

# Slow Down to Speed Up<sup>®</sup>

## The Strategic Leader's Toolkit for Rapid Results



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# Priority Assessment Tool

Here are five questions you can use to identify priorities (and set aside subordinate or peripheral activities). Take your time, think about it. Then rate each of the questions on your to do list per the scale below.

1. Does this activity align with my strategy? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does this activity directly advance my top goals? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does my manager/client/colleague agree that it is a top priority item? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does this activity add significant value? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How pressing is the deadline? \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring: 1 = no/not at all, 3=somewhat, 5 = yes/very

- An activity receiving a score of 4 or 5 on three to five of the above questions is a top priority.
- An activity receiving a score of 4 or 5 on one or two of the above questions is a priority.
- Everything else is subordinate and should be treated accordingly. You may choose to delay action, delegate to someone else, or take it off your radar entirely.

If you aren't being sufficiently thoughtful and strategic in the way you handle your workload, it's only a matter of time before the demands get the better of you. Prioritize as if your job or business relies on it. The fact is, it does.

# The No List

Like many of my clients, you probably find it easier to say yes than no. There are times when you must decline, or at least defer, the demands that come at you. There are only so many hours in a day, so many days each week. Every time you say yes, you reduce time for other activities.

List below all of the tasks you regularly do, are asked to do, or think you must do. Then decide if you will do it **going forward - Yes**, or **stop doing it - No**. Now you can take a strategic pause to **decide what New things you will do**.

Task or activity	<b>NO</b> (see: Me/Not Me/Who? and Defer/Decline/Deflect)	<b>YES</b> (see: Now/Later/Never)	<b>NEW</b>

# Now / Later / Never

If you're the right person for the task you need to determine how quickly to get to it.

Ask yourself is this:

- Really a priority item?
- Time sensitive?
- Better to defer until some preliminary steps have been taken?
- Better postponed until we've reached the next milestone?
- Action or initiative likely to have better funding or support if I postpone to next quarter, year, or later?

Task or activity	Now	Later	Never

# Me / Not Me / Who?

Some activities are your direct responsibility. They belong to you.  
Some things must be delegated.

Ask yourself, if not me, who:

- Has capacity for the work or an interest in the current opportunity?
- Can learn, and gain recognition from this task?

Task or activity	Me	Not Me	Who?

# Defer / Decline / Deflect

If you decide to say no to a specific task or request—assuming you've paused to consider whether this is the right time, place, and reason—you'll need some diplomatic language at your disposal. Your words need to be thoughtful, authentic, and credible. They should be considerate of the other person's best interests. Here are a few of the many ways to thoughtfully say no, later, or not me:

- "If this can wait 2 weeks, I can give you my full attention at that time."
- "Of course, I'd be happy to help. Let me connect you to Joe, who has the capacity and expertise to do this right away."
- "I can do this for you right away if we pause on your other project/request. Which is your top priority?"
- "I would love to help but the team is under the gun on another project. I don't want you to get short shrift. May I help connect you to another resource?"
- "What do you need to achieve, and how quickly? Let me help you find a way to meet that objective even more rapidly."

# Liz Bywater, PhD



Dr. Liz Bywater is a one-of-a-kind leadership expert who works at the intersection of business and psychology. She integrates deep expertise in human behavior and organizational dynamics with her pragmatic mindset and engaging personal style to help her clients thrive in an increasingly complex world.

C-suite leaders and boards consistently enlist Liz's help to:

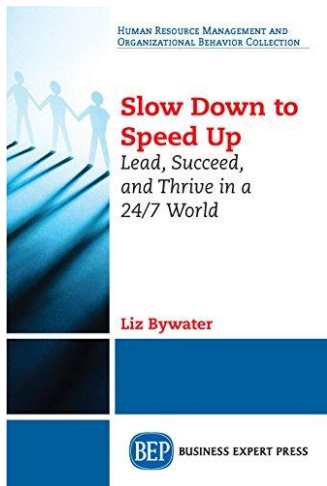
- drive profitable growth
- build remarkable customer relationships
- supercharge innovation
- increase strategic agility
- eliminate fire-fighting
- and develop highly productive collaborations amid the nonstop demands of today's 24/7 world.

Results include rapid and dramatic improvements in revenues, profitability, productivity, work culture, leadership, and more.

Dr. Bywater works with top executives and management teams across an array of companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmerisourceBergen, Biotronik, EMDSerono, Nike, Boeing, Thomson Reuters and more. She provides her clients with expert advice and actionable tools for success, based on more than 25 years of experience.

She sits on the Editorial Advisory Board for Life Science Leader and frequently provides leadership insights for Fast Company, FierceCEO, the NY Times, the Wall Street Journal, and other top media outlets. Dr. Bywater has also been a featured guest on CBS's Philadelphia Agenda and Marilyn Russell's Remarkable Women.

A longstanding member of the American Psychological Society and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting, Dr. Bywater has been recognized as one of the best consultants in the world. In 2018, she was inducted into the Million Dollar Consultant® Hall of Fame.



***Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed, and Thrive in a 24/7 World*** is a powerful new resource for leaders from the C-Suite to the front line. Filled with innovative new approaches, pragmatic tools, and real-life success stories, this book tackles the universal challenge of achieving better, faster, more sustainable results in a world of non-stop demands and constant connectivity.

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