

Internal time management: slowing the pace of life

Harold L. Taylor



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HAROLD L TAYLOR

INTERNAL TIME MANAGEMENT: SLOWING THE PACE OF LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

We're not that great at judging the passage of time since our concept of time is influenced by so many things, such as heat, activity, stress, and speed.

For example, according to the March, 2008 issue of *Scientific American Mind*, a person with a fever experiences a given period as being longer than someone without a fever. Also, when we are busy, jumping quickly from one job to another, time seems to pass more quickly. But when we are waiting in a long lineup or marooned in a traffic jam, time seems to crawl. According to Vince Poscente, in his book *The Age of Speed*, 23 percent of Americans say they lose their patience within five minutes of waiting in line. This whole concept of time perception is used by professional marketers. That's why businesses place magazines in waiting rooms and have TV sets in the service departments at car dealerships. Research shows that customers perceive waiting time to be less if there are signs to read. While lined up for a show in a Las Vegas casino many years ago, I recall a bank of slot machines only feet away so patrons could lose more money while they were waiting for the doors to open. When you are busy, time seems to go faster.

Waiting time also seems to be shorter if customers have someone to talk to. When people wait only a minute or a minute and a half, their perception of time is fairly accurate. But any length of time over that produces time distortion and they think they have been waiting longer than they really have. Marketing consultant Paco Underhill recommends taking care of a customer in less than two minutes because of this fact. In his book, *Why We Buy*, he also claims that the time a shopper spends waiting *after* an employee has initiated contact with her seems to go faster than the same amount of time spent waiting *before* that initial interaction. So acknowledging that the shopper is waiting tends to relieve time anxiety.

Most people want time to fly by if they are waiting in a doctor's office or lined up outside a movie theatre or sitting in a dentist's chair. But what they don't seem to realize is that it's their life that is flying by. Waiting time does not register in their long term memories, and looking back at their lives in retrospect, they wonder how they got to be so old so quickly. Ten years ago, when I suddenly realized I was past retirement age, I wondered about that as well. Could I have done anything differently so that time didn't seem to pass so quickly? I know I can't slow down the passage of time. The clock ticks relentlessly, regardless of what I do. But even most of the clock time seems to have escaped me. Fifty years seemed more like twenty. I felt cheated out of more than half my life.

It was then that I started researching time from a different vantage point. For the forty years or more that I had been studying and teaching time management, I had been dealing with external or clock time. Now I am more interested in *internal or perceived* time. Most of us are enjoying life as we live it; but if we can't recall it later, did it really exist? I have always thought that the greatest time management strategy has little to do with working more efficiently; but everything to do with living a longer, healthier, happier life. Now I would add the phrase, "*that you can remember.*" My conclusion after these past ten years is that we can influence the speed at which our lives seem to pass, and that we *can* ensure that we recall a greater portion of it after the fact. And that looking back, it seems closer to the actual number of years we have lived. That's what I call internal time management. The process of managing *internal time* involves more than just the study of efficiency and effectiveness; it involves holistic time management.

Holistic time management, as I see it, refers to the strategies necessary in order to lead a happier, healthier, longer, more productive and fulfilling life. It encompasses both external and internal time management, as well as health, stress, lifestyle and environmental issues that affect body, mind and spirit. It is of little consequence if you save a few minutes each day only to lose years by running out of life long before your time. But it also a tragedy if you live a long life and then forget half of it. Managing your internal time will help prevent that from happening.

1 TIME IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

1.1 A BRAIN'S-EYE VIEW OF TIME

Just as inactive waiting makes time drag, so a slow-paced, boring, non-eventful life seems longer while you're actually experiencing it even though it seems shorter when recalled later. For many people, the days seem to pass slowly and the years seem to fly by.

If you race through life, multitasking, cramming as many activities as possible into a day, generally time will zoom by. And when you're in your seventies or eighties, it will seem like you have lived only half of that amount of time. That's what I call poor internal time management. But this doesn't mean you should lead a slow, quiet, boring, non-active life with plenty of waiting and therefore appear to live longer. Because there are other factors involved, the most significant being memory. When we contemplate how fast our day or life has gone by, we are relying on our memory. And our memory is very selective. It dismisses anything it deems insignificant. We remember the important things, such as graduation from college, that car accident, our first bicycle, a winning goal scored in a soccer game, a new job and so on. Our brain doesn't bother with all the insignificant things that happen to us, such as those thousands of emails we reviewed and deleted or the mountains of paperwork that came across our desks or those trivial tasks we worked on, or those endless hours waiting for people.

But if we have a lot of significant items in our life – if we live purposefully – we will have lots of memories, and consequently, our lives will have seemed longer. I proposed this in my first book, *Making Time Work for You*, back in 1981. But at that time I had no research to back me up – only personal experience. Let me quote from that book:

"Time seems to pass quickly for some, more slowly for others. For time is measured in past accomplishments. Those who look back and see few goals accomplished, few achievements, few times when they felt proud of what they have done – those people feel that life has sped by too quickly. They feel cheated. But those who look back and are flooded with memory after memory of satisfying activities, achievements, relationships, feel they have lived a long and fruitful life."

For time is not seen as minutes, hours, or days. You can't see intangibles that have no substance. Time is seen as events. Happenings. Experiences. It's seen as the glow on your children's faces when you tell them you are taking them to the zoo on Saturday. It's seen as the applauding crowd when you end your address to the home and school association. It's seen as the first check you receive for a short story submitted to a magazine. It's seen as that first promotion. It's seen as the pile of congratulatory cards when you graduate from college. Time is measured in events, not seconds. Squander time, and there will be fewer events to recall. Fewer accomplishments. Fewer moments of happiness. Squander time, and you squander life."

Of course, at the time, I was writing more for effect than for fact, but more recent brain research has proven those paragraphs to be accurate. There is a lot more to it, but leading a purposeful life, concentrating on meaningful projects and achieving significant goals can virtually expand your life.

But why then does life still seem to go by faster the older you get? I know from experience that life seems to go a lot faster for a seventy year old than it does for a twenty year old. The popular explanation for this is that the brain perceives time as a rough percentage of total life lived. For a 10-year old child, one year represents 10% of their existence to date. That's a long time. But to a 60-year old, one year represents less than 2% of their life experience to date, giving the impression of it passing much faster. (*The Rough Guide to the Brain* by Barry J. Gibb). If this is true, the older you get the faster life will seem to pass. The only proof is to live to a ripe old age. So far, in my mid seventies, I find this to be true. But here again memory plays an even more important role.

1.2 LOSE YOUR MEMORY AND YOU LOSE YOUR PAST

Our sense of how fast time passes is a function of our memory. If we don't remember something, it doesn't exist for us. It's missing from our past, and so our past is shorter than it should be. If we don't pay attention to what we are doing, if we lack concentration, if we're distracted, if we're not totally aware of what's going on, we usually don't remember it. The key to remembering names, for instance, is to listen carefully so you hear it in the first place, focus on it, and repeat it to yourself many times. If you don't, it's lost.

When self-help gurus and stress management practitioners tell you to "be in the moment" they are probably referring to happy, anxiety-free living. But it's more than that. It appears to lengthen your life; because if you're "in the moment" you are fully aware and focused on the "now" and it will likely become a permanent part of your long-term memory.

Life expectancy for Americans born in 1900 was 50 years. In 2014 it was about 76 years for men and 81 years for women (down a little from 2012). But I will wager that those 50 years, in retrospect, seemed just as long as our 76 years. Because today we are bombarded by external stimuli – everything from ipods to iphones, paper mail to email, and people to podcasts. We are in the age of speed, doing two things at once and thinking ahead while getting behind, anxious and stressed – an ideal situation for memory loss.

Our entire life to date, except for this fleeting second that is happening right now, is in the past. You are living in the age of speed, and as you look back, the last five years probably seems more like two or three; because over half of it is missing from your memory. At this very second, the only present you *have*, time is not zooming by, regardless of *how* old you are. In fact, reading this is probably making time drag. You're already glancing at the clock to see how much longer you have to endure the reading of this book. You may be thinking about those things you have to do afterwards and what's on schedule in the morning. You may even be anxious because the kids may start screaming at any moment or your iPad might have to be recharged. Consequently you will forget 40 percent of what you're reading within the first hour.

1.3 YOUR BRAIN IS YOUR TIMEKEEPER

Your brain is working against you as well since it is programmed to be on the alert for any interruptions. It's a defense mechanism to keep you onguard for any potential dangers. You may not encounter very many physical dangers nowadays, but the same response is kicks in when you are in the middle of a conversation with someone at a party and all of a sudden you hear your name mentioned elsewhere. Your attention immediately shifts to *that* conversation.

Your level of awareness depends on your degree of interest in what is happening at the time. If you can train yourself to be more thoroughly aware of the present, your perception of time will change. An hour spent working on a project that excites you and engages your attention will seem longer, in retrospect, than an hour spent daydreaming. Stefan Klein had a great line in his book, *The Secret Pulse of Time* – “By giving more life to your time, you give more time to your life.”

Other factors are at play as well. A long period of time spent on the same or similar activities shortens our perception of this time later. For instance, if we fish off a dock for three hours every morning, the time may not seem to drag at the time, depending on our level of interest. But looking back at it later, we can't distinguish between one fishing session and the others. The past will have seemed much shorter since this part of our life has been compressed. Barry Gibb, in his book, *The Rough Guide to the Brain*, refers to this as “*retroactive interference*.”

These effects help move life along faster as you grow older. The longer you live, the more similarity in things you have done, and consequently the more compressed your life becomes.

An even more dramatic example might be that of watching TV or playing video games. They not only rob you of time that might be better spent on something more meaningful, and seem to speed by quickly because of the rapidly changing images, but they also seem to shorten your life. Who can recall the eight years or so of TV that they have watched in the first 70 years of their life? Certainly I can't. I have had no experience with video games, but I read in the book, *A Whole New Mind*, that the average American spends 75 hours per year playing video games. Of course there could be benefits from playing video games; but certainly not when it comes to time spent and lost.

You are what your brain says you are. You have lived and experienced what your brain says you have lived and experienced. External time passes as quickly as your brain tells you it passes. See how important your brain is? In fact, I had to laugh when I read a line in one of the books on the brain. The author said, “I used to think my brain was the most important organ in my body – until I realized who was telling me that!”

Now we come to a very important question. Can we really manage internal time? Can we influence the *perceived* rate at which external time passes? Well, these are my opinions, and although most of my conclusions are based on actual brain research, you might research the topic and arrive at different conclusions. But as you will soon see, I am convinced that we can manage internal time to a significant degree. The next chapter gives you a brief review of the ten things you can do to slow the passage of time from your brain's perspective – in other words, to manage internal time.

2 SLOWING DOWN YOUR PERCEPTION OF TIME

2.1 OUR BRAINS FILTER OUT THE SPAM

I would love to look back on my eighty odd years and have it seem as though I have actually lived eighty years, rather than half that number. That would be great internal time management. I think we can. Oh we can't stop life from seeming to go faster as we grow older. But we can slow it down. And we can make it seem like we have lived a lot longer fuller life in retrospect. I have had less than ten years to test the following recommendations; but they are backed by research, and I believe if someone started doing these things while they were younger it would make a huge difference.

