work that is currently in progress, or needs to be started soon.

## Ideas for later list

Anything you are planning, or might considering doing, later – keep either on a **list**, or on the **calendar**



## **Rule 1**

**Keep *one* calendar that includes *all* your time commitments**



Notes

Time grid

8

12

5

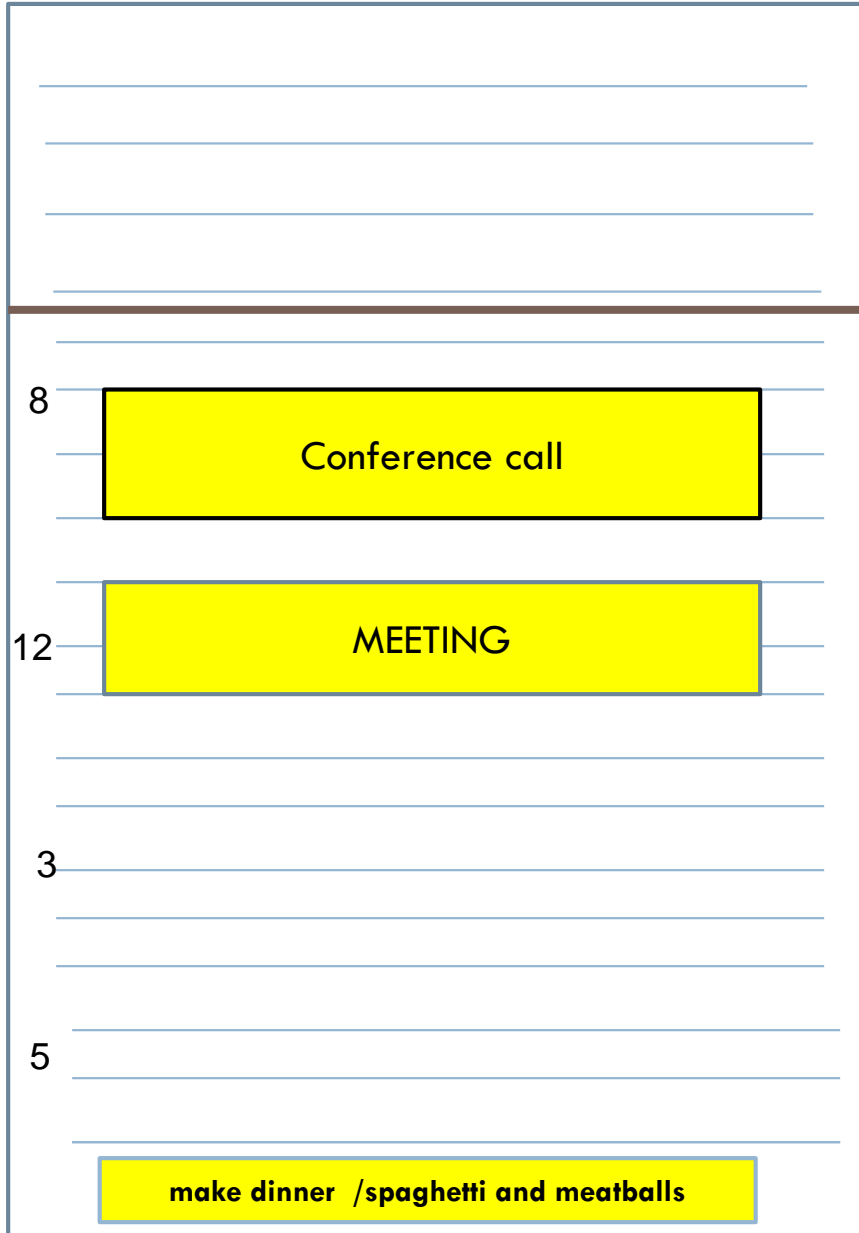
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## Rule 2

Use a calendar with a daily view option that includes both a time grid and a “note” section



