

THE *Dream Movement* SERIES

Taking Time



By Marcia Wieder
America's Dream Coach[®]

Number Seven



In selected anecdotes in this book, names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.

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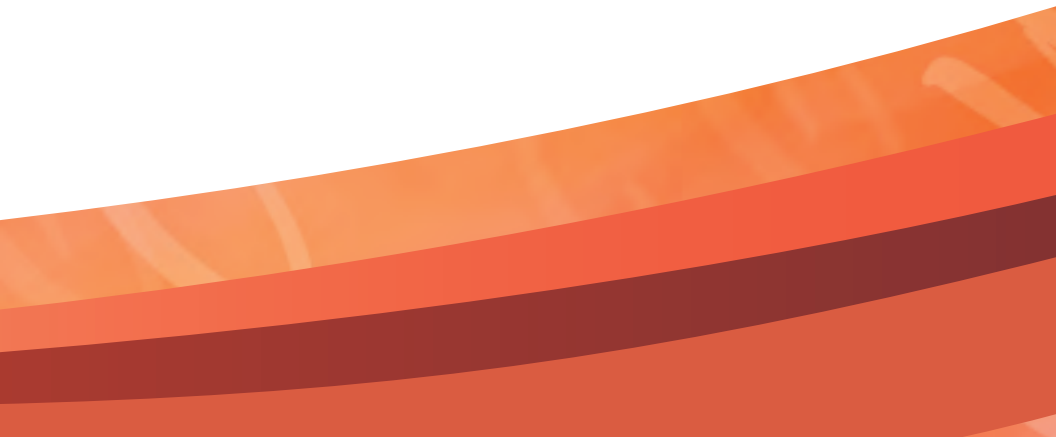
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Taking Time



Introduction

What's the biggest contributor to stress, or lack of ease in our lives? Time. How we spend it, use it—and sometimes waste it. We live as though we don't have anything to say about time; when the sun goes down, that's pretty much the end of that day. But we can learn to shift our relationship to time. "Time management" is not the answer—making the most out of your time is not about cramming even more tasks onto your to-do list. To have more quality of life, you need to truly experience life by doing less. So instead of asking yourself "How can I do more?" ask "Why am I doing this?" Focus on the things that matter most to you, and you will fully live every moment of every day.

—Marcia Wieder





Table of Contents

The Concept of Time	7
Untimely Management	8
Prisoners of Time	10
The Illusion of Time	11
What About Now?	12
“No More...Now What?”	15
A New Relationship to Time	16
Developing Mindfulness	17
Just for the Fun of It	19
Ease and Extra Time	20
Naturally On Time	21
Asking for Help	22
Living from Your Passion	23
Time-Saver “Basix”	25
Time to Live	28
Insights	30



“ To keep a lamp
burning, we have to
keep putting oil in it. ”

—*Mother Teresa*

THE CONCEPT OF TIME

Probably no other complaint is voiced as often as the complaint of not having enough time. “I don’t have time to pursue my dreams or to know my dreams. I don’t have time for me, for my family and friends. Basically, I don’t have time to live my life.”

What a concept. Who created this? Clocks, calendars, day planners—do you know a single person who doesn’t live by their schedule, who isn’t run by their calendar?

What’s your relationship to time? Do you have plenty? Are you living in the natural rhythm and ease of life? Or, are you like most people, chasing your tail, never having enough time, often feeling exhausted or “pooped?”

“When I’m not buried in work, I have time, but then I don’t have the money I need. If I’m working all the time, I have money, but no time to enjoy it.” Does this sound like you?

An overscheduled life creates stress. Feeling like time is short, we keep ourselves mentally and physically very busy, trying to accomplish the impossible feat of catching up. On the other hand, too much idle or leisure time can also cause undue stress. Time has such a grip on us that we can get agitated when we have nothing to do.

Time is a man-made concept, initiated by the Mayans, the creators of calendars. Brilliant in mathematics, they were able to calculate the length of the Earth’s orbit around the sun with an accuracy of a thousandth of a decimal point, according to modern calculations. The Mayans gave each month of their calendar a special meaning and paid tribute to important days and moments. Many modern societies, on the other hand, went on to sanitize time, divorcing it from the flow of life, making it the law of the land. Our society measures time in hours, minutes, seconds, nanoseconds (one billionth of a second) and even picoseconds (if you could imagine trillions of a second). When it comes to controlling time, we are way out of control.

UNTIMELY MANAGEMENT

I meet so many people who have become prisoners of their schedules and of their lives. They wake up by an alarm clock, jolted out of bed to start their day. Rushing around the house, they may prepare breakfast, get the kids off to the bus or themselves to the office by 9 a.m. in order to be “on time.”