Here again, what we can do about it is limited by how we are designed. If we could recall everything we ever did or experienced in our past – every activity, event and conversation, I'm sure we would be able to look back at our life and marvel at how long a life we had actually lived. But our brains are created to do the opposite – to filter out the spam in our lives, spam being all that miscellaneous information that is not going to help us fulfill our purpose in life. According to research discussed in the July, 2008 issue of *Scientific American Mind*, some of us have more effective spam filters than others. And those who are better at keeping irrelevant information out of their mental inboxes are higher-capacity individuals with more creative and problem solving skills.

An uncluttered mental filing system has its price: we don't recall a large portion of the life we have lived. Here are ten ways to prevent a large portion of your life from being filtered out as spam. We will discuss each one in greater detail in the chapters that follow.

2.2 HAVE GOALS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL TO YOU

You want to pack your life with significance. It's the important, meaningful accomplishments and activities that are most easily transferred into your long term memory. Work on your chosen goals in chunks of time, an hour here and two hours there, not days or weeks at a time. Focus on these major tasks with a minimum of distractions. Working in chunks of time helps you to remember more of what you were doing after the fact. It stretches the time more than if you had been working on the same task all day. It also helps stop you from procrastinating. The number one reason people put off tasks and projects is that the tasks seem to be so complicated and difficult. Breaking large tasks into chunks makes them manageable. I recommend you have at least one focus time of one and a half or two hours each day. These are not necessarily "quiet hours." *They are focus hours* where you give your undivided attention to a project or task.



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2.3 ADD VARIETY TO YOUR LIFE

Don't vacation in the same place each year or visit the same restaurants or go out with the same friends. Don't be a creature of habit. Habits have their place in speeding up mundane tasks and improving your efficiency, such as handling each piece of paper only once and always putting your keys in the same place. But don't make your whole life a habit. Habits are an enemy of time because later you can't recall most of what you have done. One activity is like all the others. Joe Dispenza, in his book, *Breaking the habit of being yourself*, says that by midlife, 95% of who we are is habit. So variety is not only the spice of life, as far as your internal clock is concerned, it stretches time. So don't go through life on autopilot. Break the routine.

2.4 DON'T MULTITASK

Multitasking refers to doing as many things as possible simultaneously, as quickly as possible and frequently taking advantage of as many technologies as possible. Instead, work on one job at a time, and concentrate on what you are doing. Computers multitask, but they are *machines*. *People* should focus on one thing at a time. Even if you saved a little time in the short run by doing two simple tasks simultaneously, you would lose in the long run because the time does not fully register in your long-term memory.

2.5 DON'T RUSH NEEDLESSLY

When you are working on a task, take your time and do it right. You can become addicted to speed to the point where you attempt to perform every task in the shortest period of time even when there's no logical reason to do so. This obsession with speed frequently results in frustration and stress when delays are encountered or errors result. It can also waste time, decrease productivity, threaten safety and negatively impact quality. So there's more than just the apparent speed at which time passes that is involved. Modify your behavior by doing things a little slower. Drive slower, walk slower, talk slower and work slower. The faster you go, the faster life seems to go.

2.6 WHEREVER YOU ARE, BE THERE

Practice effective listening, memory training and powers of observation. I was walking along a Florida beach one morning last winter, and there were Palms lined up in front of the beach condos and the waves rolling in and the young kids building sand castles, but I really wasn't looking at those things. I was looking *through* them into the past and into the future. I was reliving the speech I gave a few nights earlier, and planning what I would do that evening. I had to snap out of my trance and be in the *now* or that walk would be completely gone from my memory within days. That's also an example of work being a state of mind, not a place. Have you ever seen someone rushing down the corridor of a building continually glancing at his watch? If you asked him the time, he probably couldn't tell you without checking his watch again. He wasn't looking at his watch; he was looking *through* it at the meeting that would start without him and the embarrassment he would experience. He was *not* in the moment.

2.7 SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Don't be an activity packrat. Don't take on too many commitments for yourself or your family members. In general, people's lives are too busy. If it's not critical that you do something, then it's critical that you not *do* it. Keep your life free of clutter. Take time to fully enjoy what life has to offer. Time also moves more slowly for children because they are too busy living in the present to be concerned about the future. Be more child-like. Use goals as a tool, but not as a way of life. We will never be able to stop the clock, nor slow down time's passing. But we are able to make life *seem* longer by appreciating what we already have instead of spending all our time striving for what we have not.

2.8 EXERCISE BOTH YOUR BODY AND YOUR BRAIN

Keep your mind active as you get older. Do crossword puzzles, read, take courses, be creative, and challenge yourself. If you retire physically, don't retire mentally. Studies suggest that maintaining intellectual activity throughout life can preserve memory in later years. The *Victoria Longitudinal Study* in Western Canada revealed that middle-aged or older individuals who participate in intellectually challenging activities and projects, including reading, are less likely to suffer declines in cognitive functioning. (*Fantastic Voyage* by Ray Kurzweil & Terry Grossman) Physical exercise is even more important. You need to keep the blood flowing to the brain with the oxygen and glucose that it needs to operate at its peak.

2.9 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

That's when memories are thought to be transferred into long-term storage. The April, 2008 issue of *Reader's Digest* contains an article on sleep. It states that new things you have learned are being processed and memories are being organized and stored – in addition to all the other advantages of sleep. It's ironic in a way that people cut back on sleep so they can gain more time for living – only to find, in retrospect, that their life seems shorter. It's important to keep both your brain and your body healthy, and lack of sleep is the enemy of both.

2.10 FOLLOW YOUR BIOLOGICAL CLOCK

Our brain has an accurate biological clock. The March, 2008 issue of *Scientific American Mind* states that even when deprived of external time cues, people will complete the cycle of sleeping, waking and eating on a somewhat regular cycle.

16 hours after waking, we grow tired whether we like it or not. We would be more productive if we followed our biological clock rather than the one on the wall, and ate when we were hungry and slept when we were tired – instead of pumping ourselves full of coffee and burning the midnight oil. During sleep there is a replenishment of cells needed for a healthy immune system as well as memory consolidation. We also need to follow our high-energy cycles throughout the day and schedule the priorities of our life during these times.

2.11 CONTROL YOUR OWN LIFE

Managing stress is now an integral part of my time management programs. When we lose control of our time, stress immediately escalates. According to Daniel Gilbert, in his book, *Stumbling on Happiness*, at the root of most stress is the feeling of being out of control. I'm sure you know the feeling if you have ever been stuck in traffic, or waiting in a long line or suddenly told that the unrealistic deadline on your project has suddenly become more unrealistic.

In the following chapters we will look at each of these ten strategies in more detail.

3 HAVE GOALS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL TO YOU

3.1 MAKE YOUR MILESTONES MEMORABLE

In order to pack your life with memorable events and accomplishments that will stick with you for a lifetime, you will have to select those things that will have a major impact on your life. Giving up coffee or going on a diet or walking for a half hour every day are not earth shattering events that are going to stick in your memory banks. Unless of course you end up in the hospital with food poisoning or step in front of a speeding bus during your walk. That's not to say that they are not worthy goals, and certainly they should be pursued. But for significance, choose some that are more memorable than a list of New Year's resolutions.

Many people limit their goals to New Year's resolutions. How many of those resolutions do you remember after twenty or thirty years? And what major impact have they had on your life? People who make *New Year's* resolutions are usually those who are the least motivated to follow through with their plans anyway. They have procrastinated already by saying they will start in the New Year. If they were really committed to lose weight or stop smoking or save money or whatever, they would have started when they made the decision.

M.J. Ryan, in her book *This Year I Will*, claims you really have to *want* to change. The motivation comes first and then the self-discipline. In her book, she quotes statistics that approximately 45 percent of us make *New Year's* resolutions but only 8 percent succeed. Back in 1993 a St. *Petersburg Times* article reported on a study that tracked 200 people who made New Year's resolutions. Within a month, 55 percent had abandoned their resolutions. At the end of two years, only 19 percent had kept their promises. Studies to date seem to indicate that from 35 percent to 70 percent of New Year's resolutions are abandoned within one month. It's easy to get caught up in the emotion of the moment and make ourselves a lot of promises that we are not committed to keeping.

David Niven, author of *The 100 Simple Secrets of Successful People*, claims that people who construct their goals in concrete terms are 50 percent more likely to feel confident that they will attain their goals and 32 percent more likely to feel in control of their lives. That's one of the things that make *New Year's* resolutions difficult to achieve. They are simply weak attempts at goal setting. They seldom are reduced to writing, and have no deadline date for completion. A goal without a deadline is like a check without a signature. If you are going to write a book, or sail around the world or launch a new company, be specific.

You have no doubt heard about **SMART** goals. Well the acronym isn't smart enough; because it doesn't include all the essential characteristics of effective goals. Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-framed are all important. But so is putting them in writing, having goals in all areas of your life, not just work, making sure they are goals that *you* want and not things imposed upon you, and scheduling time in your planner to work on them. So the addition to the acronym becomes

Written

All areas of your life

Your goals

Scheduled

Scheduling time to work on your goals is a critical factor – especially for the more ambitious, memorable goals that will become the milestones in your life.

3.2 A PLANNER IS ESSENTIAL FOR GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

The planner you use is important as well. About 35 years ago when I designed the *Taylor Planner*, I decided to have a week at a glance planner with all seven days broken down into 30 minute segments from 7 am to late evening to accommodate scheduled blocks of time for both personal and business goals as well as the usual commitments. I also have a section at the front of my planner so I can list my goals for the year, along with deadline dates. Goals should never be relegated to a “To Do” list. If they are to become the highlights of your life, they should be treated as such. Do what works best for you, but I have a practice of scheduling time each week to work on my personal and organizational goals. This means that the time is blocked off at least a week in advance – before the time is consumed by other people or by the impulses of the day.

Even if you could arrange time to work for days at a stretch on your significant projects, I do not recommend it. Not only are you more likely to be interrupted, when recalling the activity later, your mind does not distinguish between an hour and a dozen hours if it's the same work. Dozens of studies show that you have better recall for things that happen at the beginning of an event or situation (Primacy Effect) and also at the end (Recency Effect). So it makes more sense, from a recall perspective, to have more beginnings and endings. Try memorizing nine digit numbers and you will find it's easier to recall the first few digits and the last few digits. This is helpful for students who tend to engage in marathon study sessions. Short, ninety-minute sessions with breaks in between would be more effective. I tend to reserve ninety-minute blocks of time to work on my significant goals. And I have forty-five minute to an hour focus time every morning at a local coffee shop where I work on priority projects such as this book.

Concentration rises and falls in ninety minute cycles. Choose times that match your peak energy level for maximum results. For most people, this is in the morning.

There are all sorts of iPads, smart phones, and other PDAs being used as planners. Personally I don't think planning is one of the functions that they are best at performing. From a memory standpoint, there's nothing like good old fashioned handwriting to get information into your long-term memory. Paper planners can become a permanent record of your life's activities, and something easy to access and use when your neurons finally start to peter out.

The important thing is to have ongoing significant, life-changing goals and projects that you continually work on in chunks of time throughout the weeks, years, and your lifetime. You may retire from your job; but you should never retire from your goals, regardless of your age.

