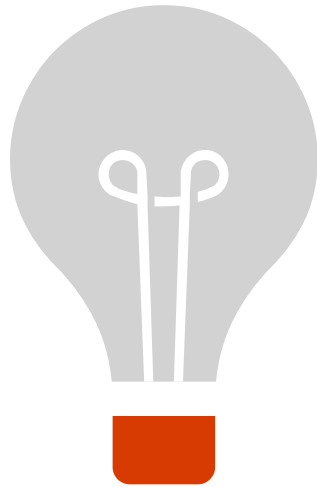**After Hours** is the amount of time you spend collaborating outside of your defined work week. In our hyper-connected world, work-related stress is on the rise and it can have dramatic impacts on our well-being.

Reducing after hours can help you achieve a work-life balance that increases your productivity, engagement, health and happiness.

Healthy after hours

Put your phone in a drawer when home to resist the temptation to check it

Wait to send late night emails until the morning

Turn off notifications on your devices to maintain control of your attention

Batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day instead of checking email all day

Set boundaries and decline meetings scheduled after hours

Set your priorities daily to gain clarity on what deserves your attention

Schedule blocks of focus time to get work done within business hours

Note: Since after hours work is often a symptom of unhealthy collaboration habits during the day, check out the focus hours, meetings and emails learning modules for more helpful tips.

Mini behavioral science lesson
Breaks and sleep make us smarter

Working harder and longer is not the way to be more productive. Science shows that we perform at our best when we allow ourselves to take breaks and sleep a healthy amount.

The prefontal cortex, which is the area of the brain responsible for problem solving, reasoning, organizing, inhibition, planning and executing plans, needs sleep to properly function. In addition, neuroscientists are finding that our brains do important processing that leads to enhanced learning and insight when we allow our brains to take breaks.

The Organizational Cost of Insufficient Sleep >

How to Have a Good Day, by Caroline Webb

Remove barriers
Set and keep boundaries

Common objection: I have to work after hours because my team does.

Recommended solution: People have a tendency to work more hours, check emails at all times, and to cancel personal commitments even when managers do not ask them to do these things. Inaccurate perceptions of what other people are doing lead us to believe that after hours work is necessary.

To avoid assumptions, set and discuss after-hours boundaries with your manager and team. Explicitly agree on what is actually expected and the best ways to get work done. Then consistently practice these new behaviors to keep boundaries. Alternative and more flexible work arrangements can lead to similar results and in some cases, superior productivity.

Work and Life, Ideas42 >

Rethinking the Work-Life Equation >

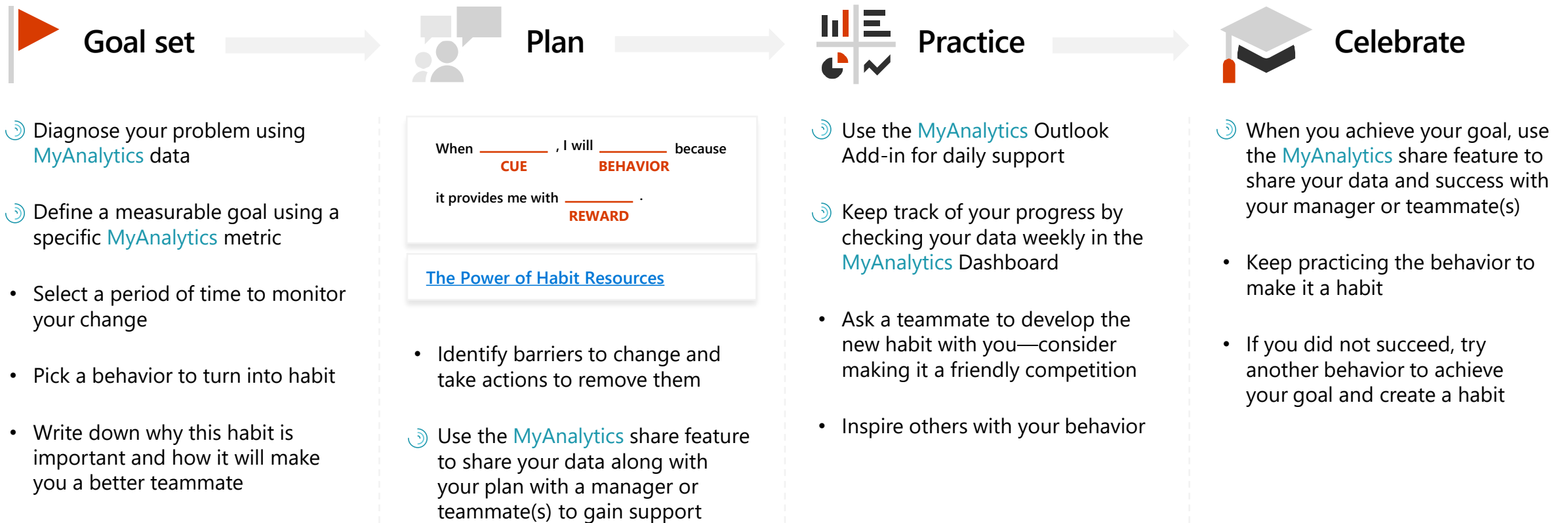# How do I turn behaviors into habits?