The work day is often spent in meetings or on the phone putting out fires or fixing what’s wrong. Hopefully, lunch is “calendared” in, or they may inhale a sandwich at their desk. At the end of the day, it’s the some deal with rush hour (an interesting name for cars moving at a snail’s pace). Of course if you’re traveling home with a friend, you get a break and get to go faster in the “express lane.” Thank heaven for small favors.

Round three starts as some miraculously get dinner on the table and finally pass out into sleep, only to wake up the next morning and repeat the routine.

Does this remotely resemble you or someone you know? Does this sound like living? Is this freedom?

Stress and anxiety about time occur when we relate more to the future than to our present. We are usually here, thinking about there. To get us from here to there, we turn to time management. The trouble with most time-management programs is that they focus on how to get things done more efficiently. Time management doesn’t give us more time. Although it speeds up the treadmill and we may become more productive, we’re only doing more. As Lily Tomlin said, “The problem with the rat race is, even if you win, you’re still a rat.”

USA Today polled adults asking if they were given one more hour a day, how would they spend it? Eighteen percent said they would spend time with family, 17 percent said they would sleep, 13 percent would read a book or magazine, 7 percent would exercise, 6 percent would participate in a non-sports leisure activity and 5 percent said they would pray or go to church. Think about it: If you had a 25-hour day, what would you do with that precious extra hour?

Have you been to New York City lately? The pace there just seems to get faster and more chaotic. Everyone is rushing like crazy and trying to schedule you in. “I’ll ‘calendar’ you in for lunch,” one agent told me. At Elizabeth Arden’s Red Door Salon, women bring laptops or actual clients so they can do business while having their toes done. Yet although the Big Apple appears to be moving at lightning speed, nothing seems to happen quickly. There’s this illusion that life is sped up, yet the lines are longer than ever and things in general take longer. Just how long is a New York second?

The other coast is equally notorious. I’ve heard that Sam Cohn, the superstar agent and vice chairman of International Creative Management, has multiple phone lines that keep callers in a holding pattern because he’s too busy to return calls. A movie producer friend told me that Jeffrey Katzenberg, co-founder of the media production company DreamWorks, used to have four breakfasts in a row at the Regency in

“Who is setting the pace of your life?”

Manhattan when he was in New York for business, starting before 8 a.m. and finishing at 10:30. He’s also been known to have two back-to-back lunches.

In Hollywood, the assistants to the stars have “limo logs” (detailed reports of the comings and goings of their celebrities), to-the-second appointment calendars and portable everything. On any given day they’ll screen hundreds of calls, make last-minute reservations and reshuffle a dozen or so appointments. Many even belong to the Association of Celebrity Personal Assistants, which helps the more than 300 members cope.

And while traipsing between these two power cities, busy airborne executives can receive calls during their flights. Downtime has been abolished through the wonders of tech-

nology. You can do business anywhere and anytime—and this is the problem. With cell phones, BlackBerrys, beepers, e-mail, fax machines, even car fax machines, the only way we can have quiet, quality time is if we turn the world off. Do you dare?

I know there's a great deal of agreement about living "on time" and how little of it we have. It's fairly new, though. It's only been since the advent of trains that scheduling life to the minute has become so paramount. Perhaps it's not too late to create a different kind of relationship with time, a relationship that honors our heart, our needs and our values.

PRISONERS OF TIME

Have you ever been in a prison? Talk about prisoners of time—this is the real deal. When I spoke at a prison in Kansas City, I felt my anxiety rise as I passed through one set of big doors that slammed shut and locked before the next set of big bolted doors opened. I wondered what I would say to these people and if I had anything of value to share.

The inmates I met with were in the last leg of their sentences, and a visionary woman named Sharon Schmitz thought it would be a gift to show them that it was okay, even necessary, for them to have dreams as they returned to society.

Our two hours together was heartfelt and intimate. We set it up so we could have a discussion rather than me giving them a lecture. They wanted to know what the rest of us want to know. What happens when you don't have a dream? What happens when you have failed, or nobody—including you—believes in your dream anymore?

As we began to conclude, I looked at them and a smile came

A 25-Hour Day?

If you had a 25-hour day, what would you do with that precious extra hour? Here are the results from a *USA Today* poll asking adults that question:

Spend time with family	18%
Sleep	17%
Read a book or magazine	13%
Exercise	7%
Enjoy a non-sports leisure activity	6%
Pray or go to church	5%

“ It’s how you spend the here and now that really matters. ”

across my face. They asked what I was thinking. I told them that the number-one reason people tell me they can’t make their dreams come true or that they don’t even know what they want is because they don’t have the time to think about it. I asked them, “What’s the one thing you *do* have?” They all yelled back, “Time!”