4 ADD VARIETY TO YOUR LIFE

4.1 HAVE MULTIPLE MILESTONES I N YOUR LIFE

I'm sure you have experienced habitual activities, such as driving to work, when you could recall nothing of the journey immediately afterwards. It was totally gone from your memory. Habits prevent you from being in the “now” – which is something I'll talk about later. But here I'm suggesting that you add variety to your life. So in the case of driving, that might entail taking different routes to work, accompanying different people, sometimes taking public transportation, stopping at different coffee shops and so on. As stated in the January, 2009 issue of *American Scientific Mind*, if we experience a novel situation within a familiar context, we will more easily store this event in our memory.

Sometimes we *do* enjoy engaging in the same activities on a regular basis such as fishing, golfing or boating. I'm not suggesting you give that up. But you might change the location, time or people you're with. Make each experience unique in some way. My late wife and I spent about seventeen winters in the same condo near the same beach with the same friends, and in retrospect it seems like six or seven winters, not seventeen. Years later we rented a condo in a different area each year, with different surroundings, and meeting different people (as well as getting together regularly with our old friends) and the four years that we have did this actually seem like *four* years.

Avoid mind-numbing activities such as watching TV, mowing the lawn etc. as much as possible. Delete, delegate or outsource boring repetitive activities. Fill your life with exciting, interesting, challenging activities that tend to get transferred to your long-term memory. If you choose to watch paint dry, no wonder your brain doesn't want to remember it.

When it comes to an example of a variety of challenging and memorable goals and their relentless pursuit, the story of John Goddard probably tops the list. His story originally appeared in the March 1972 issue of *Life* magazine and has been quoted by authors ever since.

“At age 15, John Goddard wrote down 127 goals that he wanted to accomplish in his lifetime. Included in these goals were: climb Mounts Kilimanjaro, Ararat, Fuji, McKinley (and 13 others); visit every country in the world; learn to fly an airplane; retrace the travels of Marco Polo and Alexander the Great; visit the North and South Poles, Great Wall of China, Taj Mahal (and other exotic areas), become an Eagle Scout; dive in a submarine; play flute and violin; publish an article in *National Geographic* magazine; learn French, Spanish, and Arabic; milk a poisonous snake; read the entire *Encyclopedia Britannica*; and other goals, similar in variety and scope.”

By the time Goddard died in 2013 at the age of 88, he had accomplished 120 of his goals. If you want to see this list, including the accomplished goal of living to see the 21st century, go to the website at johngoddard.info. Goddard was neither wealthy nor gifted when he began his amazing saga of adventure and accomplishment. He was just a 15-year-old boy who believed all things were possible and that he had the potential to do what he wanted to do.

At age 80 do you think John Goddard could recall the 109 or so goals he had accomplished to date? I would guess he remembered a lot more than that, and that he felt he has led a long and adventurous life, filled with a variety of accomplishments. Your goals, activities and adventures need not be anywhere near as dramatic as John Goddard's. But set goals in all areas of your life, participate in a variety of activities, be more adventurous than habitual, and have an insatiable interest in the world around you.

4.2 SPEND MORE TIME WITH PEOPLE AND LESS TIME WITH THINGS

Also, time spent with *things* seem to go faster than time spent with *people*. Cultivate friendships and don't be stingy with your time when you are interacting with others. Gretchen Rubin, in her book, *The Happiness Project*, referred to a study that showed that doing things with someone rather than doing them alone is always more fun, regardless of whether it is exercising, commuting or doing housework. Of fifteen daily activities, researchers found that the only one people preferred doing alone was prayer. Rubin goes on to say that strong relationships not only add more joy to life, it lengthens your life, boosts immunity, and cuts the risk of depression.

Unfortunately, people seem to get busier every year, not with the meaningful goal-related priorities that we have been talking about, but by the preponderance of trivia that has been introduced into their lives. People should be scheduled in your planner as well as tasks, projects and activities. Make a list of the people you really enjoy spending time with. How much time did you spend with those people during the past week? Last month? Last year? Chances are there are people – perhaps even family members – who are being crowded out of your life because of your busyness. Some people are so busy networking; they have little time for anyone who is not a business associate.

Be careful that you don't allow the people who count to be crowded out by things that don't. Our choices in life have multiplied exponentially during the past decade. We can cruise the Internet, take photos with smart phones, play games on our laptops, scan hundreds channels on our state-of-the-art flat screen TV set, send email with our latest upgrade iPhone, Skype our friends in Italy while scanning our Facebook messages, ad infinitum. We could spend a lifetime reading instruction manuals for electronic toys and household gadgets.

If you are an entrepreneur or telecommuter who has to spend a lot of time working alone, break up your work sessions periodically with conference calls or email sessions.

It's a life of choices. And the problem is there are too many of them. If we are not careful, what we do may not reflect our true values. We must make sure that we don't lose sight of what's really important.

Take that list of people, for instance. To ensure that you will spend adequate time with them, make commitments now. Schedule time in your planner next week or next month for a coffee, luncheon or night on the town. Never end a conversation with a good friend by saying, "Let's get together sometime." Instead, say, "Let's schedule a time when we can get together." Then do it.

4.3 DON'T OVERDOSE ON TECHNOLOGY

Leaders of the future will be those who can master some of the more useful technology that becomes available while maintaining their interpersonal skills. Not only will they be able to work efficiently, they'll be able to relate to other people, negotiate, gain consensus, close deals, network effectively and motivate and inspire others.

Technology is good; but you can have too much of a good thing. Research published in the February, 2008 issue of *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, shows that daily social contacts may boost brain power and cognitive abilities. In a *University of Michigan* study of 3500 people, it was revealed that more time spent chatting with friends was associated with higher scores on memory tests. Interaction with people provides greater brain stimulation than watching a computer monitor or TV set. Technology, on the other hand, encourages multitasking, which in turn leads to stress, anxiety and inefficiency.

Technology writer Danny O'Brien interviewed top achievers and found one thing in common that may account for their increased productivity. They all used some sort low-tech tool, such as a written "To Do" list or a plain paper pad.

It pays to limit technology and maintain balance in your life. A UCLA study found that people who adopted a healthy lifestyle instead of constantly manipulating their BlackBerrys and cell phones, within a matter of weeks, showed improvement in memory scores and reasoning.

You must be careful that technology doesn't become all-consuming and addictive. Don't allow it to play havoc with your priorities. People are more important than things. It's never a waste of time to memorize people's names, for instance. If you don't remember their names, you may be telling them that they are not important to you. All people are important to you. If you have spent your working life in the pursuit of money, it's true that when you're old you can use this money to pay people to care *for* you. But you will never be able to pay people to care *about* you.



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5 DON'T MULTITASK

5.1 STOP OVERLOADING YOUR BRAIN

Don't try to cram too much into a day. I'm sure you have experienced driving along a highway while listening to your car radio or a CD or daydreaming or whatever and passing your turnoff – even though you have taken that route dozens of times before. You may not even remember passing a golf course or going over that bridge. You cannot form memories when your mind is absent. That's one thing multitasking does; it robs us of our memories. And of course it has now been proven that it decreases our efficiency as well. As a Russian proverb says, *if you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one*.

An article appearing in the *Toronto Star*, July 2, 2008, talked about the myth of multitasking. It referred to a psychologist called Rene Marois of *Vanderbilt* University, who used brain scans to track what happens when the brain is forced to respond to several stimuli at once. He found that task switching leads to time lost as the brain determines which task to perform. And psychology professor Russell Podrack of the *University of California* found that multitasking adversely affects learning inasmuch as you cannot retrieve the information as easily.

In fact, multitasking, which is still recommended by some time management experts, is actually unhealthy, inefficient and can be downright dangerous. Working on two or more jobs at the same time reduces the efficiency of each. Researcher David Meyer, PhD., claims that not being able to concentrate on one task for significant periods of time may cost a company as much as 20 to 40 percent in efficiency. I have seen figures as high as 50 percent. This parallels tests conducted in time management workshops where we had students continually switch back and forth between jobs versus completing one job at a time. The total time consumed was always less when each job was completed in turn.

According to Stefan Klein, in his book *The Secret Pulse of Time* (Marlow & Company, 2007) every time you turn your attention to a new problem, you interrupt your train of thought and important information vanishes from your working memory. This is backed up by information from an article in the November, 2007 issue of *American Way* magazine that states that multitasking may also decrease what you can remember later. Brain scan studies reveal that if we do two tasks at the same time, we have only half of our usual brainpower devoted to each. When we multitask, we are only half there for each activity.

People who think they are doing two jobs simultaneously, such as listening on the telephone while proofing and signing letters, are deceiving themselves. The brain cannot effectively perform two tasks at the same time. It either switches rapidly back and forth between one task and the other – or it gives half its attention to each task. Although the brain may only be absent from either task for a fraction of a second, that brief absence could result in a catastrophe. Unfortunately many people think they're the exception. 91 percent of Americans watch TV while they eat, 26 percent admit that they often eat while driving, and 35 percent eat lunch while they're at their desks while reading, working on a computer or making and receiving phone calls. In a 2006 survey conducted by *Basex*, a New York research company, 50 percent said they wrote emails or instant messages during conference calls. *Maybe you are even multitasking as you read this chapter.* It's quite a temptation when there's so many other things to do.

5.2 YOU COULD LOSE MORE THAN MEMORY BY MULTITASKING

The consequences of missing something I write may not be that great. But imagine what a lack of concentration could do if you were driving at high speeds while talking on a smart phone. That fraction of a second could prevent you from stopping in time at a railway crossing or noticing another car about to run a stop sign.

The belief that talking on a smart phone while driving is no more dangerous than listening to the radio or talking to a passenger has been disproved by research. Talking on a phone, whether hands-free or not, is on a par with driving at the legal intoxication limit. The conversation literally pulls your attention away from your driving. Statistics also show that we are four times more likely to be in an accident while talking on a smart phone than otherwise. As Kurt Kleiner, writing in the June 8, 2008 issue of the *Toronto Star* said, *"When we're talking on a cell phone, we're only half there. And that's no place to be when the other half is behind the wheel."*

The more complex the two tasks being worked on simultaneously, the greater the chance of error and the greater the amount of time that is consumed in the transition between the two. Listening to the radio while taking a shower might consume a little more time and cause you to shampoo your hair twice; but nothing serious should result. But reviewing an important proposal while carrying on a heated discussion on the telephone might cause errors that could impact the bottom line of the organization.

In an office environment, the temptation to multitask is tremendous. We need to review last night's e-mail and voice mail, sign documents, make telephone calls, synchronize our PDAs, revise our schedules, answer text messages, print a proposal ad infinitum. It seems the only way to get everything done is to do more than one thing at a time. Ironically, doing so consumes even more of that precious time that we are trying to conserve. How many times have you had to ask someone to repeat what they said because you were reading the paper at the time? That's hardly a timesaver. In addition we are risking errors, sacrificing quality and creating anxiety. Research shows that multitasking increases stress and causes physical ailments such as headaches and stomach aches.

In our zeal to get more things done in less time we are sabotaging our efforts. I suggest you ignore the recommendations to double up on tasks. You don't have to listen to your voice mail while reviewing your e-mail or take reading material to meetings or collate papers while talking on the phone. Instead, identify the priorities and work on them one at a time. Time management is not about doing *more things*; it's about doing more *important* things. Many of the things that we are now attempting to do simultaneously could probably be eliminated altogether. Give your full attention to the important task at hand, and don't be distracted by the trivial many.

It's the *important* things that you will remember.

