

The Time Crunchers Guide to Time Management... It's a Matter of Priorities and Strategies

Guía para una gestión eficaz
del tiempo personal...
Es cuestión de prioridades
y estrategias

ROBERT L. SCHALOCK
MIGUEL ANGEL VERDUGO ALONSO

Colección Herramientas 5/2010

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to all those who taught us the value of time...
and the importance of choices.

The Time Crunchers Guide to Time Management ...It's a Matter of Priorities and Strategies

SUMMARY

This book on time management has two basic premises: effective time management involves first understanding one's priorities and second, using effective time management strategies. These two premises provide the framework for the book's three sections. Section I focuses on our use of time and how to determine time allocation priorities; Section II summarizes what we know about effective time management strategies; and Section III suggests that effective time management is more than crunching time and involves using those strategies and future scenarios shared by 'true time gurus' in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A book on time management should be brief and helpful. Although we never have time to do everything we want to do, we do have time to do what's important. This book is about understanding the difference between the two. Your reading of this book will not give you more than the 1440 minutes in a day, or the 168 hours in a week. However, this book will give the reader: (a) a method to use to analyze how you use your time; (b) a standard against which you can evaluate your time utilization; (c) a process to determine your time allocation priorities; and (d) a number of specific time management strategies that are based on good science and good judgment.

As psychologists, we have also incorporated into the suggested time management strategies what psychologists tell us about effective

behavioral change. Data are very clear that effective behavior change requires five things: (a) an understanding of the behavior in question (time utilization); (b) an understanding of alternative actions (time allocation priorities and management strategies); (c) a commitment to action; (d) obtaining feedback as to the effectiveness of the action taken; and (e) rewarding oneself for success. Exercises presented in the book are based on these five factors.

Guía para una gestión eficaz del tiempo personal...
Es cuestión de prioridades y estrategias

RESUMEN

Este libro sobre la gestión del tiempo tiene dos premisas básicas: la gestión eficaz del tiempo consiste en, primero, entender las propias prioridades y, segundo, utilizar eficazmente estrategias de gestión del tiempo. Estas dos premisas son el marco de referencia de las tres secciones del libro. La Sección I se centra en nuestro uso del tiempo y en cómo determinar las prioridades para el tiempo disponible; la Sección II resume lo que conocemos sobre estrategias de gestión eficaz del tiempo; y la Sección III expone que la gestión eficaz del tiempo es más que comprimir el tiempo, e incluye utilizar aquellas estrategias y escenarios futuros compartidos por los 'verdaderos gurús del tiempo' en el campo de las discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo.

Un libro sobre gestión del tiempo debe ser breve y útil. Aunque nunca tenemos el tiempo necesario para hacer todo aquello que queremos hacer, sí tenemos tiempo para hacer aquello que es importante. Este libro examina la diferencia entre ambas situaciones. La lectura del libro no va a proporcionar más de los 1.440 minutos de un día o las 168 horas de una semana. Sin embargo, el libro permitirá al lector disponer de: a) un método para analizar cómo usa su tiempo; b) un estándar con el que comparar su utilización del tiempo; c) un proceso para determinar las prioridades de disponibilidad de tiempo; y d) una serie de estrategias específicas de gestión del tiempo que se basan en buena ciencia y buen juicio.

Como psicólogos que somos hemos incorporado en las estrategias recomendadas de gestión del tiempo lo que la psicología nos dice acerca del cambio eficaz del comportamiento. Los datos son muy claros y nos dicen que un cambio eficaz en la conducta requiere cinco cosas: a) Una comprensión de la conducta analizada (uso del tiempo); b) comprensión de las acciones alternativas (prioridades de disponibilidad de tiempo y estrategias de gestión); c) un compromiso para la acción; d) obtención del feedback sobre la eficacia de la acción emprendida; y e) premiarse a uno mismo por el éxito. Los ejercicios presentados en el libro se basan en estos cinco factores.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	11
Part I: Our Use of Time: Actual and Desired.....	13
Chapter 1: Why You Should Read This Book.....	15
Chapter 2: How Do You Use Your Time	19
Chapter 3: Identifying Your Time Robbers	23
Chapter 4: Determining Your Time Allocation Priorities.....	27
Part II: Effective Time Management Strategies	35
Chapter 5: Be Proactive	37
Chapter 6: Talk to Yourself.....	41
Chapter 7: Be Organized.....	47
Chapter 8: Stay Focused	51
Chapter 9: Take Control	55
Chapter 10: Recharge Your Batteries	63
Part III: Time Management is More Than Crunching Time.....	67
Chapter 11: Time Management and Criteria Used by Time Gurus.....	69
Chapter 12: Strategies and Scenarios	75
References/Sources Used	79
Acknowledgement.....	83