They taught me this: It’s a question of how we spend that time. Is it quality time or lost time? The difference between a prison and an ashram (a quiet retreat for contemplation) is choice. Are you imprisoned or set free by the way you spend your time and live your life?

THE ILLUSION OF TIME

As we redefine our relationship to time, we also redefine our relationship to the world, to ourselves and to our lives. Are you living in time-bound awareness? If we are constantly thinking, calculating and using our intellect to figure things out, we may be ripping ourselves off. We are creating hurdles that keep us from seeing and feeling that which is real, that which is now.

Explore the realm of timelessness by taking off your watch, turning off the television, sleeping late or taking a nap. Explore timelessness through meditation. Timelessness lives in our hearts. It’s like being swept away by a beautiful piece of music. Time stands still. In this realm, reality, the world and our lives are experienced differently.

I know a powerful business owner named Diane who used to do everything very quickly. She was known for her efficiency

and ability to get the job done. If there was a quicker and easier way to do it, she wanted to know. She was taught “time is money,” so she taught her staff to be conscious of this. One day, she had what she thought was a clever idea. If her salespeople could shorten each of their phone calls by a few minutes, they could actually accumulate extra time and be more productive.

Diane explained to me that if a sales rep was making an average of 20 calls a day, and he can cut five minutes off each call, by the end of the day he will have saved an hour and 40 minutes, or gained a whole extra workday by the end of the week. And with that newly found time he could make more sales calls.

She actually thought this was a sound concept, so she put clocks on all the sales reps’ phones. Later she realized she must have been out of her mind. What about their relationships with clients? What about the quality of the calls? What about the well-being of her poor employees?

What is the price we are paying to have more time? Why are we saving time, and what for? Aren’t we all just going to run out of time eventually anyhow? Now is the only real time that exists.

WHAT ABOUT NOW?

How do we spend our moments? Are we here or dreaming of being there? Am I listening to you, really? Are you reading these words, capturing the message, having your experience, or are you half here and half thinking about a conversation you had this morning or an appointment you have tomorrow?

Perhaps you’ve heard this little ditty:

The past is history,

The future is a mystery,

But now is a gift,

That’s why we call it the “present.”

Being present takes practice. Developing a natural body clock does, too. It starts by tuning in. Are you aware of yourself? Do you know if you are a morning or a night person, and has this changed over the years? Does this work for you and do

you believe this is the way it has to be?

Many of us attribute our success (and our stress) and ability to accomplish things to our speed. We complain that the people around us can't keep up and we often move on. We think "faster" means better.

“ More and faster
doesn't necessarily
mean better. ”

My friend Paula told me she recognized an odd pattern in her life that helped her really see this behavior. When she was driving her car on the highway, she would frequently feel like she passed by her exit. Sometimes she would get off, turn around and go miles back, only to find she had not yet reached her turnoff. She was getting off the highway one exit too soon.

Knowing that she had this tendency, Paula learned to always continue one more exit beyond where she thought she should get off. One day she asked herself, "Where else am I getting off one exit too soon or rushing through life?" Her answer: a resounding "everywhere." Paula's relationship to patience is probably like Margaret Thatcher's, who said, "I am extraordinarily patient, as long as I get my own way in the end."

For many of us, living "now" isn't okay. The sin of the century seems to be free time. Many people overschedule as a way of proving their worth. An open hour or—shudder the thought—a free day leaves some feeling nervous or useless. I know it sounds odd, but it's a matter of programming. There is something about now that we have an aversion to. It has to do with acceptance. Once we learn to accept where we are, what we are doing and who we are being, we'll begin to reclaim great power and ease.

Funny thing, that "now" concept. In the present moment there actually is less stress. Stress comes in our resistance to

this present moment. If you could just relax into it, allowing this precious moment to be whatever it is, it would be a priceless gift. But we are so resistant. We hold on for dear life to some obscure memory of the past or desire for the future that keeps us forever scrambling and, unfortunately, dissatisfied. I am forever questioning where I am and wishing I was elsewhere, when all I really need to do for ease is to get still, get present and realize that where I am is the perfect place to be.

The moment you get this—really get it in the fiber of your being—your life will be altered and you will always have access to ease. We can take back our lives in small ways. Small steps build

“Taking time for yourself
can be a great act of
generosity.”

confidence to take larger leaps. Less stress means more success. When you are healthy and stress free, you can dream and play and have time and energy for the people and things you love.

Create a life that allows for more ease and grace. Be where you are when you are there. Be here now. As noted author Louise Hay often says, “The point of power is in the present.” Be where you are now.