6 DON'T RUSH NEEDLESSLY

6.1 SLOW IS NOT A BAD WORD

Just as gulping your food and rushing through meals takes the enjoyment out of eating while doing nothing for your health, so rushing through life has its consequences. If you can't remember what you had for dinner last night, you were probably mentally absent at the time. And the same thing applies to life itself. If you rush through life, multitasking and always thinking ahead about the next item on your bottomless "To Do" list, later in life you will wonder where the time went.

Speed is the enemy of time management, not its ally. Life is meant to be savored, not dispensed with as quickly as possible. Slowing down will result in fewer errors, fewer accidents, a healthier lifestyle, improved relationships, and a more enjoyable and memorable life.

Many people are too rushed in the morning to pause for breakfast. Skipping breakfast deprives your brain of the energy it needs to function at its best, according to Dr. Brian Morgan of *Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons*. And Valorie Burton mentions a survey in her book, *How Did I Get So Busy*, that reveals that 58 percent of Americans admit that they skip lunch altogether if they're too busy.

Because we don't make time to eat properly, exercise properly or sleep sufficiently, we are becoming obese. It has become an epidemic. In the U.S. up to a third of Americans are clinically obese. It's interesting to note that children in schools within walking distance of fast food restaurants tend to be obese. 4.5 million Canadians are obese. That's about 20 percent. This becomes one more roadblock to living a longer, healthier and happier life.

It is also essential that we control our use of technological gadgets such as iPhone, BlackBerrys and other PDAs. They were originally supposed to give us more leisure time, but instead they simply make it easier for us to work longer and faster – regardless of where we are. Controlling them by turning them off at a set time each day, such as 6 p.m., will help keep your life in balance, reduce the temptation to multitask, and slow down the pace of life. It will also reduce stress and help us to sleep easier if we're not checking email just before we go to bed. We try to get more done by cutting back on sleep when studies show that after a good night's sleep you get more done, with fewer mistakes, because of your increased ability to concentrate.

6.2 THE DOWNSIDE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology was meant to speed up the completion of tasks, not the behavior of people. We are not machines. It's bad enough trying to keep up with our neighbors, without trying to keep up with our *smart phones*. Don't allow technology to rob you of your creativity, individuality, humanity and peace of mind. Make time for yourself and rid your life of strife. Smart phones are really not that smart. If they were, they wouldn't allow so much meaningless trivia into your life.

The busier you are, the faster time seems to pass, and many people seem to be in a constant state of overload. By using technology indiscriminately, they are putting their lives in high gear, multitasking, responding to crises, and filling their lives with incessant interruptions and trivia. No generation has had such a long lifespan as this current generation, yet a third of Americans claim they do not have enough time. In some respects, all we have done by introducing technology and increasing speed is reduce the time we spend on trivial and low-priority activities so we can spend time on even more trivial and low-priority activities.

For example, washing machines do a wash quicker than when my mother used a scrubbing board; but now we do more washing, have more clothes to wash, wash them more often. Email is faster than writing longhand or typing letters but now we send & receive more messages.

We assumed that one-stop shopping would save time, but with massive superstores, and the amazing variety of products, shopping can actually take longer.

We are driving faster but spending the same amount of time in the car. It is believed that traveling time has been constant since ancient times. We have faster vehicles but longer distances to travel, plus more traffic, more construction and more gridlock. Life in general is being lived at a much faster pace than 50 years ago – or even 20 years ago. We have a love affair with speed.

It borders on the ridiculous. For example, there are evidently five McDonald's restaurants in California that have a system which allows motorists to zip through drive-throughs on toll roads and be billed later. They boast that it cuts 15 seconds off the normal 131 second wait. According to Jay Griffiths, in his book, *A sideways look at time*, in New Jersey there is a church that offers a speeded up sermon, a short hymn and a fast prayer so they can keep the service to 22 minutes or less.

I've also read about drive-through funerals where the deceased is behind a glass window and people can pay their respects as they drive past on the way home from work. And you have no doubt heard of the "one-minute book" series started by Ken Blanchard's "The One-minute manager" back in 1982. Well now they have one-minute bedtime stories – children's stories reduced in length so you don't have to waste too much time with your toddler at bedtime. Check them out at amazon.com.

The average business lunch is down to 36 minutes or less. One article claims the average worker eats lunch in 24 minutes. The expression "lunch hour" is a misnomer. Everyone seems intent on packing more and more into every hour, some even gobbling down fast food as they check email.

According to Matthew Edlund in his book *The Body Clock Advantage*, those who don't rush through the day in a panic, but pace themselves & work efficiently, actually survive longer. That's a greater time management strategy than working more efficiently.

Slow down and savor the moment. It will never pass your way again.

7 WHEREVER YOU ARE, BE THERE

7.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDFULNESS

Gretchen Rubin, in her book *The Happiness Project*, relates her experience of driving home with no recollection of going from point A to point B. She said she is sometimes terrified because she has no recollection of watching the road. This is the result of multitasking, where the second task could be just thinking about something else, being preoccupied with other thoughts. It can be even more terrifying if you consider going through life this way, preoccupied with thoughts of one thing or another and not remembering half of what you did. That's why it's so important for your body and your mind to be in the same place at the same time. Scientists claim that being in the *now* calms the mind and elevates brain function as well as reduces stress. When your mind is rapidly switching from one thought to another, your creativity is at a low.

Some people are thinking of something else when they're eating and afterwards can't even recall what they had eaten or how much. Experts agree that simply being conscious of eating will help people eat more healthfully.

Using an example of driving or walking to work, you might try observing the street names, location of the various stores and service stations, and generally being aware of your surroundings. Be in the moment. Living in the moment can be defined as mindfulness – a state of active, open, intentional attention to the present. By doing so, you will be affecting more than just your time.

According to an article in the December, 2008 issue of *Psychology Today*, mindfulness reduces stress, boosts immune functioning, reduces chronic pain, lowers blood pressure and even helps patients cope with cancer. The article also claims that living in the moment reduces the risk of heart disease and that mindful people are happier, more exuberant, more empathetic, and more secure and have a higher self-esteem. So as dance instructor Jessica Hayden says, "Focus less on what's going on in your mind, and more on what's going on in the room." Pay attention to your immediate experience.

7.2 WRITE IT INTO YOUR MEMORY

Keeping a diary, journal or logbook helps keep you in the moment. Use your planner to record events – even the ones that have already occurred. When you write things down it helps get them into your long-term memory. And even those you do forget, you can bring back into consciousness by reviewing them after the fact. That's why keeping a telephone log (where you make notes while you're on the telephone) keeps you focused on the conversation and helps you recall the information later – even without reading what you had written. It keeps you in the *now*.

A paper planner is a great tool for keeping more of your memories intact and slowing down the perceived passage of time. Not only does the act of writing in the appointments and scheduling the important projects and tasks help transfer them to your long-term memory, reviewing those pages after the fact helps solidify them in your memory. Research shows that thinking or talking about an event immediately after it occurs enhances memory for the event. That's why it's so important for a witness to recall information as soon as possible after the crime.

The greatest loss of memory is in the first hour or so of the event. By reviewing it in spaced intervals, you are fixing it in your memory. You want as much of the present as possible to be retained so you will recall it in the future. I schedule every significant event in my time planner, *even after the fact*. In other words when we spontaneously drop into a restaurant or go to a movie or visit friends, I write the details of that event in my planner when I get home. If it's a restaurant, I take out the receipt and copy the name, address, and telephone number into that block of time, including the names of the people we might have been with at the time. It was unscheduled time; but it becomes scheduled *after the fact*. By reviewing my planner, I am in effect reviewing my life. And I can readily justify this strange habit by the number of times I have retrieved phone numbers of great restaurants we wanted to revisit or to confirm the name of the movie we saw three weeks ago or to get the name of our friend's cousin who attended the dinner.

Someone suggested it might be a good idea to also record each day one thing that we are thankful for. This would reinforce the fact that we should appreciate what we already have. Keeping a diary or journaling forces you to concentrate on the present while recording it for the future.

8 SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

8.1 A MATTER OF CHOICE

The number of choices we have to make on a daily basis has increased exponentially during the past thirty years. It's interesting that no generation has had such a long lifespan and so much leisure time as the current generation; but a third of all Americans report that they do not have enough time (Stefan Klein, *The Secret Pulse of Time*). One of the problems is that we have so many choices of things to do. Another is that we want to do them all.

We have more options today than ever before. And the more we *can* do, the more we *want* to do. The amount of time we have is limited, but our imaginations are unlimited. There are career, family, social and personal activities, self-development, travel, vacations, reading, watching TV, playing with our electronic gadgets, volunteer work, crafts, sports, shopping, exercise, dining out ad infinitum.

The options available for everything from travel to shopping are staggering. Take cars, for instance. As John Mariotti mentions in his book *The Complexity Crisis*, the combinations and permutations of hundreds of options, colors and body styles can lead to millions of different models. No wonder it takes so long to buy a car.

Barry Schwartz, in *The Paradox of Choice*, says he found 85 different varieties & brands of crackers at his local supermarket. He also counted 285 varieties of cookies, including 21 kinds of chocolate chip cookies. There were 275 varieties of cereal, 175 types of tea bags and 175 different salad dressings. A typical supermarket carries more than 30,000 items. And over 20,000 new products hit the shelves every year.

Just down the road from where we stayed at *St. Pete Beach* several winters ago is an ice cream parlor called *Scoops* that advertises 60 flavors. Who needs 60 flavors of ice cream? Two doors down from *Scoops* is a *Twistee Treat* that advertises 66 flavors. And if that's not enough choice, across the street is Larry's that advertises 80 flavors! It takes longer to *choose* the ice cream than it does to eat it. A pancake place in Lakewood Ranch near Sarasota serves 150 types of pancakes.

The Internet and ever expanding technology opens even more options for spending our time. There are over a billion videos to watch on *You Tube* and more than 150 million blogs worldwide. You can choose from about 26 million songs on iTunes. And we are constantly bombarded by advertising messages urging us to do it all.

Vince Poscente, in *The Age of Speed*, referred to a 2006 poll that revealed that only 26 percent of people claiming to be time starved would choose having fewer things to do over having more time to do all the things they currently do. Stefan Klein, in his book *The Secret Pulse of Time*, observed that most people, when faced with a choice between a bigger paycheck and more free time, choose the money. Most people *don't want* to give up anything. And there are more things to do than they have time for. That's why they'll never have enough time to do everything they want to do.

8.2 THE BALANCING ACT

It also explains why most people lack focus and are not as effective as they could be if they simplified their lives. I believe that simplification is going to be one of the next major strategies for balancing lives. By life balance I mean a *blend* of work and personal life that is satisfying to the individual and his or her family or significant others. The line between work and home has become blurred, so I'm not talking about walking away from the job at 4 p.m. and not thinking about work again until 9 a.m. the next day. But work should not interfere with such things as sleep, relationships, health, recreation and family.

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The most obvious sign that your life is out of balance is the amount of time spent on work-related activities. A Canadian Health report (mentioned in the book, *Sleep to be Sexy, Smart & Slim* by Ellen Michaud with Julie Bain) claims that more than a half of all employees take work home, 69 percent check their email from home, 59 percent check voice mail after hours, 30 percent get work-related faxes, and 29 percent keep their cell phones on day and night. As a result, 46 percent feel that this work-related intrusion is a stressor and 44 percent report negative spillover onto their families. And families are supposed to be the most effective buffer to workplace stress. This illustrates that work is no longer a place, but a state of mind. And it's easier to be a workaholic these days.

