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First Things First



Synopsis

First Things First is a revolutionary guide to managing your time by learning how to balance your life. Traditional time management suggests that working harder, smarter, and faster will help you gain control over your life, and that increased control will bring peace and fulfillment. But in the first real breakthrough in time management in years, the authors of First Things First apply the insights of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People to our daily problems of struggling with the ever-increasing demands of work and home life. Rather than focusing on time and things, First Things First emphasizes relationships and results. And instead of efficiency, this new approach emphasizes effectiveness. It tells us:

- * Why we feel a gap between how we spend our time and what's deeply important to us
- * How focusing on efficiency and control increases the gap instead of closing it
- * How to determine if what you're doing is really important -- or only urgent
- * How to overcome the tremendous gravity of habit
- * How to put people ahead of schedules
- * How to lead your life, not just manage your time

Offering a principle-centered approach and the wisdom and insight that made The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People a #1 bestseller, First Things First empowers listeners to define what is truly important; to accomplish worthwhile goals; and to lead rich, rewarding, and balanced lives.

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Customer Reviews

The Stephen R. Covey engine has kicked out numerous books on self-help, and they consult 200 out of the top 500 Fortune companies. After all of those books and years, they have heard enough stories and waded through enough crisis situations to get a good handle on what works and does

not work in all of those environments. Now, if you've read every book they're written, then undoubtedly you're going to begin this book and say "I've read this all before". Naturally, when they begin a book, they have to assume that some readers haven't read the other books yet. They have to catch them up on the background and basics. If you don't need that primer, then skim for a while. It's not a bad thing, it's a normal thing. It's how book writing works :) If you pick up book 5 of Harry Potter, you still have to go through a little bit of scene setting for the .00002% of the population who skipped the other books and leapt into Book 5. So now, onto the key points of this specific book. Time management is good. Organizing your goals is good. But all of these things are only good if your goals are actually valid ones. If you spend all your time creating to-do lists, and carefully plotting out weekly goals ... but your goal is to get a "bigger fur coat" while your children are starving and you're miserable at work, something is out of sync. This book is all about making sure that what you do is what you REALLY want to do. It's about a higher level of time management. So they're not saying the other time management systems are bad. They explicitly say that each has its place in life! However, if you work very hard every day to climb a ladder, and find after many years that the ladder you've climbed was against the wrong wall, then you'll be very disappointed.

I enjoyed both "Getting Things Done" and "First Things First." And in various forums, it seems that each time management philosophy has its disciples and detractors. Personally, I think the systems harmonize quite nicely. GTD is more about building a high performance task executing machine. You are the machine, of course, and David Allen seems to understand the mechanics of that machine quite well. For example, even though we are naturally skilled at planning - mapping out the steps needed to achieve a specific outcome - we are poorly equipped to remember the task we need to do at the exact moment when execution is required (it's why we set the book we can't forget in front of the door so we run into it on our way out of the house). This is because our minds can only focus on one thought at a time. Allen prescribes an extensive solution to capture every commitment, create to-do lists and reminders, and apply contexts so you can batch all of your activities while @ the store, @ home, or @ the weekly meeting. It's a nearly airtight method to make sure you don't drop the ball on any outstanding commitments (as long as you use it faithfully, of course). Covey on the other hand does not spend so much time ensuring you capture every task on your mind. His focus is on determining which activities are more important, based on your personal mission statement as applied to the various roles you play in your life (business owner, youth group volunteer, father, coach etc).

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