

How to Effectively Handle Interruptions

Accelerating Excellence with Del Gilbert
Podcast Episode #78 - Resource Guide

*In order to be effective and produce great work,
you need a plan to deal effectively with interruptions.*

Every time an interruption, request, or incoming task arrives, instead of immediately abandoning what you are working on, you should **triage** them. Put them through a filtering process.

Here are **6 questions** you can quickly ask yourself when an interruption or incoming request occurs.

1. WILL THIS HELP ME ACHIEVE MY PRIORITIES?

Always keep in mind the purpose of your work and your highest priorities. If you don't, it will be easy to get thrown off course, go down rabbit trails, and get caught up trivial matters.

2. DO I HAVE TO DO IT?

Try to consistently work at a high level. You should never be above doing low-level tasks, but if you are consistently doing tasks that people being paid less than you can do, you are not providing your highest value.

3. DO I HAVE TO DO IT NOW?

Don't give interruptions more importance than they deserve. Yes, there are true emergencies but don't automatically stop what you are doing by default to address an incoming task or interruption.

4. IS THIS MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT THAN WHAT I AM WORKING ON NOW?

You should be very clear on what tasks in your job provide the most value. When you have that clarity, you have the ability to compare the importance of each task.

5. AM I DOING THIS BECAUSE IT'S EASIER THAN WHAT I AM WORKING ON NOW?

Less important work is generally easier work. We often welcome interruptions because high value work is usually creative or analytical in nature. High value work is harder work.

6. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO ADDRESS THIS THE INTERRUPTION?

Some interruptions or incoming tasks **should** be handled on the spot. If the task will take just a minute or two, why go through the bother of writing it down and scheduling it?