How to make it a habit

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

Goal set
- Diagnose your problem using MyAnalytics data
- Define a measurable goal using a specific MyAnalytics metric
- Select a period of time to monitor your change
- Pick a behavior to turn into habit
- Write down why this habit is important and how it will make you a better teammate

Plan

When _____ , I will _____ because
   CUE   **BEHAVIOR**

it provides me with _____ .
                          REWARD

The Power of Habit Resources

- Identify barriers to change and take actions to remove them
- Use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data along with your plan with a manager or teammate(s) to gain support

Practice
- Use the MyAnalytics Outlook Add-in for daily support
- Keep track of your progress by checking your data weekly in the MyAnalytics Dashboard
- Ask a teammate to develop the new habit with you—consider making it a friendly competition
- Inspire others with your behavior

Celebrate
- When you achieve your goal, use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data and success with your manager or teammate(s)
- Keep practicing the behavior to make it a habit
- If you did not succeed, try another behavior to achieve your goal and create a habit

Here are some examples

Habit playbook

Wait to send late-night emails until the AM

Working after hours sends the signal, "When I'm on, you need to be too." A significant and consistent correlation has been found between the amount of time managers send email and organize meetings after-hours and the amount of time their direct reports do the same. In one Fortune 100 technology company, data shows that every hour that people managers spend after-hours translates to 20 minutes of additional direct report time spent after-hours. The numbers vary, but significant correlations hold true for several other companies as well.

Source: **If You Multitask During Meetings Your Team Will Too**

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate
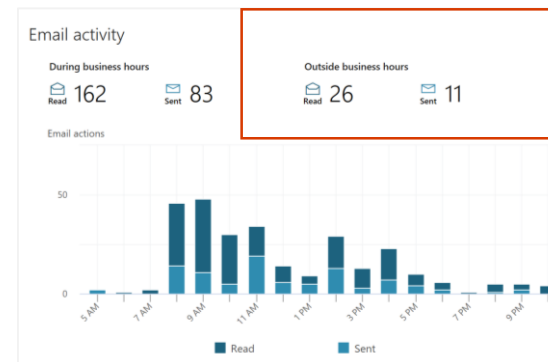
Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of emails sent outside of business hours by 50%.
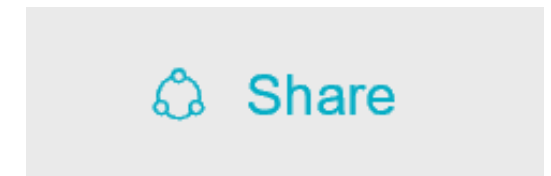
Ideas

When I choose to work after hours, I will wait to sent late-night emails until the AM because it provides me with the satisfaction that I am helping my teammates unplug.

When I choose to work after hours, I will wait to sent late-night emails until the AM because it provides me with a way to show I respect my teammates' boundaries.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity

During business hours
Read 162   Sent 83

Outside business hours
Read 26   Sent 11

Email actions

50

5 AM 7 AM 9 AM 11 AM 1 PM 3 PM 5 PM 7 PM 9 PM

Read   Sent

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

7

Habit playbook

Batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day

Processing emails constantly throughout the day and during our focus time subjects us to the harmful impacts of interruptions, including lower productivity and increased stress. It takes us longer than we think to fully return to a task after an interruption. Research conducted by the University of California, Irvine shows that it takes 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption. Similarly, research conducted by Microsoft and the University of Illinois shows that it takes 16 minutes to return to a task when the interruption is specifically email.

Source: **Worker Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching**

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next two weeks, I will batch process emails at 11 AM and 4 PM.

Ideas

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with a way to reduce my stress level.