Eating on the run, taking your BlackBerry to the beach, being consistently late for personal and business events, not having enough time to exercise are all indicators of a lack of balance.

Getting back in balance usually involves regaining control of your time by being proactive instead of reactive, scheduling time for yourself in your planner, simplifying your life, and developing good habits. It may even involve changing jobs, downsizing, moving or whatever. But it's a process, not an event, and could take months or even years. One suggestion to align your life with your values is to make a list of what's really important to you, and then make a list of the things you have to do the next day and compare the two. Most people have too many things on their *To Do list*.

We are complicating our lives with all the stuff we buy and accumulate. Daniel Pink, in his book, *A Whole New Mind*, points out that self-storage, where people store the stuff they no longer have room for at home, is a \$17 billion business. That's larger than the motion picture business. According to the *Self Storage Association*, the number of self-storage facilities had grown about 70 percent in just one decade. And what we don't store, we just throw away. Ciji Ware, in her book, *Rightsizing Your Life*, claims that Americans are known around the world as the major consumers on the planet, generating nearly 200 million tons of household garbage a year. The U.S. spends more on trash bags than 90 other countries spend on *everything*. Think about that. The cost of the *containers* for our waste is greater than the cost of all goods consumed by nearly half of the world's nations.

It's no longer considered a luxury to own a car. But the U.S. now has more cars than drivers. And many purchases are not considered a necessity. Cell phones may be considered a necessity for many. But consumers spend nearly as much on decorative faceplates for their cell phones as they do on the cell phones themselves. And we insist on having the latest model. A statistic from the June 29, 2008 *Toronto Star* indicated that at that time, people in the U.S. were tossing out \$80 million each year in metals alone when they trashed their old cell phones.

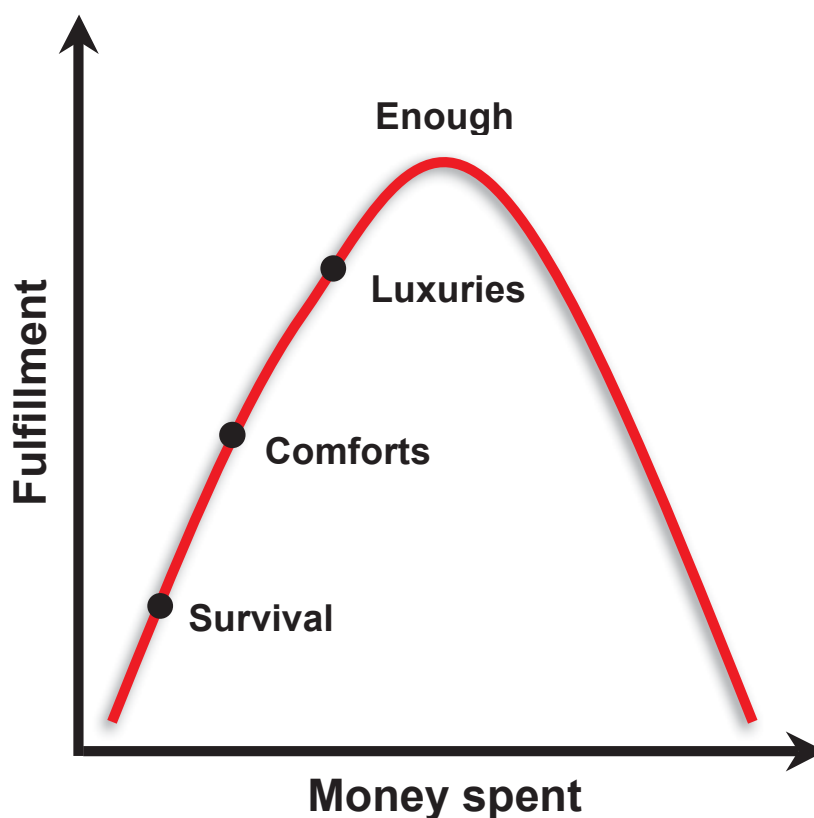
8.3 THE FULFILLMENT CURVE

There's an excellent book called *Your Money or Your Life* by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin that describes a *Fulfillment Curve*. This curve is illustrated below. This curve plots money or possessions or "stuff" along the x-axis, or horizontal axis, and fulfillment or happiness along the y-axis – that's the vertical axis. The more money you have to spend, the greater the degree of fulfillment – up to a point. After fulfillment goes through the survival stage, comforts stage and luxuries stage, it levels off. As you start accumulating more luxuries after the "enough" stage, your degree of fulfillment starts decreasing. In other words, once you have achieved what the authors refer to as "enough," acquiring *more* simply makes you unhappier. It's interesting to note that Daniel Pink also mentions in his book, *A Whole New Mind*, that while living standards have risen steadily decade after decade, person, family and life satisfaction haven't budged.

Material things do consume a lot of our time. People spend their precious non-renewable resource, time, in order to acquire more money and possessions, only to discover that the possessions do little to further their enjoyment of life. In fact, possessions consume even more of this non-renewable resource. Not only does it take time to earn enough money to buy this stuff, it takes time to shop for it, learn how to operate it, maintain it in good working condition, repair it, upgrade it, insure it and use it. If we have to rent public storage, we have to sign a contract, pay rent, buy a lock, take trips back and forth to check on it or add to it, and so on.

It's not surprising that the more we acquire beyond a certain point, the unhappier we get. We are afraid of losing it, breaking it or having it stolen. We frequently have to make payments on it, acquire more space to accommodate it, and worry about keeping the neighborhood kids or the family dog away from it. There also comes a time when we have to figure out how to get rid of it.

The more stuff we have, the greater the responsibility we have and the more opportunity there is for worry, anxiety and stress. It also complicates our life, causes clutter and distracts us from our life purpose. This complexity can extend to our business as well, as indicated previously. We can have too much inventory, too many receivables, too broad a range of products, too many styles, types, channels of distribution and so on. The years produce clutter and complexity that hinder goal achievement and profits. Just like the application of the 80–20 Rule, simplification is a key time management strategy.



From the standpoints of cost, stress and time management, you should simplify your life as much as possible. The more stuff you own, the more time it demands. Most of us can get rid of half our possessions and never miss them. We could also rid ourselves of many of the activities in which we are involved and reduce the amount of time being spent on the remaining activities.

Buy a bigger house and it may provide more space and comfort, but it also provides a larger mortgage, more taxes, a greater fear of robbery, more housework and more expenses. It does not necessarily make you happier.

Just by keeping track of their spending, many people are able to cut costs by 20 percent by simply reducing any spending that is obviously a waste. You spend your life earning money. Waste that money and you are wasting your life.

Simplifying your personal life does not necessarily mean reducing your working hours, although it could involve that as well. It means freeing up more time and energy to pursue your personal goals and working on activities that you enjoy, and in the process, slowing down the pace of life. One of the secrets to recall is to keep your life significant but simple.

9 EXERCISE YOUR BODY AND YOUR BRAIN

9.1 KEEPING FIT INCLUDES THE BRAIN

A healthy body will certainly help extend your lifespan – providing more life goals or milestones to recall as you get older. The same is true for the brain. If you suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's, memories may literally disappear. So in this and the next chapter, I will cover the importance of exercise and sleep – to activities being threatened by today's pace of life.

Although time management has been touted as the most important resource, it is your health that should be your priority. And although a long life is desirable, you don't want to outlive your brain. So your body and your brain should be exercised and kept in good health.

In the 1800s, life expectancy was about 40 years. By 2012 it was about 78 for men and 83 for women, dropping slightly in 2014 to about 76 for men and 81 for women. Better health care and living conditions have proven to be great time management strategies. You can experience and accomplish a lot more with another ten years or so in which to do it.

But with an increase in lifespan generally comes a loss of mental function and mobility as we grow older. Although physical fitness remains important, it is equally important to keep your brain in shape as well. Fortunately it is no longer believed that the brain becomes fully developed and then stays that way. It can continue to grow new cells and new connections, rewire itself, and even have other areas of the brain take over if one area happens to be damaged.

If you want to fully take advantage of your increased lifespan, keep your brain fit. You can do that with physical and mental exercise, adequate sleep, proper diet, and lifelong learning. We hear a lot about diet when it involves weight control or diabetes or blood pressure or cancer or dozens of other possible afflictions. But we don't hear nearly as much about maintaining brain health through proper nutrition. The three-pound mass of nerve cells and supporting tissues that we call the brain is so complicated with its 100 billion neurons, or active brain cells, that it is still not fully understood. But it is known that brain health is linked to proper diet as well as the other things such as a physically active lifestyle, stress management and adequate sleep. According to Dr Mehmet Oz, foods that are good for your brain include bananas, blueberries, hemp seed and apple juice. Omega 3 fatty acids are of particular importance.

You can read about diet or visit a naturopath for recommended supplements. One of the things I take is EPA, Omega-3 fish oil since it presumably helps keep cell membranes in the brain flexible and one-third of that is polyunsaturated fatty acids. There's an excellent book called *Fantastic Voyage: The Science Behind Radical Life Extension*, by Ray Kurzweil & Terry Grossman, that devotes a chapter or two to brain health.

9.2 KEEPING YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY

Until recently the importance of the brain seems to have been overlooked. This is where time is measured and memories are stored. With life expectancy increasing, a lot of us have healthy bodies but unhealthy brains. It is estimated that 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and it is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. In Canada, 500,000 Canadians have Alzheimer's disease, and within another generation, this figure is expected to more than double.

There are now gyms for the brain. People pay \$60 per month to work out on computers loaded with "mental fitness" software. There are classes in brain nutrition and cognitive training. In the past five years, more than 700 retirement communities have added computerized brain fitness centers. People spent 80 million dollars in 2008 on mental fitness, and this has been increasing each year. The industry is based on a relatively new scientific discovery – neuroplasticity – the brain's ability to rewire itself by creating neural connections in response to mental activity.

I predict there will be an even greater emphasis on brain health in the future because it is obvious we are in many cases outliving our brains. There are ongoing courses at many colleges and universities and many are directed specifically to seniors. For example, in Nova Scotia, Canada there is a *Seniors College Association of Nova Scotia* offering courses for a nominal fee to seniors over 55. Courses are held in a variety of subjects at various towns, churches and community centres throughout the province.

Time management, stress management and health management are merging disciplines. You cannot focus on one and ignore the others. People who lose control of their time usually end up sacrificing exercise, regular medical checkups, leisure activities, relaxation, and regular eating habits and so on. Keeping well is easier and more time effective than *getting* well.

The most effective way of keeping your brain healthy is through physical exercise, not mental exercise. Physical exercise sends more blood to the brain and with more blood comes more oxygen. It also releases a bunch of other things like nutrients, hormones and cleansing agents. It also stimulates the production of something called BDNF which is important in the growth of new neurons. The brain is only 2 percent of our body weight but consumes 20 percent of the oxygen we take in.

People who exercise regularly in middle-age are only one third as likely to get Alzheimer's disease in their seventies as those who don't exercise. So lead an active lifestyle. That reminds me of a cartoon I saw recently. It showed a doctor talking to a patient, with the caption, "*What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?*"

Healthy activities such as exercise, relaxation and leisure time should be scheduled in your planner if necessary, along with your priorities and major activities and events. If you don't, the time in your planner may become filled with work-related activities and you may spiral out of control.