Learn to slow up, rather than slow down, which means that relaxing can lift you up and give you more energy. Taking extra time for yourself will actually give you more time.

Create something in your life that you allow to unfold naturally. Write a poem or a story, plant a garden or learn to paint. Let it take as long as it takes. Do it as often as feels right. It will teach you deep lessons about unstructured structure and timeless time.

You have the ability to practice “being in the now” all day long and every day. When you make tea or coffee, or when you’re cooking, smell the aromas and notice the colors, textures and shapes. Recognize when your thoughts drift from

the present moment and gently bring your attention back. When the phone rings, use it as a chance to breathe. Take a full, deep inhalation and exhalation each time before you answer the phone. Gentle reminder notes around the house and office can also be useful: “Remember to Breathe” and “Are You Here?” are two of my personal favorites.

How about taking time out? Often used as a disciplinary action for young children, I have found “time out” to be one of the greatest gifts we can give to ourselves. When do you take time out and how do you take it? Consider naps, romantic novels, short meditations, a foreign movie or afternoon tea with a pal.

And bring back spontaneity. Sometimes it’s time to drop everything and indulge a whim. Are you really that busy that you never have time to change plans on short notice? When a friend urges or a child pleads, can you respond?

How often I hear, “I can’t take the afternoon off or stop working on this project. I have to stay in control.” Sometimes taking a break is the best possible thing you can do for a project, even though you may not think so. A little burst of spontaneity and breaking routine will help you feel refreshed, invigorated and more “in control.” Spontaneity, in moderation, can give you a breather, re-ignite your passion and give you a new perspective. Give spontaneity a shot.

“NO MORE...NOW WHAT?”

Where do you literally waste time? I was often complaining that I didn’t have time to exercise or go to the gym. I decided to calculate where the hours of my day go and assess when am I being productive and when am I not. I was shocked to discover out that I easily squander about 10 hours a week checking e-mail. It had become my socially accepted addiction. Every time I hit “send” or “receive,” I feel needed, wanted and somehow significant.

To manage my newly formed bad habit, I decided I would only check e-mail once in the morning and once in the evening. The result was astonishing. I was able to take back a solid hour a day,

which I am using at the gym or hiking in the woods. While in the woods my mind is quiet and I have some of my most creative ideas. When I returned to e-mail the world was still waiting and I felt more intentional and focused.

Where can you take back some of your valuable time and precious moments? Make time for the things that matter to you by quitting something or scaling back on some of the activities that may be robbing you of your time. As you declare, “No more,” you make space for asking “Now what?”

“Learn to make time
for the things that
matter to you.”

A NEW RELATIONSHIP TO TIME

When we shift our relationship to time, we shift our relationship to life and how we live. For some of us it can take a long time (at least by our standards) to slow life down by one beat or by one step, but everything in our life changes by doing this. We begin to feel “in synch” with life, with nature and, most important, with ourselves. By literally slowing down, we are more able to keep up with ourselves. We begin to live by our own pulse rate.

Do you ever take off your watch? At least on weekends, do you practice tuning into your inherent body clock? Do you live as much of life as possible without checking the time? Or, do you live in neatly scheduled one-hour increments?

Wait a second. What *is* a second? Your heartbeat can take a second. Some adults have a pulse of 60 beats per minute. So what are you tuned in to? Are you run by a man-made calculation or by an internal clock, a natural rhythm? Who is setting the pace of your life?

What's your sense of time? When does time fly and when does it drag? When do you feel timeless and when do you feel time-bound? By becoming aware of your natural rhythm, of your inherent clock, you can begin to create and shift your relationship to time. You can begin to use time as a gift for creating ease.

We need to find our own rhythm, our own flow, and we need to learn to shift into the right rhythm for each of us. Your rhythm feels right for you. It puts you at ease. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears," Henry David Thoreau wrote.

We can shift to internal time by recognizing and acting on what is true for us. It's this simple: Eat when you are hungry, sleep when you are tired, play or do something fun when you are bored. When we each learn to live on the beat, results happen effortlessly. All the pieces of our life symphony come into accord; there's a beautiful pulsation and life works. You can find your rhythm through nature. Notice what works for you. Are you listening to birds, ocean and wind, or pagers, phones and jet planes?

Here's the best part. Life can catch up with us and become easier. We no longer have to do things like call looking for late checks or feel desperate when we think we are running late to a meeting. We can learn that everything happens in perfect timing. We don't need to spend lots of time and energy "trying to make things happen." We can be available when someone needs us and even have time to take care of ourselves and to do the things that matter to us most. This becomes a shift in your reality.