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with higher-quality focus time.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity

During business hours

Read 162   Sent 83

Email actions

Goal is to see 2 or 3 blocks of email activity

50

0

5 AM 7 AM 9 AM 11 AM 1 PM 3 PM 5 PM 7 PM

Read   Sent

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share
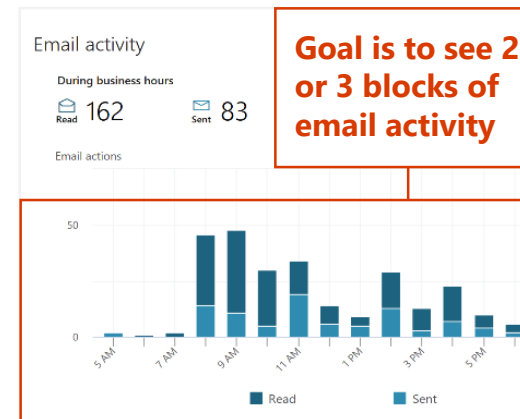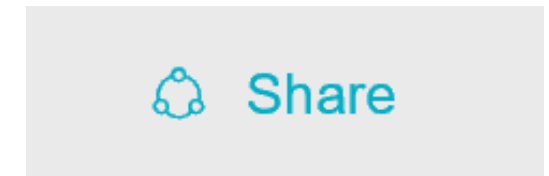
Habit playbook
Decline after-hours meetings

Declining meetings after hours will enable you to reclaim personal time, reduce your stress levels and get the break time you need to perform at your very best. Over time when done consistently, your team will start to respect this boundary and hopefully also adopt it. Sometimes urgent deadlines and unusual schedule conflicts will force you to meet after hours though. When this happens, note the meeting exception in your acceptance to continue to manage expectations.

Goal set → **Plan** → **Practice** → **Celebrate**

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of hours spent in after hours meetings by 50%.

Ideas

When I receive an after-hours meeting invite, I will decline it because it provides me with time to take care of my personal needs.

When I receive an after-hours meeting invite, I will decline it because it provides me with a way to reinforce a boundary I have set with my team.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting habits

Conflicting meetings

Longer meetings

Recurring meetings

After hours meetings

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook

Proactively schedule "slack time"

One of the reasons we often feel overloaded is because people typically expect tasks to take less time than they actually do. We base our estimates on one standout memory rather than the average time it's taken to do similar tasks in the past. Scheduling "slack" time can help. It is a block of time on your calendar to accommodate for natural poor planning. When this time is blocked, it can't be taken by a meeting, so you have additional time to complete important tasks before the work day ends.

Source: How to Have a Good Day, by Caroline Webb

Goal set	→	Plan	→	Practice	→	Celebrate

Specific example	**Ideas**	**MyAnalytics Dashboard**	**MyAnalytics Dashboard**

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce meeting hours by 1 hour for "slack" time.

Ideas

When I plan my week, I will build in "slack time" because it provides me with a way to reduce meeting hours.

When I plan my week, I will build in "slack time" because it provides me with a way to get my work done during business hours.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Meeting hours