10 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

10.1 THE DANGERS OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Sleep not only keeps you healthy, it also impacts both learning and memory. If you are sleep deprived, you're unable to focus attention optimally on your projects, goals and events. This not only prevents efficient learning, it also prevents you from getting the information into long-term memory. Research suggests that memory consolidation takes place during sleep. And as mentioned earlier, if you have fewer memories to recall, your perception of previous years will be shortened.

A CBS "60 Minutes" documentary aired on March 16, 2008, reported that four nights without sufficient deep sleep affects more than just performance, judgment and memory. It also presents a risk factor for diabetes. One of the interviewees commented that diabetes was now an epidemic. In fact sleep researchers were attributing some of the obesity problem being experienced in North America to sleep deprivation. Evidently lack of sleep makes us hungry and we overeat.

John Medina, in his book, *Brain Rules*, illustrates how the lack of sleep affects learning. He recited a study that showed if an "A" student who was used to scoring in the top 10 percent of everything, was allowed just seven hours of sleep on weekdays, and about 40 minutes more on weekends, she will begin to score in the bottom nine percent of non-sleep-deprived individuals. Medina emphasizes that loss of sleep affects learning as well as cognitive skills. He also described a study of soldiers operating complex military hardware. A loss of one night's sleep resulted in a 30 percent loss of cognitive skill and a corresponding drop in performance.

Dr. Mike Dow, in his book, *Brain Fog Fix*, quoting CDC statistics, says that 50 million Americans report they are not getting enough sleep. But sleeping pills are not the answer. An article in *Scientific American*, (January/February, 2016 issue) states that 8.5 million Americans take prescription sleep aids, which have a range of side effects, including daytime drowsiness, hallucinations and sleep-eating. One study found that regular sleeping pill users were 4.6 times likelier to die prematurely.

Researchers at Stanford University have found that the light from your computer monitor right before bed is enough to reset your whole wake/sleep cycle – and postpone the onset of sleepiness by three hours. The optimal amount of sleep varies from individual to individual, but generally it's between 7 and 8 hours per night. When you cut back on sleep, you are fighting your biological clock – which is the topic we will be discussing in the next chapter.

Dr. Mehmet Oz claims that about 70 million Americans don't get a good night's sleep. An actual nationwide survey from the *National Sleep Foundation* showed that 63 million people, one third of the population, are exhausted during the day, and 22 million working days a year are lost due to the increased incidence of colds alone. Dr. Carlos Schank, an expert on sleep disorders at *North Western Hospital*, said that nightfall used to make us peaceful and tired. Now it seems we have to get that last email off before we go to bed. And researchers at *Stanford University* have found that the light from your monitor right

10.2 AIM FOR 7 TO 8 HOURS SLEEP A NIGHT

Don't sacrifice sleep in order to get more things done. That's when the new things you have learned are being processed and memories are being organized and stored. Sleepless brains don't perform well. If you don't get enough sleep, you become dysfunctional. Just as the old example of pausing to sharpen the axe will allow you to cut more logs in less time, so will taking time to sleep properly increase your personal productivity. According to the *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety*, fatigue reduces the ability to make decisions and complete complex tasks. They say that long hours on the job and they claim that long hours on the job and inadequate rest are factors.

For many people, sleep is considered a waste of time. Largely as a result of overwork, the average sleep time in the U.S. dropped 20 percent during the twentieth century, according to Jay Griffiths in his book, *A Sideways look at Time*. People sacrifice sleep to get more done when the reverse is true. They get more done when they get more sleep. Yet in my lifetime, the average amount of sleep people get has been reduced from over 8 hours a night to only 6.7 hours a night. Also, working night shifts and flying across time zones is also known to disrupt our biological clock. It could take days to adapt to a new schedule.

The *National Sleep Foundation's* 2008 poll showed that almost one-third of North American adults who worked at least 30 hours a week have fallen asleep on the job or become extremely drowsy on the job, an indication that they're on the verge of sleep deprivation. Losing another hour when *Daylight Saving Time* kicks in could be the last straw. Studies show that people are more likely to get into car accidents immediately after having to set their clocks forward in the spring.

Data studied by the *Insurance Corporation of British Columbia* from 2003 to 2007 revealed that there had been an average of 700 crash accidents on the Monday following the time switch compared with 650 the Monday before – an increase of 7 percent. Quoting B.C. psychologist Stanley Coren on sleep deprivation (Toronto Star, March 12, 2009), “Your brain goes into a state of what we call microsleep that can last from 10 seconds to one minute.” He goes on to say, “*Sleep deprivation makes you clumsy, stupid, unhappy and dead.*”

If you want to live longer and healthier with your memories still intact, treat a good night’s sleep as a priority that takes precedence over any project no matter how important. It was found that healthy 30-year olds, after six days of only four hours sleep per night, had the body chemistry of 60-year olds. It took about a week to get back to normal.

Don’t mess with sleep or you’re messing with your mind. And when you mess with your mind, you’re messing with your memory, which in turn messes with your perception of the passage of time. For more information on using sleep to increase the quality and quantity of time in your life, refer to my ebook, *Sleep: a time management strategy*, published by bookboon.com.

11 FOLLOW YOUR BIOLOGICAL CLOCK

11.1 DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY

Our brain has an accurate biological clock. The March, 2008 issue of *Scientific American Mind* states that even when deprived of external time cues, people will complete the cycle of sleeping, waking and eating on a somewhat regular cycle.

For example, the book *The Secret Pulse of Time*, by Stefan Klein, relates the case of a French geologist who lived in a dark cave for 61 days. He communicated regularly with the outside world. Although he soon lost all sense of time, and day and night were the same to him, his biological clock kept him going to sleep, rising and eating pretty well on schedule.

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Our biological clock knows a lot more about our most productive times, energy levels and low points than the clock on the wall. We would be more productive if we followed our biological clock rather than the man-made one, and ate when we were hungry and slept when we were tired – instead of pumping ourselves full of coffee and burning the midnight oil. During sleep there is a replenishment of cells needed for a healthy immune system.

Studies were done in schools to adapt hours to match the biological clocks of adolescents. In the U.S., school starting times were changed from 8 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. and in some cases to 9:40 a.m.. The studies in U.S. late-start schools report less student depression, fewer dropouts, less absenteeism, and better scoring grades.

A pilot project started in the fall of 2009 in one of the Toronto, Canada high schools. They shifted the entire school day so classes don't start until 10 a.m. and close at 4:13 p.m. This acknowledges the latest research showing that once puberty hits, the brain is wired to go to bed late and sleep in. It also hoped to take advantage of optimal learning time, which is late morning.

A follow-up in September, 2014, revealed that the school, *Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute*, actually changed the hours to a 10 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. school day, with extracurricular activities starting at 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. instead of the usual 7 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. During the last two years, according to principle Jennifer Chan, students are arriving more alert, energetic and on time with higher scholastic achievement overall.

Everyone's internal clock is not set the same. Generally, teenagers are night owls and don't get sleepy until after the rest of us. Needless to say they do not operate on all cylinders early in the day. Senior citizens are the opposite, being early risers. This is obviously recognized in Florida since it is the home of the "early bird" specials.

11.2 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR HIGH ENERGY TIMES

When time management experts tell you to get up an hour earlier and get a head start on the day, this may not be good advice. Researchers in the field of chrono-biology – the study of the body's natural rhythms and cycles tell us that could be counterproductive. It depends upon whether you are a morning person or a *night person*. And also what is meant by *earlier*. If it's before 6 a.m., forget it, according to researchers. In general, that's the time we're least alert. Our ability to think clearly and react quickly is at its lowest point between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.

The Secrets Our Body Clocks Reveal by Susan Perry and Jim Dawson reveal some interesting information on how our internal clocks operate. For instance, most of us reach our peak of alertness around noon. So perhaps delaying lunch until 12:30 or 1:00 p.m. might capitalize on our most productive period. But there's a sudden drop in the early afternoon that lasts until about 3:00 p.m., at which time our mental alertness once again begins to rise. There seems to be a good reason for the early afternoon siesta. Not good enough a reason to convince the boss, but we could schedule the mundane, low-energy tasks for that part of the day. If you are a *morning person* this early afternoon sag will probably be more evident.

According to the authors, your short-term memory is best during the morning hours, so studying for a test that morning or reviewing notes of a meeting would be a good idea. But long-term memory is best in the afternoon, so that's the time to study material for the following week – or for that training session for the new employee. How well you remember things depends on when you *learn* them, not when you recall them.

Applied to meetings, mornings are a great time for creative sessions or meetings where tough decisions must be made. But don't let them run into the early afternoon doldrums.

Everyone's clock is unique, and some may peak at 11 a.m. instead of 12 noon, but even extreme *morning people* and extreme *night people* are no greater than 2 hours apart with their circadian cycles. *Morning people* should do all their heavy thinking and creative work in the morning and reserve the late afternoons for the routine. *Night people*, although similarly alert at 11 a.m., do not experience the same late afternoon sag.

Morning people, according to Perry and Dawson, tend to have less flexible circadian rhythms so they benefit more from a structured daily routine. You could actually track your alertness and body temperature to determine how much of a *morning person* you really are. A morning person will usually have a temperature that rises fairly sharply in the morning, reaches a plateau by early afternoon, and begins its descent before 8:00 p.m. in the evening. Actually, only 20 percent of people are true *early birds* or *larks*, and only 10 percent are owls and the rest are somewhere in between according to John Medina, in his book, *Brain Rules*.

Or more simply, reflect on your behavior. If you go to bed early and wake up early, jump out of bed in the morning raring to go, do your best work early in the day and wake up just before your alarm goes off every morning, you are probably a morning person.

If you don't already know the prime hours of your own biological clock, Phyllis Kaufman and Arnold Corrigan, in their book, *How to Use Your Time Wisely*, suggest the following test: try a different task, such as a crossword puzzle, at different times during the day – when you first get up, at 10 a.m., at noon, 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m. Then decide when you found the puzzle easiest.

You could carry out a similar test by performing the same work-related task at different times during the day. Once you have a handle on the time of day your powers of concentration are at their peak, don't waste this time or allow it to be stolen by others.

Don't expect everyone else to be the same as you. These biological rhythms are innate, and we should organize our lives so as to work with them, not against them. For more information on how to work with your biological clock, refer to my ebook, *Manage your personal energy*, published by Bookboon.com.

12 CONTROL YOUR OWN LIFE

12.1 LACK OF CONTROL GIVES STRESS A FOOTHOLD

People have a natural inclination to control events and make things happen. Losing control makes them unhappy and stressed. Stress can induce the release of cortisol, and excess cortisol impairs function in the prefrontal cortex – an emotional learning center that helps regulate “executive” functions such as planning, reasoning and impulse control. Recent evidence indicates that the prefrontal cortex also stores short-term memories.

Here’s an example of how losing control can affect your health. In a nursing home, the elderly residents were given a houseplant. Half of them were told they were to control the care and feeding of the plant while the other half were told that someone on staff would look after the plant. Within 6 months, 30 percent of the residents in the low control group had died, compared with only 15 percent of those who were in control. (*Stumbling on Happiness* by Daniel Gilbert). Another study had student volunteers visit nursing home residents on a regular basis. Some residents were allowed to decide when the student was to come in and how long he or she stayed. The others were not given that option. The student just popped in. After 2 months, residents with control were happier, healthier, more active, and taking fewer medications than those in the low control group.