DEVELOPING MINDFULNESS

Awareness is that state of mind which observes without condemnation. It's called being mindful, and every great master and teacher has spoken about it as the path to peace of mind and greater ease. Learn to infuse the spirit of ease into every-

thing you do in everyday life by cultivating awareness.

You can notice when you are rushing, eating on the run and not breathing. You will notice the moment stress starts and learn to stop whatever you are doing for a moment. You can catch your breath and regain your timing.

A dear friend of mine left his six-figure-income sales career to become a limousine driver, making a few hundred dollars a week. He did it so he could practice “awareness.”

“Cultivate awareness of the present moment.”

Every day he practiced “noticing.” That’s it. He practiced being in the moment by noticing people and nature, and his thoughts and feelings. He was extremely aware of his behavior because it really mattered to him. After a few months of this practice, he became a much more loving man and happier about his new simpler life.

Don’t take this wrong. Simplifying or slowing down life does not mean you have to give up your “normal” life. Perhaps it does ask you to consider shedding some behaviors that do not support you. This will help you feel calmer, richer and greater ease about your life and yourself. Please do not fear where this will take you. Trust yourself.

By the way, my friend later returned to the workforce. He told me it was time for him to practice his newly developed skills in the “real world.” He realized that a fulfilling life is not about “checking out”. It’s about contributing, teaching and being of service.

By changing your body clock and your awareness, you can change the timing of your life. You can absolutely live peacefully and not only still be effective, but actually accomplish much more with less effort. Think of all the “extra time” you’ll have to do the things you want, the things you love.

Too often our sad relationship with time requires that we

spend most of our lives handling problems and fixing messes, and if there's a little time left over maybe we get to do something fun. No wonder we feel like we're aging so quickly—and many of us are. As my mentor grandmother was often heard to say, “Nothin’ ages you faster than stinkin’ thinkin’.”

JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT

It is essential to our well-being and to our lives that we play and enjoy life. Every single day, do something that makes your heart sing. When we are doing what we love we don't care about time. For at least that moment, time doesn't exist and we are truly free.

Emily Dickinson said, “To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else.” Fill your life with as many moments and experiences of joy and passion as you humanly can. Start with one experience and build on it. Schedule this time at first if you must. Make a date with yourself, every day if possible, even if you take only a half-hour of time that is really just for you. Your work can usually wait a half-hour, but your soul can't. Then nurture these moments so they can grow organically. Look for ways to plant these playful dream seeds wherever you can and attend to them as often as possible. Have it be simple and delightful.

And whenever you can, please take off your wristwatch. To be the master in your own life, start by being the master of how you spend your time. Live as much of life as possible without checking the time. Wherever and as often as possible, take the time you need and spend it the way you choose. Eat when you're hungry and sleep when you're tired. Get to

“Every day, do something that makes your heart sing.”

know what works best for you. Tune in to your inherent clock, to your natural pulse, and use it as the valuable tool that it is.

Even if you don't believe this to be possible because there are so many circumstances running you, try it in the areas that matter most to you and in some small way. This can be a great act of generosity. If you don't give yourself the time you need and deserve, some part of you will rebel and perhaps even sabotage you. You'll wind up wasting a lot more time and energy, when all you needed to start with was a little attention for yourself.

EASE AND EXTRA TIME

I believe the way to have more ease in our lives is to be more conscious of how we use, spend or waste time. Our relationship to time is the access to an easier life. But often it seems just the opposite is true. If you are run by time, ease may be a foreign concept to you altogether.

“When life seems out of control, stop and regroup.”

Louisa May Alcott told us, “Have regular hours for work and play; make each day both useful and pleasant, and prove that you understand the worth of time by employing it well. Then youth will be delightful, old age will bring few regrets, and life will become a beautiful success, in spite of poverty.”

Sometimes life and our schedules can seem pretty hairy and out of control. The ability to stop and regroup at this moment is essential. This is the time to ask yourself “What do I need, and how can I make it happen?”

Recently my schedule was chock full. I was afraid that I would soon run out of juice and exhaust myself. I knew I needed a vacation, but I didn't initially see how it would be possi-

ble right at the time, which was when I needed it.

I said to myself, “I must find a way to bring quiet and play time into my schedule now.” The next day, literally out of the blue, the call came. Could I be in Cancún, Mexico one week from Saturday to give a morning motivational speech?

My first thought was it sounded like fun. My second thought sent me into overwhelm when I realized I had to be on the East Coast for a big presentation on the following Friday. So I asked my new prospective client for help. I explained it would be too stressful for me to fly back and forth between coasts and that it would be a big time drain on me while I was in the middle of writing this new book.

“No problem,” she responded. She arranged for my accommodations in a five-star hotel, all expenses paid for that entire week, plus airfare to fly back East. She gave me an oceanfront room where I could sit with my notebook computer on the balcony and write some inspirational prose.