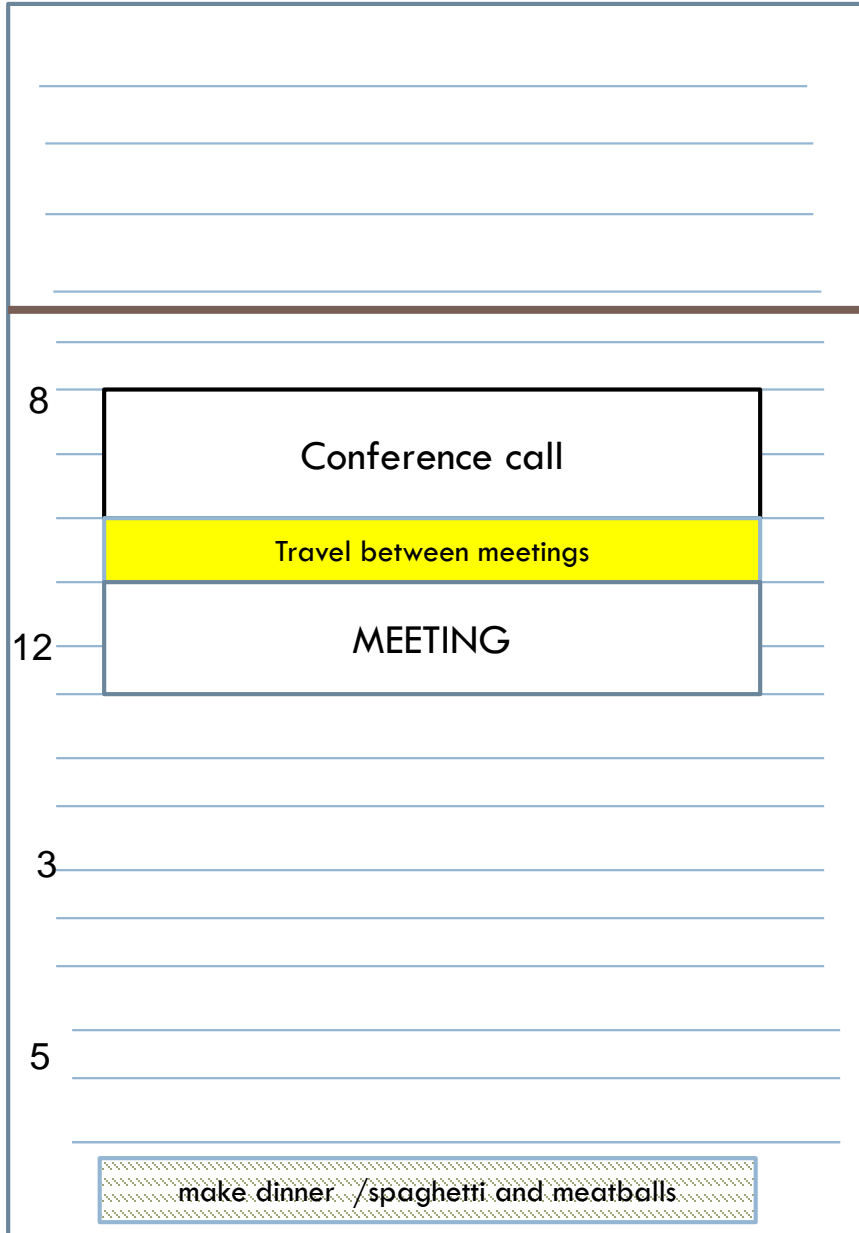
# Calendar



## Time grid

- Events – everything that you have agreed to “attend”**

# Calendar

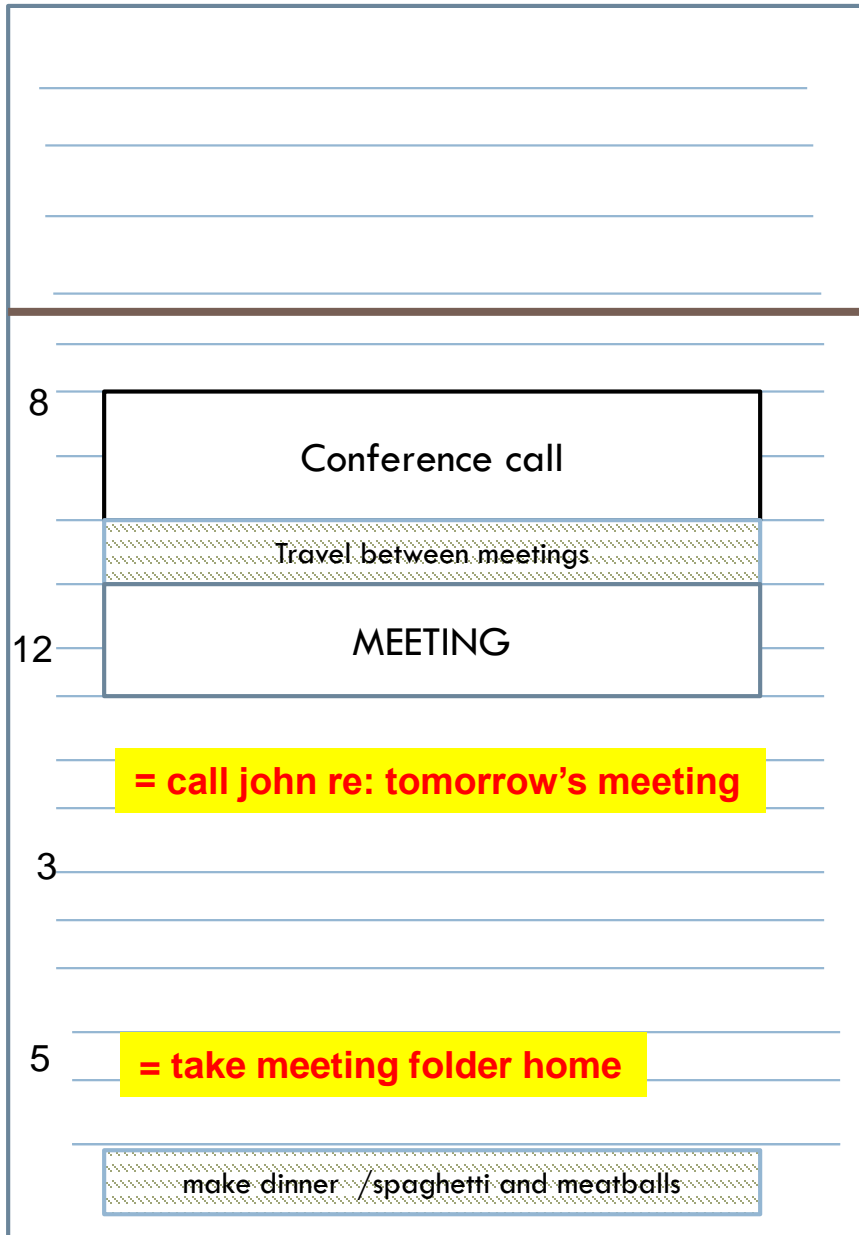


## Time grid

Events

Transition time

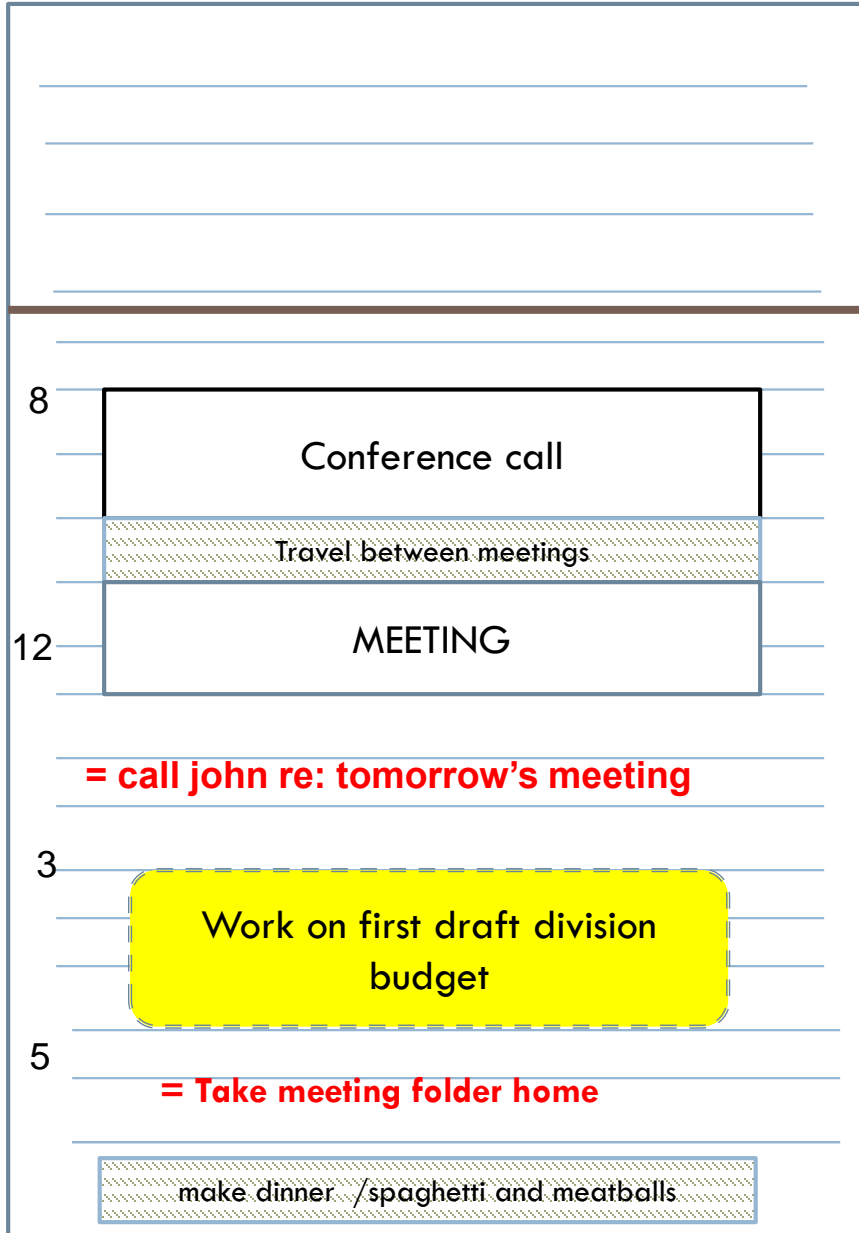
# Calendar



## Time grid

- Events
- Transition time
- Tasks that must be done at a specific time

# Calendar



## Time grid

- Tasks that must be done at a specific time
- Events
- Transition time
- "Appointments with yourself"

# Calendar

**Today: Pay visa bill**

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8

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12

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3

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5

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## Notes