Gaining control can have a positive impact on one’s health and well being. But when the researchers had finished their study and all visits stopped, there were more deaths among the high control group than the low control group, showing that losing control once you’ve had it it can be worse than never having had control in the first place. I relate this to disorganized people whose houses or offices are in a shambles – who are happier than organized people whose lives are disrupted by sudden changes in environment, workload, and interruptions etc. that move them into a disorganized state.

Stress is at an all-time high. *National Safety Council* estimates that job stress causes a million Americans to miss work every day, costing the economy over \$150 billion annually. Statistics Canada reports that stress cost Canada \$33 billion per year. Stress as a reason for absence from work increased 316% since 1995.

One time saving strategy that dwarfs all others, is to live longer and healthier. For some reason, this isn’t emphasized in most time management programs. We seem to be too interested in shaving ten minutes from the length of a meeting or reducing interruptions by five percent. Extending your life by ten years is far more important in my opinion.

Those who don't rush through the day in a panic, but pace themselves and work efficiently, actually survive longer according to Matthew Edlund, author of *The Body Clock Advantage*. These people usually have routines for going to bed and rising at the same times every day, exercise and eating. They control their work versus letting their work determine when they go home, go to bed or exercise.

Mental clutter is just as stressful as physical clutter. Writing things down and having a plan to get them done unclutters your mind, relieves anxiety, eliminates the fear of forgetting and makes you feel better.

Ken Blanchard in the book, *The One Minute Manager Balances Life & Work*, made the comment that we should never put our health at risk in order to gain more money. Otherwise, he claimed, in later years we'll be spending even more money in an attempt to regain our health.

Other authors also have stated that losing control affects health and productivity. Stefan Klein, for instance, in his book *The Secret Pulse of Time*, said that stress originates in a surrender of control. In my opinion that's one reason that cancer is so deadly. Being told that you have cancer – or even worse, also being told that you have only a few months or years to live, is devastatingly stressful. You immediately feel helpless. People become so preoccupied with their uncertain future that they find it difficult to cope with everyday life. And it's precisely this type of chronic stress that causes a weakness of their immune system. And the immune system is unable to fight the cancer. It's a vicious cycle. Finding out you have cancer causes stress. Stress weakens the immune system. And the immune system is too weak to fight the cancer.

I've had personal experience with this situation since both my wife and I had cancer. My wife's ovarian cancer, having been diagnosed only after it had already metastasized to other organs in the abdominal cavity, had a poor prognosis – five years at the most. But doing everything we could to support the immune system, from supplements and mistletoe extract injections to vitamin C infusions, she was able to lead an active life for over ten years. I believe that many cancer survivors are survivors because they take control of the situation, regardless of the means they use to do that. Unfortunately, I can't quote any clinical proof to back this up; but the more we learn about the interaction of the body, mind and spirit, the more holistic medicine makes sense. And we must at least participate in our own treatment – because a lack of control causes stress.

We do know that attitude can make a big difference. Dr. Edward Creagan in his book *How Not to Be My Patient* refers to research indicating that pessimists have a 19 percent shorter lifespan than optimists. Bernie Siegel in his book *Love, Medicine and Miracles* mentions research that reported a ten-year survival rate of 75 percent among cancer patients who reacted to the diagnosis with a fighting spirit, compared with a 22 percent survival rate among those who saw their situation as hopeless.

Time management, stress management and health management are merging disciplines. You cannot focus on one and ignore the others. People who lose control of their time usually end up sacrificing exercise, regular medical checkups, leisure activities, relaxation, and regular eating habits and so on. *Keeping* well is easier and more time effective than *getting* well.

Healthy activities such as exercise, relaxation and leisure time should be scheduled in your planner if necessary, along with your priorities and major activities and events. If you don't, the time in your planner may become filled with work-related activities and you may spiral out of control.

13 LIVING LONGER AS A TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

13.1 AGE IS A STATE OF MIND

How many times have you heard time management speakers, seminar leaders and authors tell you that if you were to become more efficient through the use of technology and other time savers that you could free up an hour or more per day for the rest of your life? “That means that over a sixty year period, you could gain the equivalent of almost two years! Think what you could get done with an extra two years!”

Sorry, I don’t buy it. Utilize every spare minute, short change your family and friends, multitask even if it puts you under stress and damages your health, and you’ll gain the *equivalent* of two years? Wouldn’t it be easier to simply live two years longer, be healthier in the process, and enjoy two more *actual* years of what life has to offer? You don’t have to be old and decrepit at 85. Take a holistic approach to time management as we have been discussing in this book, and you will probably live a lot longer. Even if you don’t, you will probably have enjoyed life a lot more in the process, and will have remembered a lot more of it in retrospect.

Sixty-five is no longer considered old. That’s the age you qualify for medicare and may begin collecting old age security. It’s still the age some people retire or are forced to retire from their company. But from a medical or health standpoint, 65 means very little. This 65 nonsense started in Germany back in 1889 when legislation provided for a pension at age 70, later reduced to 65. Of course the average life expectancy at that time was only 45, so it wasn’t such a generous piece of legislation after all. The U.S. adopted 65 for their social security payments in 1935. Anyway, it’s a little outdated and you’re not generally considered to be old until you’re over 70, at which time you might merit the term “senior citizen” or the more euphemistic “older adult.”

Many people start deteriorating mentally, physically and emotionally because they have bought into this fable that you should retire or slow down at 65. If you are self-actualizing at your job, there’s no reason you should have to retire. If the life expectancy were still 45, it might make sense, but with life expectancy in the eighties, it no longer makes sense. I’m over 80 at the time of writing this, and although I may play more golf and take more time off work, I’m far from being retired. The main reason people retire early, according to Ken Dychtwald, in his book *The Age Wave*, is first, because they are tired of doing what they do, second because their work schedules are all or nothing – there is no chance of cutting back – and third, because the work is too physically demanding and less intellectually stimulating.

13.2 IF YOU RETIRE, RETIRE TO SOMETHING

As Roizen and Oz say in their book, *You Staying Young*, if you retire, fine, but find a way to continue working, either as a volunteer or for pay, at something you enjoy. It will help you stay active physically and mentally, give you a lifelong sense of purpose, and help you maintain the social ties that are so necessary for stress management.

There are no guarantees in life. There is no such thing as a gene that is responsible for aging, although scientists believe they have found one that is responsible for the aging of skin. But genes do play some role. If your parents lived to be 100, you have a greater chance of living to a ripe old age than if they had both died in their sixties. But your genes only determine 20 to 50 percent of how long you will be alive.

There are three parts of the world where people have a greater chance to live to be 100: Sardinia, Okinawa and Costa Rica. In each of these areas, people have found ways to cope with stress. The communities have strong traditions of walking, building family strengths, playing with kids, and being active. And there's no such thing as retirement.

Your chronological age is your age in years, but what really matters is your biological age, which is an estimate of your well-being and general health compared to others your age. If you want to check your biological age, go to <https://auth.doctoroz.com/realage>. At the time of writing this, I took this rather extensive test online. My results showed that with an actual age of 81.7 and a “real” age of 76.2, I had gained 5.5 years of life. At the least it makes me feel good, and motivates me to continue with an active lifestyle. What you eat, your attitude, your current health, and dozens of other factors all have a bearing on how you age.

Ever heard of antioxidants? Everyone seems to be promoting them in one form or another. Even if they don't help, just thinking they help could be a factor since the body-mind connection is so powerful. In fact 30 to 40 percent of people taking a placebo for depression, pain or arthritis will feel better. (*Real Truth about Aging*) Our attitude and outlook have a bearing on the occurrence of illness. As I mentioned before, pessimists die, on average, eight years younger than people who have a positive attitude (*How Not to be My Patient*).

13.3 PRODUCTIVITY IS NOT AGE-RELATED

You can be productive at any age. Ronald Reagan, the oldest U.S. president when inaugurated, served two terms and lived to be 93. Winston Churchill became prime minister of Great Britain at age 65. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., became a U.S. Supreme Court Justice at age 61 and served until he was 92. Pablo Picasso continued painting until his death at 92. Bob Hope was still entertaining in his late eighties and lived to be 100. George Burns, was still making people laugh in his nineties, and also lived to be close to 100. Grandma Moses turned to oil painting at age 78, and continued until her death at 101. At 71, Michelangelo was appointed chief architect of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. I believe he held the position until he died at 89. George Bernard Shaw wrote *Farfetched Fables* when he was 93. Arthur Rubenstein performed at Carnegie Hall at 90. At 100, George Abbott brought a revival of his first hit, *Broadway*, to the stage. At 97, Art Linkletter, until recently at least, was giving over 70 lectures per year. There is no shortage of examples of people who were healthy and productive well into their nineties. One study of high achievers revealed that 65% of their accomplishments were attained after age 60.

The author of *Age Wave*, tells a story about Warren Buffett, the richest person in the world, when he was asked how he felt about the fact that Rose Blumkin, the chairperson of one of his companies, *Furniture Mart*, had just turned 94. Buffett replied, "She is clearly gathering speed and may well reach her full potential in another five or ten years. Therefore I've persuaded the board to scrap our mandatory-retirement-at-100 policy."

It is possible to live a happy and productive life in your eighties and nineties. But it requires planning and strategic living. And it certainly helps to have good genes and a little luck. Not all seniors have accumulated a comfortable nest egg, are healthy, and have a zest for life.

If I were to write a list of tips for the elderly, I would include such things as:

Avoid multitasking. Finish one job before starting another.

Write things down. Keep a journal. Write notes to yourself.

Organize your environment, put structure in your life, and develop a few routines.

Keep a paper planner updated. Record every appointment, activity or commitment as they are confirmed.

Keep a photo album with names of friends and relatives clearly marked.

Take an afternoon nap – around 3 p.m. if possible.

Have a place for everything, and return it to that place after use.

Avoid caffeine at bedtime.

Finish your walk at least two hours before bedtime.

Get up the same time every morning.

Keep practicing those skills you don't want to lose. Habits are helpful as you get older.

Get involved in associations, causes, volunteer groups, travel.

Associate with younger people.

Keep your mind active by doing crossword puzzles, reading, playing games.