The real irony is that, one week earlier, I had said my dream was to be in a beautiful oceanfront location, writing. Talk about hitting the jackpot. I got quality relaxation time, at the beach, with all expenses paid. No one will ever convince me that the power of clarity and intention can’t move worlds!

NATURALLY ON TIME

While in Cancún, I practiced following my natural body clock. I got up when I woke up, took naps, slept when I was tired and ate when I was hungry. And life continued to deliver miracles. The magic and ease that is available when we are living “in synch” is extraordinary. It is some of the most powerful magic I know.

I could have worried that I would be away too long. This is the time when people are booking speakers for their conferences, so shouldn’t I be home marketing myself?

In Cancún, I relaxed. I was at ease when I met people and had time for small talk and relationship building. I danced and dined and had fun with my new friends. And I got booked for

several future speaking engagements. Time can be our enemy or our friend. It depends completely on how we use it.

John Muir, the great naturalist, wrote that he wanted to spend all his time in an idle manner “literally gaping with all the mouths of soul and body, demanding nothing, fearing nothing, but...hoping and enjoying tremendously.” Don’t we wish?

When you are living with your natural timing miracles occur and can catch up with you. They don’t pass you by because you are part of the great plan, interwoven with them. Life becomes easy. Please do not miss this point. Life is easier when you are living it naturally.

While in this natural flow, be ready to experience some magic: People will show up to help you, or a surprise phone call might give you the answer you need, or you may clearly see how you could easily help someone else. What makes this magic is that it produces an extraordinary result. If you’re wondering if you were the reason the magic or miracle happened, remember what my friend Gillian used to tell me: “If a miracle takes place within 100 miles of you, take credit for it.”

“Living ‘in synch’ brings magic and ease.”

ASKING FOR HELP

Notice that even when the timing is right, it still helps to actually make the request and ask for what you want or need. The other day I bumped into a neighbor who was returning from running some errands. This simple story illustrates my point.

Like most of us, she was short on time and trying to accomplish too much at once. As luck would have it, it was a rainy, nasty day and she had a heavy box that needed to go to the post office.

As she dragged it downstairs, she was hopeful that someone would come by to lend a helping hand. Right away she saw a young man hurrying by with a handcart. “Excuse me,” she

“ One of the great shortcuts in life is asking for help. ”

shouted. “Would you be going to the post office?” she said. “As a matter of fact, I’m returning this cart to them. Hop on,” he exclaimed.

She was delighted to just put her box on the cart and walk along with him. He asked how she knew that he was headed her way. “I just hoped you were,” she responded. When you’re looking for help, really look, and when in doubt, ask. And if the answer is no, perhaps ask a different question.

The point is that help is often right there, and sometimes we miss it or it misses us. You don’t have to wait for it to find you. Reach out and speak up. It’s a great way to save time.

LIVING FROM YOUR PASSION

When I speak about changing our relationship to time or making room for our dreams, people get a little nervous. It makes sense to be concerned. What are you going to do with these new ideas and desires? How are you going to have time to do what you really want? Your calendar is already jammed with all the other stuff you need to do. Unless you have made a conscious effort to clear some space, there is probably little or no room to add passion and dreams to your life.

We live from our reactions, rather than from our dreams. When something happens or needs to happen, we go to our calendar, in search of an open slot to squeeze one more task into our already very full life. By the time you do all the things you have to do and need to do, is there any time left to do what really matters to you? Do you get the leftover precious moments, assuming there are any? And what do you do with them?

How do you spend most Sunday evenings? Frequent

responses include: planning the week ahead, laundry or watching TV. Do you have any time scheduled for what you love? Do you have time for you?

I'm going to ask you to consider turning your life upside-down. Don't panic, this does not have to happen all at once. It does not have to be drastic, unless you say so. I want to show

“ Do you have time for you? ”

you how to live a little more from your passion and a little less from your calendar. Then you will feel in control of your life and really know the true meaning of ease.

Practice using passion as your barometer. If you are asked to do something and you don't have to do it and you are not passionate about it, say “no.” Passion can be the ultimate time-saving tool for two good reasons. First, when you are doing what you love, who cares about the time? When you are with someone you love, or listening to a great piece of music, or painting or volunteering, doesn't time just fly by? Don't you feel as if you have slipped into timelessness?

Second, when you are doing what you love, it often gets done faster than when you are doing only the things you need to do. Our challenge is to free up your life from some of the deeds you are doing. When you have a choice of accepting or declining a task, do you ever use your passion as the reason for saying “yes” or “no”?

