

Put In The Big Rocks First!

In "First Things First," Stephen Covey tells a story that one of his associates heard at a seminar. The seminar presenter pulled out a wide-mouth gallon jar and placed it next to a pile of fist-sized rocks. After filling the jar to the top with rocks, he asked, *"Is the jar full?"*

The group replied, *"Yes."*

He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar. The speaker jiggled the jar until the gravel filled the spaces between the rocks. Again, he asked, *"Is the jar full?"*

This time, the group replied, *"Probably not."*

The speaker then added some sand and asked, *"Is the jar full?"*

"No!" shouted the group.

Finally, the speaker filled the jar to the brim with water and asked the group the point of this illustration.

Someone replied *"The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!"*

"No," countered the speaker. The point of this illustration is, if you don't put the big rocks in first, *" . . . would you ever have gotten any of them in?"*

Think of 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 significant other - and make sure they go into your jar of life first.

As you make decisions during the moments, days and months of the year ahead, ask: *"What are the big rocks in my life?"* Then, put those in your jar first.

Quickie Quiz

Which activity looks like a big rock to you?

1. Watching a rerun of a less-than-favorite TV show **OR** taking a walk with a friend or family member.
2. Checking your e-mail every few minutes **OR** writing a letter of praise/thanks to a co-worker or friend.
3. Giving your thumb a workout with the TV remote control **OR** lifting some heavier weights to benefit your total body.
4. Spending your time "crawling the mall" **OR** enriching your cuisine by learning how to prepare a healthy vegetable.
5. Doing that "one more thing" on a night you're extremely tired **OR** going to bed and getting a good night's sleep.
6. Screaming at other drivers when you're stuck in heavy traffic **OR** putting a symphony on the tape player and thinking "life's too short to be uselessly angry."
7. Trying to follow a "if it tastes good, spit it out" diet **OR** going on a treasure hunt for recipes for lower fat and calorie treats.

As you make choices , say "yes" to your "big rocks" first. Don't feel you need to explain each "no" when the smaller gravel and sand try to fill your time. "No" can be a complete sentence!