Three Ways to Think About Prioritization

A. Urgency vs. Importance (Steven Covey)
Consider the importance (or “weight”) of the items on your list, and the urgency “when is it due?”

| Important | Quadrant 1: Examples: Things due today or tomorrow, dealing with emergencies or crises | Quadrant 2: Examples: Long-term projects, planning ahead, studying in advance, getting started early |
| Not Important | Quadrant 3: Examples: Interruptions, distractions, fun events that come up, social invitations | Quadrant 4: Examples: Time wasters, busy work, procrastination activities, aimless internet browsing |

Steven Covey recommends we spend most of our time in Quadrants 1 & 2 and as little time as possible in Quadrant 4.

B. The ABC Method (Alan Lakein)
The ABC Method was originally developed by Alan Lakein and consists of assigning a priority status of “A,” “B,” or “C” to each of the items of your to-do list or task list.

| “A” Status Items – “Must Do” | High priority, very important, critical items, with close deadlines or high level of importance to them. |
| “B” Status Items – “Should Do” | Medium priority, quite important over time, not as critical as “A” items, but still important to spend time doing. |
| “C” Status Items – “Nice to Do” | Low priority at this time, low consequences if left undone at this moment. |

C. Other Considerations . . . (adapted from David Allen)
- **What can I do where I am?** *(Think about location. What can you do where you are now? Sometimes we have unexpected pockets of time. How can you use them to your advantage?)*
- **How much time do I have and when do I have to do something else?** *(Be realistic about what can be done. Your to-do list might shift based on how much time you have available)*
- **How much energy & focus do I have?** *(What can you realistically take on right now?)*
- **What has the highest payoff for me if I do it?** *(Yet another way to think about importance, weight, or priorities)*

Sources: