

all of those items would be gone, and we could never have it at that price again?

THE OTHER SIDE of this tragedy develops when we fail to realize that some things really are disappearing doors, and need our immediate attention. We may work more hours at our jobs, for instance, without realizing that the childhood of our sons and daughters is slipping away. Sometimes these doors close too slowly for us to see them vanishing. One of my friends told me, for instance, that the single best year of his marriage was when he was living in New York, his wife was living in Boston, and they met only on weekends. Before they had this arrangement—when they lived together in Boston—they would spend their weekends catching up on work rather than enjoying each other. But once the arrangement changed, and they knew that they had only the weekends together, their shared time became limited and had a clear end (the time of the return train). Since it was clear that the clock was ticking, they dedicated the weekends to enjoying each other rather than doing their work.

I'm not advocating giving up work and staying home for the sake of spending all your time with your children, or moving to a different city just to improve your weekends with your spouse (although it might provide some benefits). But wouldn't it be nice to have a built-in alarm, to warn us when the doors are closing on our most important options?

SO WHAT CAN we do? In our experiments, we proved that running helter-skelter to keep doors from closing is a fool's