



How to Fit All of That in?

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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

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What's in this talk?

- General time management
- Having a career and a family
- Having a career and a life



Founders Dilemma

**Work, Sleep, Family, Fitness, or Friends:
Pick 3**



Randi Zuckerberg

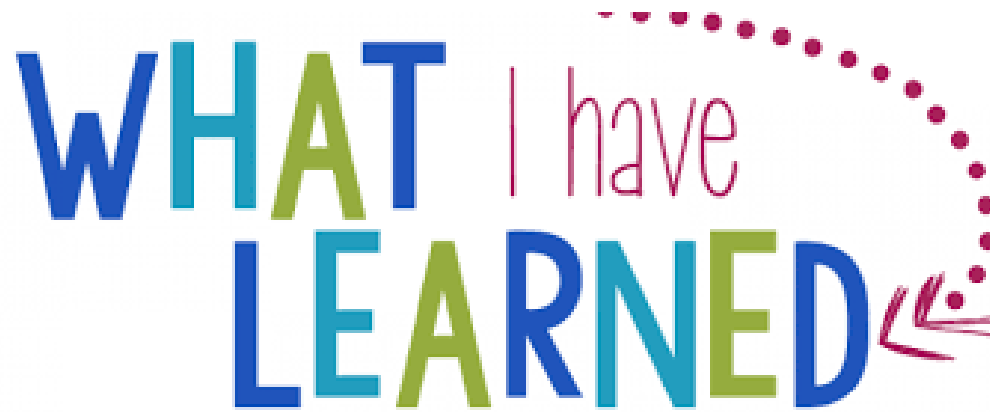
A Brief and Partial Bio



- 1996 Ph.D., University of Maryland. Moved to Canada
- 2002 Tenure
- 2008 First child (and mat leave)
- 2009 Promoted to full professor
- 2009-11 Department vice chair
- 2011 Second child (and mat leave)
- 2013-16 Departmental vice chair
- 2014-17 Secretary of my kids' school Parent Council
- 2018 Co-chaired ICSE'18 Technical Track

(and a few other things in the middle: students, papers, grants, chairs, editorial boards, program committees, talks, panels, etc. etc. etc. etc.)

WHAT I have LEARNED

The title 'WHAT I have LEARNED' is displayed in a colorful, multi-colored font. 'WHAT' is in blue and green, 'I have' is in pink, and 'LEARNED' is in blue and green. A decorative dotted line in pink and red curves around the top right of the text, ending in a small arrow pointing left.

- You can have it all!
 - ... Just not on the same day!
- Training outstanding graduate students / RAs / postdocs is the best use of “research” time
 - Both extremely rewarding and allows delegation of challenging tasks
- Marrying “well” really helps
 - Thanks, Ilia!

What Haven't I Learned?

- Saying no enough
- Letting go
 - Working on this one, though!
- Always thinking strategically
 - Too much of my time is spent on “urgent”
 - Spend less time reviewing someone else’s work and more time producing my own
 - When delegating, choosing the most interesting tasks rather than the ones that I cannot delegate
- Finding time for significant hobbies
 - Involving “production”, not “consumption”

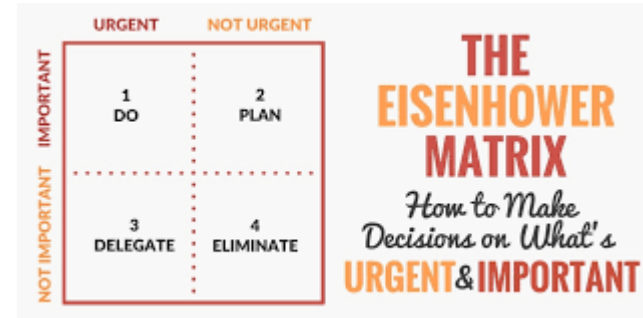


A Quick Aside: Classical Time Management Advice

- **Eisenhower's Principle**

- Important vs urgent activities
- i.e., maximizing effectiveness, not only efficiency

- **Important** activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.
- **Urgent** activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else's goals. They are often the ones we concentrate on and they demand attention because the consequences of not dealing with them are immediate.



