

Honour your roles

Jane Lelean explains how to focus your thoughts on what is important to you, in all aspects of your life, and then implement a plan to help you achieve your vision

The key is not to prioritise what is on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.

STEPHEN COVEY

In my previous articles I have discussed tools that will enable you to focus on the most profitable aspects of clinical dentistry. Now I would like to turn our attention to how we can organise our thoughts, and then ourselves, in terms of what is important to us and then incorporate these aspects into our lives.

The system I am going to describe this month works best as a weekly habit. Most of my clients choose to do this at a scheduled, quiet time on a Sunday to prepare for the week ahead. These ideas are based on the concepts discussed by Stephen Covey in his book, *The seven habits of highly effective people*.

Roles

Write down the roles that you have at the moment. They will change over time, but this week what roles do you fulfil? They may include:

- Individual

- Spouse
- Parent
- Son/daughter
- Sibling
- Business leader
- Clinician
- Lecturer
- IDA committee member.

Goals

For each of your roles, write down two or three goals that you want to achieve in the forthcoming week. For example:

- *Individual*
As an individual I will exercise three times this week and start to read a business management book.
- *Spouse*
I will go on a date with my partner and provide 100% support to my partner's career change.
- *Parent*
As a parent I will assist in my daughter's education and spend one-on-one time with my son.
- *Son/daughter*
I will show my parents I love them.
- *Sibling*
I will support my sister through her challenging time.



- *Business leader*
As a business leader I will share my three-year vision with my team and develop the leadership skills of my manager.
- *Clinician*
As a clinician I will improve

my treatment plan conversion rate and hone my CPR skills.

- *Lecturer*
As a lecturer I will make my notes available on the school's intranet and put aside time to answer students' questions.

- *IDA committee member*

As a committee member I will improve my skills chairing a meeting and enhance the unity of the group.

Actions

Once you have identified your roles and goals within each, identify a specific action(s) that you can take in the forthcoming week that will achieve the goal and put the action in your planner so that it happens.

Make the action SMART – that is:

- S – specific
- M – measurable
- A – achievable
- R – relevant
- T – time specific.

For example, from our list:

- As a parent I want to assist in my daughter's education, so I will help her with her times tables on Sunday afternoon. I will take my son to a football match on Saturday afternoon to spend one-on-one time with him
- As a business leader I will share my three-year vision with my team at our monthly team training session on Friday morning. To develop leadership skills, I will discuss booking my manager onto an appropriate course at our weekly management meeting on Monday and get her to complete the documentation by Monday evening
- As a clinician I will discuss my sales conversion rate with my team at the next weekly staff meeting. As a team we will devise a system that holds me accountable for discussing with every patient their treatment wants and needs from us, measuring the treatment plan uptake and a regular review so I can hone my skills. I will schedule a confirmed date for the whole team to attend their annual CPR training by the end of the week.

Vision, goals, targets and actions

When clients recruit me as their coach to assist them in reaching their goals, one of

the many things we do is to get very clear about the big picture – the overall vision of what exactly it is they want to achieve. In the context of time management, this is the equivalent of deciding how many days you are going to work each year and allocating your free days, focus days and buffer days.

The vision is then broken down into a series of mid-term goals usually spanning three months or a year. These goals are the measurable stepping stones that ensure you are on course to complete your vision. In time management terms, this is like defining your quadrant two activities.

Once the mid-term goals have been set, they should then be broken down into weekly targets that, when completed, consistently enable you to reach your goals and, ultimately, achieve your vision.

Once you have planned your weekly targets, you can write and prioritise your daily actions or to-do list, which will support you in achieving your vision.

We will explore to-do lists and action plans in the next article, which will be published in the October issue of *Irish Dentist*. 

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