

Soft Skills for the School Librarian • Time Management

Time Management Self-Assessment

Read some tips from Mary Keeling her articles, “Start Lines and Deadlines: Managing Library Program Tasks,” and “Enrich the Library Program with Volunteers,” and then use the prompts below to help you take an accurate look at what you’re currently doing well and what could be improved.

Part I: Where Does My Time Go?

Carry this—or another—calendar with you throughout your day and make quick notes on how you’re spending your time. At the end of the day, review it and fill in any gaps. Repeat this several times over the course of two weeks and then examine the patterns. Where can you create efficiencies to increase time spent on high-priority areas?

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
6:30					
7:00					
7:30					
8:00					
8:30					
9:00					
9:30					
10:00					
10:30					
11:00					
11:30					
Noon					
12:30					
1:00					
1:30					
2:00					
2:30					

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
3:00					
3:30					
4:00					
4:30					
5:00					
5:30					
6:00					
6:30					
7:00					
7:30					
8:00					
8:30					
9:00					
9:30					
10:00					

Part II: How Do I Prioritize?

Use the following four questions to help you get a handle on your methods of prioritization in a job with many facets.

1. What is your current system for tracking your priorities?

2. What are the advantages of this system?

3. What are the disadvantages?

4. What new strategies would you like to try? (If they aren't already a part of your system, consider tying actions to goals, ranking, and creating realistic deadlines.)

Part III: What Are my Procrastination Traps?

Procrastination shows up in my many forms: mindlessly scrolling through social media; taking a whack at the low-hanging fruit instead of the high-priority items; compulsively cleaning something that is really already spic and span. But what are the root feelings driving this behavior? Read through the following typical procrastination characteristics and remedy recommendations. If any of them resonate with you, give them a try!

1. **Feeling Overwhelmed:** The task at hand seems too hard or too large. It's not clear where to start.

If this is you, try: breaking down the task into its smaller components and marking each section when its complete; setting aside smaller windows of time to work on pieces of the project.

2. **Sense of Perfectionism:** The work won't be good enough. I don't know enough to get started. I don't trust my own judgement.

If this is you, try: starting with what you do know; reviewing a successful past project; remembering that all projects are works in progress; getting feedback throughout the project, instead of just at the end.

3. **Low Motivation:** I'm not invested in the outcome. I'd rather be doing something else.

If this is you, try: identifying how the task is relevant to something you are invested in and/or what benefits will come with completing it; bundling the task with an activity that you look forward to.