Eisenhower's Principle

		Urgency	
		HIGH	LOW
Importance	HIGH	Q1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy: Just do it• Example: House on Fire	Q2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy: Schedule it• Example: Exercise / planning
	LOW	Q3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy: Delegate / Push Back• Example: Someone else's urgent deadline	Q4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy: DON'T do it• Example: Making sure last years files are in the right folders

Important and Urgent

- Forseen vs non-forseen
- Leave some time for un-forseen
- Schedule well and avoid procrastination so that forseen gets done

Important and not Urgent

stuff that gets you tenure

Not Important but Urgent

should be handled with care; otherwise takes over life. “Sand”

Not Important and Not Urgent

try not to do (but do not let your quality of life make it to this category!!!!!!)

SOUNDS EASY, RIGHT?



trick question

Important but Not Urgent

- (Journal) papers
- Grants
- Professional recognition
- (maybe) Graduate student training and placement



Here is your week: An exercise



- A new undergrad course to teach
- 200 students who are sending email about an assignment they are having trouble with
- 7 TAs to manage
- Graduate affairs committee (two 2-hour meetings per week, 30 awards to rank)
- A paper deadline in 2 weeks
- Faculty meeting about recruiting
- 20 graduate students in your course trying to schedule discussions about their projects
- 2 annual review meetings for Ph.D. committees you are on
- 12 full-length papers to review for a conference
- Your department chair asking to prepare an urgent proposal about a new program to present to the dean

Some Strategies



- Figure out ALL that needs doing
 - That includes time with family, self-care, etc.
- Separate it into urgent/important
 - Can that get done without you?
 - What do YOU get out of this particular item of work / responsibility?
- Prioritize. Say no.

What does “Important to YOU” mean?

- you personally, as a researcher
- your group
- your lab
- your department
- your university
- your family
- your discipline
- you personally, as a human being



“Relative Importance”

- A close friend invites you for dinner
- A colleague asks you to comment on a student thesis
- A journal sends you a paper to review
- A student wants to discuss long-term career plans
- A child is asking you to volunteer for their craft party
- You are invited to join a PC
- You are deciding whether to attend a conference



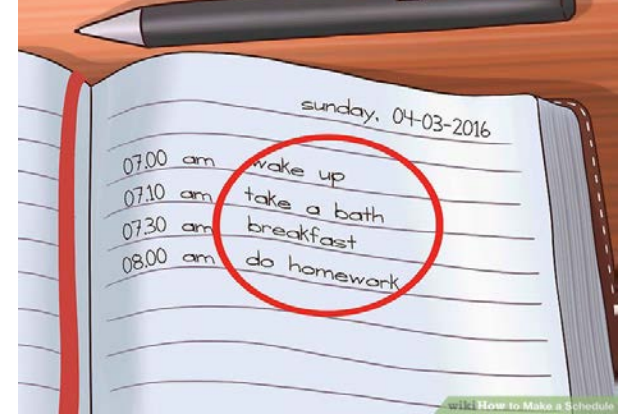
Primary Difference between Being in Academia and Running Your Business?

~~No hope of being bought by Google and retiring
early~~

Time flexibility

- So, gain control over your time!
- Protect it
- Use it to your advantage!

Time and Schedule



- Minimize context switching
 - “Teaching” vs “Student meetings” vs “Admin” vs “Research” days
 - Careful organization of tasks to fit into these days

Some ideas:

- Can do “horizontal” rather than “vertical” split (never worked for me)
- Staying at home, if you can (or coming into the office, and closing the door!) is a great way to get protected time
- I personally keep a “closed door” policy but immediately schedule a meeting if I cannot accommodate a request from a student
- Explicitly schedule leisure (time with spouse, exercise, school play, time to bake cookies or make Halloween costumes)
- Explicitly schedule time to get bigger projects started (and finished!)