**Tasks that *must* be done sometime today**

# Calendar

**Pay visa bill**

**WF** Jane to email back

8

12

3

5

## Notes

**Tasks** that **must** be done sometime today

**WF** people you are *waiting for* responses from today

# Calendar

**Pay visa bill**

**WF** Jane to email back

**DEADLINE** paper submission due

8

12

3

5

## Notes

**Tasks** that **must** be done sometime today

**WF** responses you are *waiting for* today

**Deadlines**

# Calendar

**Pay visa bill**

**WF** Jane to email back

**DEADLINE** paper submission

**Reminder** Submit time sheets *(weekly)*

8

12

3

5

## Notes

**Tasks** that **must** be done sometime today

**WF** responses you are *waiting for* today

**Deadlines**

**Reminders**

*(e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, annual, irregular)*



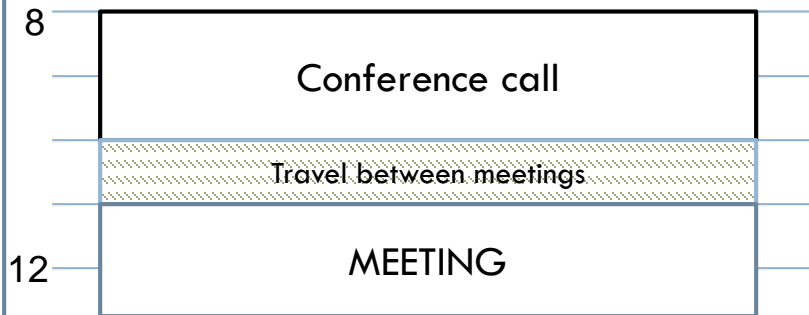
# Calendar

**Pay visa bill**

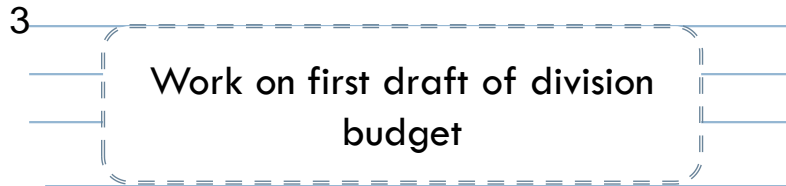
**WF** Jane to email back

**DEADLINE** paper submission

**Reminder** Submit time sheets *(weekly)*



**= call john re: tomorrow's meeting**



**= Take meeting folder home**



**The hard landscape:**

**When appointments and tasks are done, *you can go home!***

# Master list

## Personal

Research new bicycle choices for Harry, and narrow to two choices for his review

~~Send invitations to my family for Labor Day party, *by mid-July*~~

**... and so on**

## Work

Create draft of new evaluation system for team to review

Hire new secretary II

Finalize budget for fall speaker program

**... and so on**

## Features:

- All planned work\*
- Both work and home
- Items described as results
- “Running” format

