



## Important People

Advanced decision-making is one of our most important tools to enable us to achieve all the things that we want to. One of the first steps in time management is to get very clear on what you want to manage. This is an opportunity to get down on paper all the people you'd want to see and spend time with in an average year. It may sound a little odd to some people to sit down and think about how often you actually want to see auntie Edna or your good friend Bob each month or year, but if it saves those exclamations of 'it has been too long' or 'where does the time go' then it is valuable.

Being aware of how often you want to see people can make it easier to make quick decisions about seeing them. It also sets you up with realistic expectations. Normally when people do an exercise like this they see that they haven't got enough spare time in the year to do things without being organised about it.

When making this list of the important people you want to see consider friends, family, colleagues, business associates and any other people who don't fit neatly into a category. Consider how often you want to see each of them (weekly, monthly, yearly) and for how long. Would a 2-hour lunch be good or do you want a week holiday with them?

The penultimate piece of this is to consider how much time you have available and when. Does your lifestyle mean you have 3 evenings a week free, and you'd be happy to see people for 2 of those evenings? Do you tend to keep your weekends free to see people or are you involved in several time consuming hobbies?

Another consideration is the expectations of these people that are important to you. If a close friend would love to see you every week, but you know now you only realistically want to see her every fortnight, then having that conversation in an open way can avoid negative feelings building up over time. Equally, if you would like to have dinner with your sister once a month if she knows that then it makes it more likely that you can both work towards having that happen.

Finally bringing it all together is to work out whether your ideals and your time available are compatible and if not what to do about it. You could consider other ways of staying connected to people, like email and texting. You could change your lifestyle to free up more time. You could decide that you can be happy seeing people less frequently.