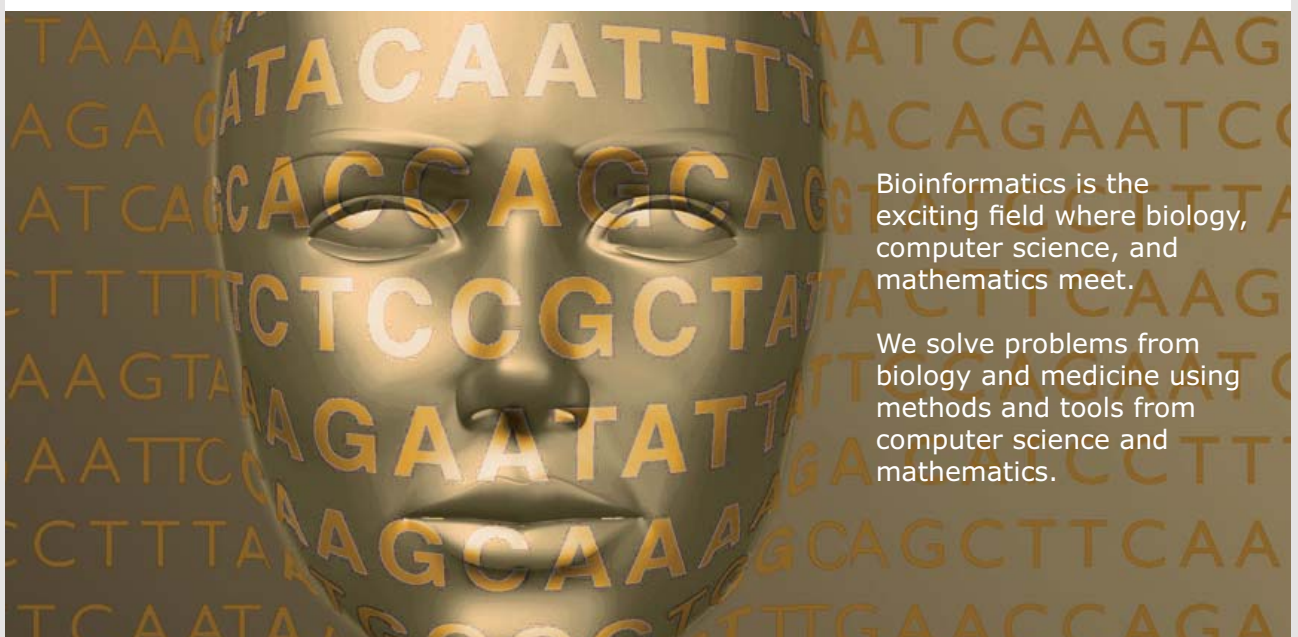
Exercise your body as well as your mind.

I think the above list is good advice for anyone, young or old; but when you *are* old you normally have a greater degree of independence and you believe you have the right to assert it. So if you want to take a nap in the afternoon (which will surely increase your energy level and productivity afterwards) you can do so with no feelings of guilt.

Meanwhile your grandchildren will be busy juggling jobs, multitasking, and being bombarded by electronic stimuli, trying to cope with their work-induced ADHD and wrestling with your latest comment that life is a journey, not a destination.



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14 AN EMERGING PRIORITY

14.1 DON'T BE SEDUCED BY TECHNOLOGY

We are indeed in the age of speed. And it's technology that has helped bring us here. We used to be able to leave our office and transition into our personal world consisting of family, friends and leisure time. Now we *are* the office. Work is no longer a place that you travel to and from; it is a state of mind. Our smart phones hold more information than all the filing cabinets in the entire company, and additional information from all over the world is just a finger tap away.

Some people believe they are still in complete control of their lives; but in most cases, the opposite is true. They are being controlled by technology. You can't say you are in control when you sleep with your BlackBerry, check email on your smart phone after every golf shot or spend 30 hours per week surfing the Internet.

You know something must be wrong when companies design 12-step programs to tackle email addiction or when psychiatric investigators in South Korea find that 20 percent of Internet-addicted children and teens end up with relatively severe ADHD symptoms or when people report a loss of energy and a sense of depletion after a marathon session with their TV or computer.

We are seduced into buying the latest gadget, and considered to be behind the times if we still use a land line in the office or a paper planner for our planning. TV, itself addictive, glorifies video games, and by 2006, approximately 145 million people were playing video or computer games. According to Dr. Gary Small and Gigi Vorgan, in their *book iBrain*, players of one game spent an average of 22 hours per week at it. The average young person's brain is exposed to 8 hours of technology each day. If you only get around to reading only book out of the many that I have mentioned, read *iBrain: surviving the technological alteration of the modern mind*. Our brains are literally being rewired by technology. One study of taxi drivers revealed they had a much larger posterior hippocampus than other men with a similar profile who did not drive for a living. That part of the hippocampus is responsible for a person's navigational skills.

Indications are that our social skills are affected as well as our ability to focus, academic achievement and reasoning ability. There is also indication that all this multitasking leads to attention deficit traits and a loss in working memory. Physical health is affected as well. Video games have been found to increase blood pressure and heart rate and activate the stress response. The more time people spend on digital technology, the less they exercise. Research also indicates that extensive video gaming makes youngsters more aggressive and desensitizes them to violence.

Are you addicted? Do you check your email first thing in the morning, even before getting dressed or brushing your teeth? Do you take your BlackBerry to the beach or keep your cell phone turned on in meetings and in church? Do you flip through a hundred or more channels desperately searching for a reason to remain in front of your TV set? When you are walking, is at least one ear blocked most of the time with earphones or an earpiece?

14.2 MERGE HIGH-TECH WITH HIGH-TOUCH

There is a cost to everything. Technology is great. Unfortunately many of us become addicted to it, whether that is surfing the Internet, playing video games, or constantly text messaging or checking email. We must heed the admonition “everything in moderation” and maintain some semblance of balance in our lives. Technology can improve cognitive performance as well as save time; but as the authors of *iBrain* point out, in excess it can keep us from being responsive to the real world around us.

Dr. Edward Hallowell, a psychiatrist in Sudbury, Mass., and author of several books on ADD/ADHD, including *Driven to Distraction and Delivered from Distraction*, sees a lot of patients wrapped up in this multitasking mania. Over the past decade he has seen a tenfold increase in the number of patients showing up with symptoms closely resembling ADD, but of the work-induced variety. They were irritable, their productivity was declining, they couldn't get organized, they were making fast, off the cuff, decisions – all because they felt pressured to get things done quickly. He gave the condition a name – *Attention Deficit Trait* (ADT).

I'm not saying we should throw away our smart phones and turn our backs on technology; but I am saying we should control it. And we should not throw away our paper and pen either. When people ask me whether a BlackBerry or an iPhone is better than a paper planner, I wince. They would never ask me if they should throw away their sink because they bought an electric dishwasher. Both have their uses. We still refuse to wash our vegetables in the electric dishwasher, and I still refuse to do my weekly planning in a BlackBerry or iPhone for the reasons mentioned in this book. For information on controlling technology, refer to my ebook, *Managing the use of technology*, published by Bookboon.com.

14.3 LEAVE TIME FOR CREATIVITY

For years, time management experts, including myself, have been showing people ways to utilize idle time. We had *never* entirely succeeded until the electronic handheld devices such as smart phones came on the scene. Now some of us realize that we have made a big mistake. People should never eliminate idle time. That's creative time. That's *thinking* time. When a New York Times reporter interviewed several winners of the MacArthur "genius" grants, most said they kept cell phones and iPods turned off when in transit so they could use the downtime for *thinking*. That's what most people are lacking. We need time for creativity. It's called blue-skying. Blue-skying could be simply staring at the sky or watching steam rise from your coffee.

Michael Gleb, author of *How to Think Like Leonardo daVinci*, asked the question "Where are you when you get your best ideas?" The answer was seldom "At work." It was usually while walking, taking a shower, listening to music or some other non-work related activity. Walking with an iPod feeding into your ear or text messaging until a meeting starts or making calls on your smart phone while in a line-up, stifles creativity.

One indication that you are not getting enough time to be creative is an affliction called *thinksomnia*. Because you're so busy and preoccupied all day, the only time you get to think about anything is at night just before you fall asleep. That's when the ideas pop into your head and you end up thinking about them – to the point that you can't get to sleep. That's called *thinksomnia*. That's a new word, by the way, and you can find its source by doing a Google search on it. But it's a word that should be inserted into our everyday vocabulary.

I recommend to my clients that at least 10 percent of their day should be left free for thinking. Why the sudden emphasis on thinking, blue-skying or creativity? Because not only will it determine our success as individuals and assure the success of our companies, it will affect the future of our nation. We had better make time for creativity since everything else is being outsourced to other countries. For example, in 2003 about 25,000 U.S. tax returns were done in India. In 2008, it was 400,000. There's very little creative work needed for a tax return. (*The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman) In some hospitals, radiologists are outsourcing reading of CAT scans to doctors in India and Australia. Also call centers, customer service, and tech assistance – even tracing lost luggage or hotel reservations. We can't afford to short-change our creativity – which we're doing in this age of speed.

Dan Miller, in his book, *No more dreaded Mondays*, says “*In today's arena, creativity may be more of an asset than competence.*”

BlackBerrys, smart phones and other PDAs are efficient beyond *imagination*. Unfortunately it's the imagination that is the key to successful ventures. And smart phones are just plain stupid when it comes to creativity. What this world needs is more doodle pads and fewer keypads.

Don't apologize for scheduling in a paper planner or drawing mind maps on a scratch pad or scribbling an idea on an index card. When everything else has been outsourced, creativity will be the precious gold of the future.

15 EPILOGUE

It has been nearly forty-five years since I presented my first time management seminar to an enthusiastic group of young managers. They were anxious to improve their personal productivity and eagerly took notes and absorbed everything I told them, from getting up an hour earlier in the morning to making use of the final ten minutes of the workday.

We didn't have laptops or smart phones or iPods or iPads in those days, but I was able to suggest that a pocket recorder go with them in their car, and that they should have a "waiting kit" to utilize any idle time in waiting rooms or line-ups. I told them how to cut meeting time in half, intercept unscheduled visitors, avoid non-productive phone calls, and reduce socializing during office hours.

I've learned a lot in forty-five years. I wish I could find those same managers and apologize for telling them never to waste time. Time is life. And life is too precious *not to waste*. Whether that makes sense or not depends on your definition of waste. To waste time used to mean to avoid non-productive time such as conversations at the water cooler, or joking around at the start of a meeting, or socializing during a business call. And to many people it still means that.

Now, I don't believe those things are a waste of time. When you chat with customers in a coffee shop or help someone struggling to put groceries in their car or offer assistance to a stalled motorist, you are not wasting time, you are participating in life. When you spend a lunch hour doing crossword puzzles or watch a baseball game on TV at night or bounce a tennis ball off the garage door for ten minutes before leaving for the office, you are not wasting time, you are enjoying life. And at the office, if you take a break from that overwhelming project by staring out the window and marveling at how the wind sculpts human images from the clouds, you are not wasting time, you are savoring life.

Time is in the eye of the beholder. What one person may consider a waste of time, another may consider a gift of time. It's your time. It's your life. It's your responsibility to manage it. When you are in your seventies or eighties or nineties, you will reap what you have sowed. But I do urge you to be in the driver's seat. Don't give up control to technology or feel you have to keep pace with everyone around you. Go at your own speed. Accomplish what is important to you. Make your own memories.

And when you recall those memories, may it seem as though you have had a long, happy, productive life with many exciting milestones and few regrets.

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17 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harold Taylor, CEO of *TaylorInTime*, has been speaking, writing and conducting training programs on the topic of effective time management for over 40 years. He has written more than 20 books, including a Canadian bestseller, *Making Time Work For You*. He has developed over 50 time management products that have sold in 38 countries around the world. His monthly Time Report has been published for twenty-five years and he has had over 250 articles accepted for publication.

A past director of the National Association of Professional Organizers, Harold received their Founder's Award in 1999 for outstanding contributions to the organizing profession. He received the CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) designation in 1987 from the National Speakers Association. In 1998 the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers inducted him into the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame. And in 2001, he received the Founder's Award from the Professional Organizers in Canada. The award has been named in his honor.

Prior to his speaking and writing career, Harold held management positions in industry for twelve years and was a teaching master in the business division of Humber College in Toronto for eight years. He has been an entrepreneur for forty years, incorporating four companies during that time. Since 1981, when he incorporated the time management company, *Harold Taylor Time Consultants Inc.*, he has presented over 2000 workshops, speeches and keynotes on the topic of time and life management.