



SI-12

### Defanging the “Hurry Trap”

“Nowhere to be in a hurry or to procrastinate; no bustle, complete order, strength and consistency.” These are snippets of advice from one of the most successful men of all time, Marcus Aurelius.

These and other insights into this remarkable individual’s thinking can be found in *Four Reasonable Men*, by Brand Blanshard. Blanshard brings to us through his writing the personal thoughts of one of the busiest, most responsible, ideal driven and powerful men of history.

Here’s a figure who most successfully carried the weight of leadership of the Roman Empire from 161 to 180. He was noted for his accomplishments, fairness, and the creation a co-emperor to share power and govern with him.

After reading Aurelius’s pensive thoughts taken from his personal notes and then translated and edited in *Four Reasonable Men*, I’m enriched by seeing into the mind of this eminently reasonable man. Aurelius seems just as concerned as any man or women today about the issue of getting things done on time and with high quality.

Lately, I’ve thought carefully during my morning meditation-on-success walks, about the Aurelius recommendation to not be “in a hurry or to procrastinate [with] no bustle.”

Upon further reflection, it is quite apparent to me how the “hurry trap” of modern life degrades the quality of work outcomes, deteriorates personal health, both physical and emotional, and reduces level of satisfaction derived from life.

## TFS e-Mentor Success Insights

Success as an instructor or student involves dealing with hurry and lots of it. Education is a time-bounded process. Each course runs for a fixed time, with an outside-of-class student commitment time requirement based on the student's ability to learn rapidly and produce learning products by set deadlines.

What would Markus Aurelius think about all the educational bustle today? As a man who knew the value of serenity in achieving success, I think he would be dismayed.

### Success Insights-Defanging the Hurry Trap

We can simply pass off our tendency to be overscheduled, overworked, under-rested, and generally frazzled as a condition necessary to cope with modern life—and that's the way it is and nothing can change it; sink-or-swim attitude.

The question should be, what is the cost of hurry in terms of the quality of accomplishment. Aurelius would no doubt ask, "What is the ultimate price of multitasking?"

I disagree that nothing can be done to cure "hurryitis." Instructors have the power to assign a reasonable academic workload to students and to set a sensible pace of learning in their courses by carefully managing and planning every available instructional minute in a slimmed down learning process.

Knowing which learning outcomes are essential to achieve and how to most efficiently achieve them compared to the legion of nice-to-achieve outcomes is a start.

Scanning the academic workload for repetitive or unimportant assignments that are often classified by students as "more busy work" helps. Finally, active, accelerated, and optimized teaching and learning methods can be employed to aid your students learn more in less time.

## TFS e-Mentor Success Insights

Today, as in Roman times, everything counts, including getting a lot done in a short time, but there is even a more pressing need for reasonableness in setting the pace and workload levels for students in order to defang the “hurry trap” that can and will undermine high-quality educational and life outcomes.

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