

Put in the Big Rocks First!

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EXTENSION

Lancaster County

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In *First Things First*, Stephen Covey tells a story that one of his associates heard at a seminar. The seminar presenter pulled out a wide-mouth gallon jar and placed it next to a pile of fist-sized rocks. After filling the jar to the top with rocks, he asked, *“Is the jar full?”*

The group replied, *“Yes.”*

He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar. The speaker jiggled the jar until the gravel filled the spaces between the rocks. Again, he asked, *“Is the jar full?”*

This time, the group replied, *“Probably not.”*

The speaker then added some sand and asked, *“Is the jar full?”*

“No!” shouted the group.

Finally, the speaker filled the jar to the brim with water and asked the group the point of this illustration.

Someone replied that you could always fit more things into your life if *“you really work at it.”*

“No,” countered the speaker. The point is, if you don't put the big rocks in first, *“. . . would you ever have gotten any of them in?”*

As you start the New Year, think of the “big rocks” in your life as the things you can do to make this a healthier and happier year for yourself and others. When making decisions during the moments, days and months of the year ahead, ask: *“Is this a big rock?”*

Say “yes” to your “big rocks” first. Don't feel you need to explain each “no” when the smaller gravel and sand try to fill your time. “No” can be a complete sentence!



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