9.2 hrs   Goal < 10 hrs

Edit goal

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

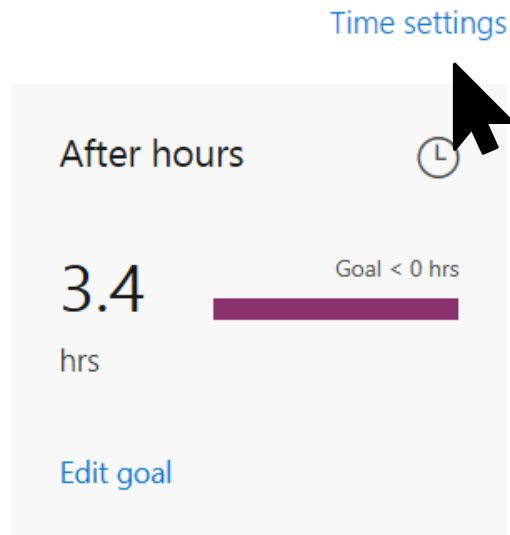# MyAnalytics features to support change
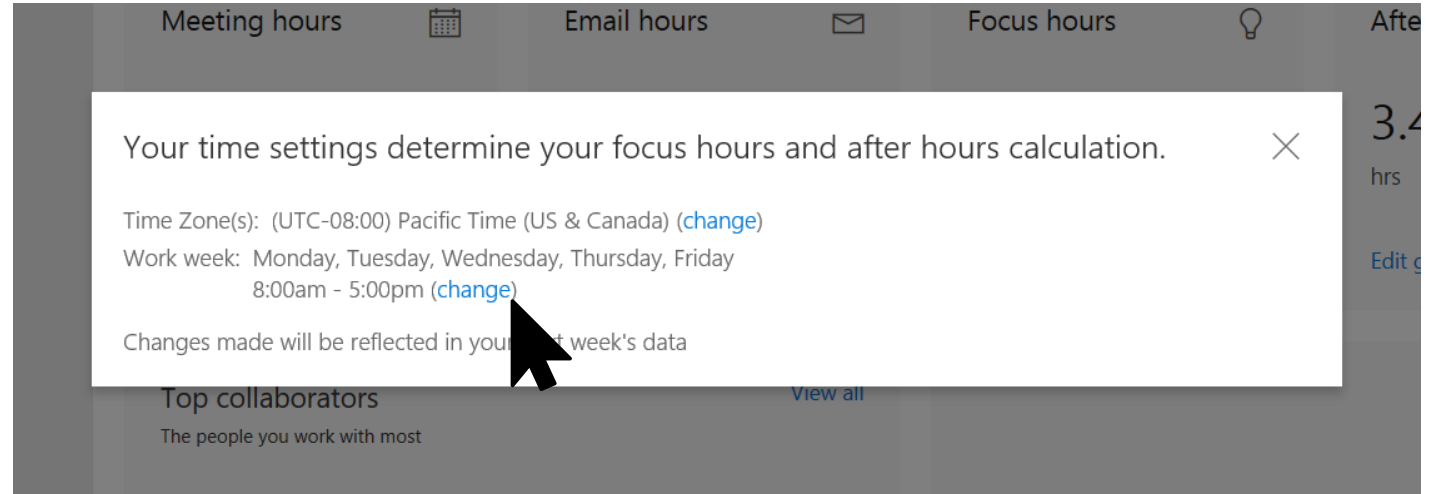
MyAnalytics feature
Time Settings
Dashboard

Use **time settings** to customize your work week and see accurate after hours in your dashboard

---

1   Click on **time settings**

2   Click on **change** to input your custom work week days and hours

Time settings

After hours   🕐

3.4   Goal < 0 hrs

hrs

Edit goal

Meeting hours   📅   Email hours   ✉️   Focus hours   💡   Afte

Your time settings determine your focus hours and after hours calculation.   ✕

Time Zone(s): (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada) (change)
Work week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
         8:00am - 5:00pm (change)

Changes made will be reflected in your next week's data

Top collaborators   View all
The people you work with most

3.4

hrs

Edit

MyAnalytics feature
After-hours impact
Outlook Add-in

Use **after-hours impact** to see late-night email activity and help you make better future decisions

1 | Select the **after-hours impact** card to see whom you have impacted

Take a look at who you've been impacting after hours.

2 | Click on a person to see the email

After hours impact this week

Eleanor Stribling	1 day
Erik Anderson (O365)	1 day

Suggested strategy

Ripple effect
Save after-hours emails for the morning to reduce the chance that you'll start a ripple effect of after-hours work for others.

