



CAREER VISION

The Four A's

Snarled rush hours delay commutes; job demands increase as we struggle with information overload and the use of new technologies.

Our children, parents, and even our pets need attention, and their schedules require careful coordination.

We want our homes to be havens of orderliness where we share well-balanced, healthy meals at the end of each day. And of course, we're taking night classes to stay current in our fields, volunteering time and resources to help our community, and exercising to stay in shape; all of this before slipping into bed for our needed eight hours of sleep.

Workers everywhere share concerns about finding a way to balance life's daily demands, as they lament, "I don't have enough hours in the day". No wonder there has been a flood of books and articles on how to simplify one's life. For many of us, time is the new currency, and learning to balance competing demands on our time is a daunting challenge.

Mastery of the three R's (readin', 'riting, and 'rithmetic) is commonly viewed as essential to effective learning and communication. However, the nurturing and building of the four A's may be essential to developing skills relevant to the 21st Century.

Attitude is how we present ourselves to the world.

Developing the skills to share our (sometimes conflicting) opinions in a respectful tone and pleasant manner contributes to a more balanced environment and easier interactions with others. Our choices about how to present ourselves will impact every situation we encounter and everyone we meet.

Attention is what we focus on.

What we attend to establishes our priorities. We can easily feel overwhelmed if our attention is constantly challenged by competing priorities (e.g., family relationships and care giving, financial and physical well-being, professional development, work performance and relationships, and community). Learning to focus our attention on defined priorities in different areas of our lives is now an essential skill.

Action is the process of doing or moving toward an outcome.

Rather than only thinking about something, taking some action, even one step, moves us steadily closer toward a goal. When our priorities are identified, creating an action plan and visualizing the outcome helps us to maintain focused attention.

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Accomplishment is the result of attitude, attention, and action all working in concert. It can be a step taken on the way to a larger objective, a change in health or relationship, or a week of focused attention on a particular project. Accomplishments demonstrate the results of our time and energy. Incomplete goals can contribute to frustration and anxiety.

By being aware of our attitude, attending to defined goals, and taking the necessary actions, we increase our accomplishments and establish a sense of balance.

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800 Roosevelt Road, E-200 • Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137-5866 • 630.469.6270 tel • 630.469.6279 fax •
www.careervision.org