

The Parable of the Glass Jar

One day at school a teacher began his class by placing a large glass jar on the lab bench in the front of the classroom and announced that "This is the jar of life, and today we will be filling it."

After the obligatory moaning had ceased, the teacher reached behind the lab bench and brought out a tray of softball sized rocks. He carefully placed one rock in the jar, then another, then a third, and then a fourth. When he tried to add a fifth rock, there was not enough room, so he removed it.

He asked the class if the jar was full. Without hesitation, there was a resounding "YES".

The teacher reached behind the lab bench again, and brought out a tray of golf ball sized stones. He added a few to the jar. Gently shook the jar and was able to fit a few more. Once again, he had reached the top of the jar and asked if the jar was full now. Once again, the class responded in the affirmative.

Again, the teacher reached behind the lab bench, and this time brought out a tray with pea sized stones. He added a handful, shook the jar gently, added another handful, shook the jar, added another and shook, until no more pea sized stones could fit. He asked the class if the jar was full now. The response was slow and not a very convincing "I guess so".

The teacher reached behind the lab bench again, and brought out a plastic pail and a plastic shovel. He began adding sand to the jar, stopping every now and then to shake the jar, forcing the sand into all the tiny crevasses. Finally, when no more sand would fit, he asked that fateful question again. There was no answer, but a girl in the front row sprung up and went behind the lab bench. She proclaimed that there was nothing left back there, and so the class agreed the jar was now full.

The teacher walked over to the glassware cabinet, took out a 500ml beaker and filled it with water. He went back to the glass jar and poured the water into the jar, until it could hold no more.

With that he sat down and asked the class what they had learned from the jar of life.

One student in the back shouted out "You can always get more into it than you thought."

The teacher laughed and said "That was a good answer, and there is a lot to be said for that, but that's only half of the story."

As time was winding down in the class, and it looked like the answer the teacher was looking for would not come without some prompting, he posed another question "What can be said about the order in which we filled our jar of life?"

There was silence for a few seconds before a voice squeaked out "We put the big rocks in first".

The teacher asked "Why?"

The reply came from the other side of the room this time "Because if we put sand in first, there wouldn't be any room for the big rocks".

We all have big rocks in life . We **MAKE** time for those things. My big rocks have always been family and friends and to a lesser extent work and working out.

We all have small rocks in life. We **FIND** time for those things like hobbies, projects, volunteering, traveling, etc.

The pebbles, sand, and water is the stuff that we just do and the life that goes on around us.

Why Plan?

Simulation

1. List the four most important aspects of your mission statement. These are your personal "Big Rocks" or important things.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

2. Identify three things that could occur that you will need to take care of immediately. These are the important and urgent things that occur in life. These may or may not be due to procrastination.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3. List three other things. (These things are represented by the sand)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

4. What happens when we put the most important things (Big Rocks) into the jar first and then follow with the less important things?

5. What happens if we put the unimportant things in first, followed by the Important but Urgent things and then the Important Big Rocks?

6. What does this demonstration tell you about time management?