3 | Reflect on whether the email could have waited until the morning

Erik Anderson (O365) | 1 day

Conversations after-hours

Erik Anderson (O365)
test tenant environ...   Mon, Feb 12
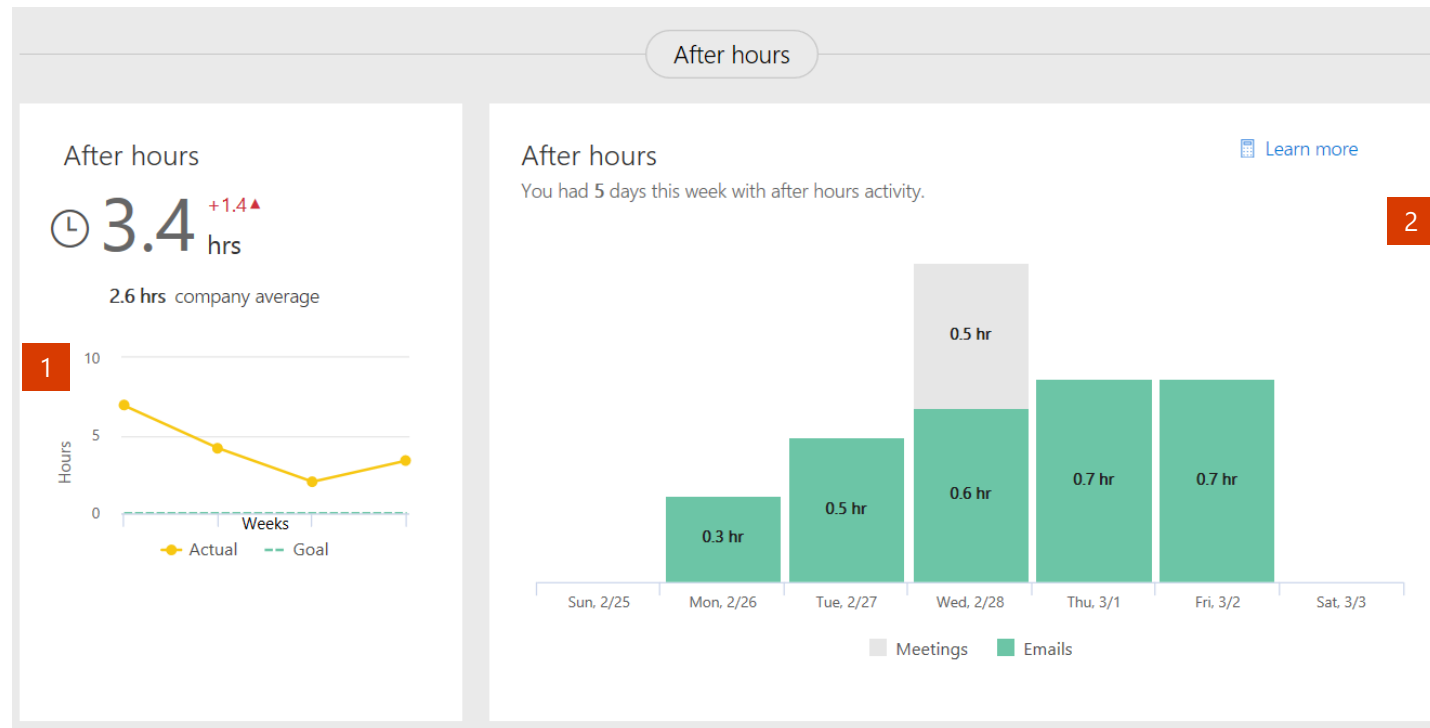
MyAnalytics feature
After hours

Dashboard

Use **after hours** to help identify patterns in your activity and opportunities for improvement

1

The 4-week trend line allows you to assess the magnitude of your after-hours problem. Is it persistent, growing or did you just experience a temporary rise?

2

The chart enables you to see how your after-hours time is split between meetings and emails. It can help you identify your focus area.

The example shows a person who emails after hours. This person is likely disturbing others with late-night emails. Solutions include reducing meeting time during the day to free up additional time for email, waiting until morning to send emails and/or putting the phone away at home to resist the temptation to check email.

After hours

After hours

⏱ **3.4** hrs +1.4▲

2.6 hrs company average

1

After hours

You had **5 days** this week with after hours activity.

🔲 Learn more

2

0.5 hr

0.3 hr   0.5 hr   0.6 hr   0.7 hr   0.7 hr

Sun, 2/25   Mon, 2/26   Tue, 2/27   Wed, 2/28   Thu, 3/1   Fri, 3/2   Sat, 3/3

◻ Meetings ◼ Emails

Actual   - - Goal

Hours / Weeks

Taking it to the next level

Setting priorities

Clear priorities can help you avoid after-hours work

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	**Q1** NECESSITY Crises Emergency meetings Last-minute deadlines Pressing problems Unforeseen events	**Q2** EFFECTIVENESS **Proactive work Important goals Creative thinking Planning & prevention Relationship building Learning & renewal Recreation**
NOT IMPORTANT	**Q3** DISTRACTION Needless interruptions Unnecessary reports Irrelevant meetings Other people's minor issues Unimportant email, tasks, calls, etc.	**Q4** WASTE Trivial work Avoidance activities Excessive relaxation, internet, television Time-wasters Gossip

Source: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

"Putting first things first means organizing and executing around your most important priorities. It is living and being driven by the principles you value most, not by the agendas and forces surrounding you."
Dr. Stephen R. Covey

PLAN EVERY WEEK

1. Draw the urgent/important matrix and assign your to-do items for the upcoming week to a quadrant

2. Confirm that your calendar is focused on Q1 and Q2 items; make adjustments if necessary and communicate priorities to colleagues

3. Schedule focus time using MyAnalytics for Q2 items

4. Use your matrix as your guide for the week as new things come up

5. Say "no" to non-essential requests: Eight Ways to Say No