TOOLBOX: SETTING PRIORITIES

Before you can set priorities, it's vital that you are capable of clear two-way communication (sending and receiving).
A crucial precondition is that you are good at listening, summarizing and asking follow-up questions:
1. listen/consider the question,
2. then summarize the question,
3. then ask follow-up questions to get to the key issues.

Once you have a clear idea of the question, it's important to discover where the question fits in your matrix below:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do Now Necessity	Plan for Quality
Not Important	Delegate Disappointment	Dump Time Wasters

Analyse your to-do list for the coming week/month and allocate things to the appropriate squares below:

Do now out of necessity	Plan for quality
Delegate to avoid disappointment	Dump the waste

you can also memorize and use these questions:

MUST I DO THIS NOW?	(?)	IS IT COMPULSORY?
MUST **I** DO THIS NOW?	(?)	AM I THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN DO THIS?
MUST I **DO** THIS NOW?	(?)	IS THIS THE RIGHT ACTION TO TAKE?
MUST I DO **THIS** NOW?	(?)	ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES?
MUST I DO THIS **NOW**?	(?)	CAN IT BE POSTPONED?

If you feel that the question you're being asked is not important enough for your goal/promise, then take the time to communicate this clearly and with respect to the person asking you to do something:

"Unfortunately...(respect)

... I can't help you because... (taking care of yourself)

You could do... to solve your problem (taking care of the other person)"

It is extremely important that you are aware of your own strengths. As we already mentioned, these could turn into pitfalls, as the following example shows:

EMPATHY
'Is it important for ME? Or is it important for me because I am empathic and want to help the other person?'

ACTIVATOR
'Is everything urgent because I have a continuous need for ACTION? Or is it really urgent within the context of the question?'

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