What’s Most Important

It can be difficult sometimes to prioritize your life into sort of a “backlog” of everything. But just like in agile having a list where only one thing at a time can be at the top can be helpful when you only have time for for one thing at at time. For me I think it looks something like this:

1. Family
2. Work Projects
3. School Projects
4. Friends\*
5. Colleagues\*\*
6. Classmates\*\*
7. Side Projects\*\*\*
8. Movies / TV
9. Podcasts
10. Video Games

\*Can get bumped up if they become Family (in spirit, not necessarily by law)

\*\*Can get bumped up if they become friends

\*\*\*Can get bumped up if the become school or work projects

I just want to make sure I say for the record that this is the first time I am putting these priorities in writing and I am totally surprised by what is on here and disappointed by how I spend my time given that this is how I feel. Most of the time I do adhere more or less to this scheme. Like if I have a family commitment it will take priority over a work commitment, or if I have homework that needs to be done, I won’t work on one of my side projects. But the amount of time I spend watching TV when all sorts of other areas have work that need to be done is upsetting.

I suspected that something like this might happen if I took the time to examine this issue, you know I think that it might be a good Idea to print this list somewhere so that I can practice using it to make decisions. Of course it won’t be so simple as just using a simple list, there is also urgency to consider, if date night can be rescheduled for tomorrow, so that I can meet an urgent deadline, then I think that is reasonable. On the other hand if there hasn’t been a date night in months and it’s my wife’s birthday.. You get the idea.

This idea can also go another layer deeper, by making lists for each item. Now I definitely think each area should get its own list, but right now I think I will focus on work.

1. Giving back to the communities that we depend on and who depend on us.
2. Being excellent
3. Being efficient with efforts
4. Being adaptable with my expectations
5. Meeting deadlines
6. Being flexible with my time
7. Adding value to my team
8. Improving my working environment and culture

Giving back was actually the last thing I wrote, but after thinking about it for about ten minute, I decided it should be the first. I have never thought of myself as an activist and have never been very active in my community before. But the more I develop as a software engineer, the more I feel responsible for the future of the tech community in Rhode Island ( where I live). There is a reason that I didn’t find Software until I was thirty, and it because no one was talking about it . It didn’t seem like a relevant option or even an available option and that is unacceptable.

My daughter will need to find work one day and I’d like here to be able to find it here. I don’t what here to wonder for years if she will ever be excited for her future like I did for so many years.

Well that’s a topic for another day, but for now I would just encourage anyone reading this to try the same exercise.

Make a list and use it to make some better decisions in your life.