Rewards



- Always have something to look forward to when you are “running at full capacity”
 - (no, not an annual vacation. that is too far in the future).
- Reward yourself regularly. You worked the entire weekend?
 - Go get a manicure...
 - or go to a movie
 - or go bike riding one morning **DURING THE WORK WEEK! Yes!**

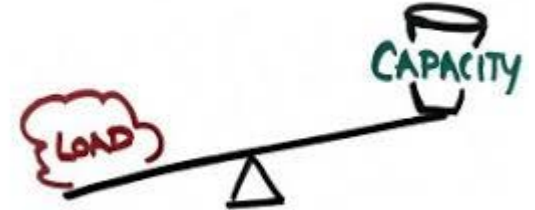
Getting More Time



- Get help
 - Whatever you do not want to do that you can pay someone to do it - do.
 - Just make sure it is stuff you do not want to do!
 - Money is cheaper than time. Throw money at a problem!
 - Cleaning! Maybe grocery delivery. Maybe meal prep.
- Get rid of obvious time wasters
 - Lunch line
 - Bring your own, use the time to take a walk to clear your head or talk to a friend.
 - Or eat at your desk and go home an hour earlier.
 - But... lunches with friends / colleagues / etc. are essential as well
 - Social media
 - Commuting (if you can)

Increasing Your Capacity

- Delegation
 - What? To whom?
- Collaboration
- Investment in your own physical and mental health
 - You are in a 40-year career! No reason to burn out early
- Trying double (or triple) duty
 - Same activities for both kids
 - Planning work time while you wait for them
 - Teaching what you want to research
 - Finding meaningful service commitments
 - Listening to books (not only music or news) when you exercise
 - Connecting to your partner by scheduling exercise or commuting together
 - In fact, consider doing “walking meetings” with your students



Technology and Time



- It is your friend
 - connect email and todo lists and calendars
 - Allows to work from home, use skype
- ...and your enemy
 - My most creative time is spent outside the office, away from the computer
 - Email, email, email, email...
 - Did anyone say social media?
- I have "interrupt-driven" days of meetings and "days to get stuff done" at home.
 - Scheduling skypes then.
 - But trying to "bunch them up".
 - Meetings should have a clear end time as well, and stick to it.
 - Share your schedule with your group but block personal time, for work or relaxation.
- Many people at UofT try to do all of their teaching in one term
 - To minimize context switching and gain more control of their time

Planning Your Time

A white sticky note with a red pushpin at the top center, pinned to the top right corner of the slide. The note contains the handwritten text "What's the plan?" in black ink.

- Do it regularly! At least once per week
 - I usually plan once per day
- Do regular priorities meetings with your group. At least quarterly but monthly would be better
- Do same with family
 - Planning fun, planning outings, planning books to read and family games nights and evenings with spouse
 - Exercise
 - But... **HAVE TO LEAVE ROOM** (mental and physical!) for spontaneity

How to have it all?

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A Career and a Family

- I had kids late in my career, just when I did major admin and was involved in lots of service activities



- My tricks: delegation, collaboration, “double-duty”, obsessive scheduling:
 - Family time (non-negotiable): 7-8:45 a.m., 6-9 p.m.
 - But of course, back on skype at 9 p.m. 😊

When to Have Kids?



- No good time
 - Most of us cannot wait until we become full professors to start having a family
- First couple years of tenure track are particularly tough
 - All demands at the same time
- But ultimately, no career is worth sacrificing life over!!!
 - And having a family puts a lot of other things in perspective, and that is healthy

A Career and a Life



- I used to read A LOT.
 - Reading to and with kids now
 - Listening to audio books
 - Reading “adult” books, but fewer
- I used to love theatre and movies.
 - Hope to do more, with kids and with my spouse
 - Work in progress
- I used to hang out with my colleagues and girlfriends
 - Do that at conferences, less at home. Hope to do more
- I used to have time to attend more talks and travel for a few days before / after conference
- I used to do music. Still do some, mostly with the kids
- I used to ballroom dance. This one is still waiting for its turn

A Parting Thought

- How to have it all?
- Only by explicitly reprioritizing
 - E.g., to take a day off work to spend with the kids
 - To schedule a weekend away with friends
 - To exercise at 6 in the morning (alas)
 - To sleep more on Sundays

You are in for A LONG ride. Please do not let your life outside work disappear. It is not worth it!

Another Parting Thought (Q&A with Marsha)

- Do I ever feel like the sky is falling?
 - On a regular basis
- Am I happy?
 - Yes, although sometimes frazzled
- Will your schedule get better?
 - No, but if you want to last in this job, you will get control over your time (if you really insist on it!)

AND THIS IS THE BEST JOB EVER!!!!

Let's do that planning exercise



- A new undergrad course to teach
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