Ben Franklin said, “Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.” An extremely productive man who was an inventor, scientist, writer, publisher and statesman, Franklin retired at age 42. He also said, “Be not disturbed at trifles or at accidents common or unavoidable. Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary action.” Franklin followed his heart, doing what he loved, staying centered and knowing how to say “no.”

Here's a quick word on calendars. Do you live in mortal fear that you might lose your Filofax, PDA, or whatever is your chosen organizational tool? I started out with a small calendar. Friends ridiculed me, saying I needed a bigger book to hold bigger dreams and ideas. I switched to an elaborate personal planning system. Soon I outgrew that and it was time to get "high tech." I transferred everything—all my dates, contacts, records and phone numbers—to a notebook-size computer. It was wonderful—until one day when the computer crashed and I lost everything.

I am now back to a small and simple calendar. I juggle very large projects with this mini marvel. If I notice it's becoming too full or busy, I stop, sort, toss out and re-prioritize, based on my passion and my dreams. I have learned to keep life pretty simple. I do not compromise on my vision, just on how I schedule my time.

My computer did have a cool capability that gave me great insight. It had a "T" button for transfer. Whatever tasks I didn't complete could simply be transferred to the next day with the touch of a key. After several days of transferring, I could simply move the task to the following week. If after two weeks I was still moving it around, I would switch to the "D" key, which stood for delete.

This program made me realize how much time I was wasting juggling incidental tasks that I never intended to accomplish. Now I am more aware and don't schedule things I don't plan on doing. Awareness is one of the greatest time-saving tools I know.

TIME-SAVER "BASIX"

Here are six of the ways I practice being in control of my time and my life. I call them my "Basix"—because they are basic and there are six of them. As you make fundamental changes in how you live, when you say yes or no, and how you take care of yourself, you will develop your own Basix. Here are my biggest and most basic time savers:

1. Clarity. Whenever and as much as possible, I have a clear picture of what I want or need, or what I am trying to create or accomplish. Clarity helps me accomplish the other things on this list faster and with much greater ease.

2. Prioritizing the day. If I lived strictly from my calendar and “to do” list, I could feel overwhelmed daily. Each morning, I decide what are the three most important things for me to accomplish that day. Then I list them in order of priority and I begin working on item #1. If it’s a big task, it

“Live more by your passion and less by your calendar.”

may be my only priority for the day. Completing it allows me to feel good, even if I only completed one task. Practice not overscheduling.

3. Multi-tasking. I have developed the fine art of accomplishing multiple tasks at once, by being extremely organized. With little effort and intentional focus, I can get so much done, so efficiently. Living in the city helps. In under two hours I can go to the post office, the cleaners, the bank, eat a little lunch, and even get a manicure. If I attempt to do this at high noon, when everyone else is doing their errands, it takes longer. Part of my effective use of time and creating ease in my life includes deciding when would be the best time to accomplish these tasks. This is an important point.

4. Bundling. This is a continuation of multiple tasks, but has more to do with the layout of your tasks. Set your life of for ease by using services that are near you, near each other, or easily accessible. Access, if you live in the city, may mean its walking distance or there is parking nearby. My favorite butcher is on the other side of town, but is located near my

facialist. On days when my skin is glowing, I'm usually having a delicious dinner. Twice a month, this has turned into a "Take Care of Me" day.

See where bundling can save you time. Do you have certain days you go to the cleaners? Do you work out on particular days of the week? Can you eat out that night or is there a good "carry out" restaurant nearby? What activities are scheduled into your life that could be bundled with other activities, resulting in greater ease for you?

5. Just say no. When you don't *have* to do something and you don't *want* to, why are you doing it? Practice saying no. And practice doing it with grace and ease. Pain and discomfort come from resistance to something, not from the release of it. Do you resist saying no? Take the pressure off yourself. This simple little word—no—will allow you more time to stop, look, reflect and practice a new way of living.

Pressure is contrary to ease. If you feel suppressed, repressed, depressed or compressed, strongly consider saying no (thank you).

6. Using resources. This is by far my favorite and most powerful time-saver. If I need something, I don't always know where to find it, but I usually do know who to call. Don't reinvent the wheel. Call your friends, family, colleagues and others who can share their best and favorite resources with you.

When I was under deadline to complete my last book, I needed several powerful quotes on specific topics. I could have gone to the library and spent hours researching. Instead, I called my friend Caterina Rando, who produced a software program called *Words of Women Quotations for Success*. Within minutes, she faxed me dozens of quotes, saved me tons of time, and received an acknowledgement in the book. When I needed a liability release for my business, I called a business owner friend who sent over one that she uses, with her permission to modify it to my needs.

