

# Big Rocks

One day an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration the students never forgot.

As he stood in front of the group of high powered over achievers he said, "OK, time for a quiz" Then he pulled out a wide mouthed jar and set it on the table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is the jar full?" Everyone in the class said, "Yes."

Then he said, "Really?"

He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he tipped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks. Then he asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?"

By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started tipping the sand into the jar and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is the jar full?" "No" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good!"

Then he grabbed a jug of water and began to pour it until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One eager student raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is you can always fit some more in!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us: if you don't put the big rocks in first, you will never get them in at all. What are the 'Big Rocks' in your life?" "Your children...Your loved ones... your education... your dreams...a worthy cause... teaching or mentoring others.. doing things that you love...time for yourself...your health...your partner." "Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you will never get them in at all.

If you sweat the little stuff (the gravel, the sand) then you will fill your life with little things to worry about that don't really matter, and you will never have the real quality time you need to spend on the big, important stuff (the big 'rocks')." "So, tonight or in the morning, when you have reflected on this short story, ask yourself this question: What are the 'big rocks' in my life? Then, put those in your jar first."

# Applying Big Rocks to work and life

What are the important Big Rocks for you?

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What is the gravel?

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What is the sand?

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What is the liquid?

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Fields of Learning