\* *Except* calendared events and daily routine tasks

	Project	Goals	Actions
	Mentoring meeting in October	Plan the meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start agenda</li> <li>2. Plan outside speakers</li> <li>3. Check registration</li> </ol>
	WIHS	Submit revised TFV paper Complete ATV PK paper Complete TB paper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finish TFV paper revisions</li> <li>2. Look through final models sent by Chengshi</li> <li>3. Make final multivariate table and send to group</li> <li>4. ATV CROI abstract</li> <li>5. Start drafting ATV PG paper</li> <li>6. Finish TB paper</li> </ol>
	ROI	Submit STRAND paper Submit NPV TLC paper Complete TFV methods paper Maternal hair samples, PROMOTE abstract ASPIRE concept sheet SMARTT concept sheet revision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wait for APs comments</li> <li>2. Submit TFV STRAND paper</li> <li>3. Edit NPV TLC paper from Yong</li> <li>4. Await input on NVP TLC paper, Peter, Yong</li> <li>5. Finish NVP TLC paper after Yong's input</li> <li>6. Write TFV methods paper</li> <li>7. Analyze maternal hair PROMOTE data</li> <li>8. Write Yong about maternal samples</li> <li>9. Write ASPIRE concept sheet</li> <li>10. SMARTT concept sheet (address site support; power calculations; clarification of duration of exposure studied in hair and covariates analysis)</li> </ol>
	Mentoring grant (R25) for January	Draft specific aims Write paper with Mallory on first mentoring meeting Move forward work on Peru and Africa papers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write David by July 12</li> <li>2. Talk to David July 12</li> <li>3. Edit methods/results section next</li> <li>4. Submit paper</li> <li>5. Write results/ discussion of SF meeting</li> </ol>
	Talks	ID boot camp HIV MMA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIV talk for ID boot camp</li> <li>2. Meningitis talk for ID boot camp</li> <li>3. Single pill combination talk</li> <li>4. Epi talk for MMA</li> </ol>

# Getting started with a master list for your mentee

- Record what is on your mind:
  - ▣ What do I need to finish this week?
  - ▣ What do I need to finish in the next month or so?
  - ▣ What do I need to finish by 3 to 6 months from now?
- Add what is already in your system:
  - ▣ Add items from any existing to-do lists
  - ▣ Go through your calendar for the next few months
- List each of your areas of responsibility (i.e. “hats”) and ask for each, what do I need to do for this “hat”
  - ▣ “Hat” Examples: Parent, Partner, Runner, PTA President, Residency Director, Clinician, Division Director, Grant PI

# Refining process

## □ For each item:

1. **Is this something I am committed to do?**
2. **Is this the right time to do it?**

List Destination		1 <sup>st</sup> - Committed?		
		Yes	Maybe	Never
2 <sup>nd</sup> - Now?	Yes	Master List	-	Delete!
	No	Ideas for later/ create reminder	Ideas for later	

# Paper / document based options

Paper	Document file
Legal pad	<b>Word document</b>
3-ring binder	Excel spreadsheet
Index cards	Plain text file
Post its <sup>TM</sup> stuck in a single location	

# Sample list manager programs /apps

Free, any OS	any OS / web based	iOS only
Remember the Milk	Outlook Tasks	OmniFocus (\$\$)
Toodledo (premium version \$)	Doit.im (\$)	Things (\$\$)
Wunderlist	Nirvana (\$)	Reminders

# Ideas from UCSF CFAR mentees

(updated today 2/14/20)

- G-calendar (tasks function)
- “Morning pages” (write 3 pages out in the morning – creative);
- Put phone away
- Amazon Alexa (Alexa, add x to shopping list; add tasks to task list- can do with Siri)
- Shared Google keep ([keep.google.com](https://keep.google.com); shopping lists or shared projects)
- Evernote – but not secure
- “Managing your energy, not your time” (helps you say yes/no to certain things)
- Fantastical\*- can integrate google calendar and outlook under one calendar (can keep personal/business separate if you want)
- Box/Dropbox
- Asana- create task list, emails you reminders, good for teams
- Wunderlist- shared task lists with others
- Cozi – shared calendars
- “Things” app – schedules
- “Todoist” app – integrates Gmail and outlook – project management, send you email alerts



# Questions?