Nothing makes life easier and saves more time than using your resources. And remember, the more you give, the more you receive. You are also a resource to many.

More Time-Savers

One of my colleagues, Odette Pollar, is president of Time Management Systems. She is the author of *365 Ways to Simplify Your Work Life* and writes the nationally syndicated column called *Smart Ways to Work*. Odette asked me to share her time-saving wisdom with you:

“You can do something easily or efficiently, which may not meet your goal of simplification. Simplification has to do with reducing the volume of tasks and complexity in your life.” Three ways to simplify your life are:

1. Get rid of clutter and excess. Piles of things tend to distract you and make you feel guilty. The more you own, the more you have to transport, insure, store, dust and maintain. Things can take over your life.

2. Say no. Don't be afraid to say no to things, people, tasks and opportunities that clutter up your life and distract you from your objectives.

3. Simplify decision-making. Do not agonize over minor ones. They are still minor with or without the agony. One suggestion is, if you are making the same decision over and over again, you really need a rule, rather than a new decision.

TIME TO LIVE

Have you heard about the new clock on the market called the LifeClock? It runs backwards, counting off your remaining time on earth in hours, minutes, seconds and tenths of seconds. It assumes that as a man you will live to be 75, and as a woman, 80.

Do you think knowing how much time we have left will enliven us? The poet Elizabeth Coatsworth wrote, “When I dream, I am ageless.” And the Russian writer Emma Goldman said, “When we can't dream any longer, we die.”

Last year I spoke on board a cruise ship. The average age of the passengers was well over 65. I would split the people I met into two categories, those with and without dreams. The ones who had dreams and hopes for their golden years or for their children and grandchildren were filled with life and energy. Those who thought they were too old to have dreams were a lit-

tle like the walking dead. The difference was astounding. Mary Martin, who of course played Peter Pan, the young boy who never wanted to grow up, said, “It’s been a fabulous life. I’ll keep living until it’s time. Then I’ll just go on to another stage.”

It’s how we spend our time here and now that really matters. If you are fed up with the way society and you have come to interact with time, change it. You can loosen technology’s grip on your life by not living for your fax machine, e-mail, voice mail and pager. Use them only when necessary or when you choose to. Decide what your hours of operation are and tell people when you are available. It does not have to be 24 hours a day. Don’t become addicted to technology, and if you already are, get help and break the habit. Take control of your time again by learning not to answer immediately. Put some space in your life. Use your precious moments to live life fully. It is possible to be in a more natural flow. It is possible to have grace and ease in our lives, and it is possible to exist in the day-to-day world in a very different way than many of us do.

“ The way we spend our time is the way we spend our lives. ”

One of the ways to feel truly abundant, to feel the richness of your life, is to be able to do some of the things you want to do, when you want to do them. Give it a try now. Remember, whether we like it or not, the clock keeps ticking away. The way we spend our time is the way we spend our lives. It is the quality of your life that matters. Moment by moment is the only way we can live life. The better we are at this, the richer our lives will be. Savor life and you’ll understand the true joy of doing less and having more, every precious instant of every priceless day.

Insights

- Keeping time is a man-made concept that has gotten way out of control.
- How you spend your time determines the quality of your life.
- We must learn to shift our relationship to time.
- Time management doesn't give us more time. Although it speeds up the treadmill and we may become more productive, we're only doing more.
- You can loosen technology's grip on your life by using your fax machine, e-mail, voice mail and pager only when you choose to respond.
- It is possible to live in timelessness awareness as opposed to time-bound awareness by doing what you love and what makes your heart sing as often as possible.
- In the present moment there actually is no stress. Stress comes in our resistance to this present moment. If you can relax, allowing this precious moment to be whatever it is, it would be a priceless gift.
- Release the past, embrace the present and welcome the future.
- By becoming aware of your natural rhythm, you can begin to create and shift your relationship to time.
- You can learn to make time for the things that matter to you.

- Slowing down, breathing and noticing life will change your internal clock and how you live your life.
- Fill your life with as many moments and experiences of joy and passion as you humanly can.
- Work can wait; your soul can't.
- When you get “in synch” with your natural timing, the miracles and magic of life can catch up with you and your experience of life changes.
- Spontaneity, in moderation, can give you a breather, re-ignite your passion and give you a new perspective.
- Passion can be the ultimate time-saving tool. When you are doing what you love, who cares about the time?
- Moment by moment is the only way we can live life. 🍷

Make a Daily Dream Visit

For immediate support on
Making Your Dreams Come True,
I invite you to...

- Join AmazingDreamers.com
- Attend a Dream Workshop
- Check Out My Dream Store
- Hire a Certified Dream Coach®

Marcia Wieder
America's Dream Coach®



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