LIST OF TABLES

2.1.	Time Utilization Patterns	20
2.2.	Determining Your Time Utilization Baseline	22
3.1.	Leisure Time Patterns	24
3.2.	Analysis of Potential Time Robbers	25
4.1.	Priorities Based on Roles and Functions: The Discrepancy Index.	30
4.2.	Personal Time Priorities	31
4.3.	Quality of Life Domains and Their Importance in Time Allocation	31
4.4.	Establishing a Holistic Approach to Time Allocation	32
5.1.	The Eight Principles of Behavioral Change	39
6.1.	Factors Influencing Self Talk and Available Time.....	45
9.1.	Decision Making Analytic Framework.....	56
11.1.	Rank Ordering of Time Management Strategies Used by the Respondent Group	70

PART I
OUR USE OF TIME: ACTUAL AND DESIRED

Why You Should Read this Book

How Do You Use Your Time?

Identifying Your Time Robbers

Determining Your Time Allocation Priorities

CHAPTER 1

WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

*There is always time....if you
know your priorities.*

We are all time crunchers. Each of us frequently feels in a tight or critical situation regarding available time, and many of us view our perceived lack of time as stressful. This book is a guide for time crunchers to manage their time better (i.e. more efficiently). *Its two basic premises are that effective time management involves first understanding one's priorities, and second using effective time management strategies.* These two premises provide the framework for the book. Part I focuses on our use of time and how to determine time allocation priorities (in case you need help); Part II summarizes what we know about effective time management strategies (here, we all need help). So, in reading this book, your mantra should be: *Priorities and Strategies.*

A book on time management should be brief and helpful. Although we never have time to do everything we want to do, we do have time to do what's important. This book is about understanding the difference between the two. Your reading of this book will not give you more than the 1440 minutes in a day, or the 168 hours in a week. However, the book will give you: (a) a *method* to use to analyze how you use time; (b) a *standard* against which you can evaluate your time utilization; (c) a *process* to determine your time allocation priorities; and (d) a *number of specific time management strategies* that are based on good science and good judgment.

You will need to be an active participant in reading the book. Specifically, you will be asked to:

- Analyze how you use time. That analysis will involve both time obligations (such as home, family, and job) and time robbers (such as TV, video games, and disorganization).
- Understand how people use time. We can learn a lot from time utilization studies since they provide a standard against which we can compare how we use our time.
- Determine your time use priorities based not just on your current time obligations, but more importantly on factors that should drive your use of time. Here, you will be introduced to futuristic and holistic perspectives for determining priorities and allocating discretionary time.
- Try out a number of time management strategies that are based on both good science and actual use by a number of ‘time gurus’ that we have interviewed for the book. This request, along with the preceding ones, sets this book apart from the 100s of available time management books.
- Engage in right to left thinking (which is also unique to this book). Right to left thinking is a key concept found in the management literature (Drucker, 1999). It involves identifying valued outcomes, which in reference to this book are having time to do those things that reflect our personal priorities and being more relaxed about time utilization and time pressures. Once these priorities are identified, one thinks from left to right and asks, “what specific time management strategies do I need to use to maximize effective use of time and hence achieve my desired outcomes?” In this sense, time management is both a process and an outcome.

The psychological literature is very clear: effective behavioral change requires five things: (1) an understanding of the behavior in question (time utilization); (2) an understanding of alternative actions (time allocation priorities and management strategies); (3) a commitment to action—you **MUST DO SOMETHING**; (4) obtaining feedback as to the effectiveness of the action taken; and (5) rewarding

oneself for success. These five elements are at the heart of each of the following short chapters, and reflect our personal beliefs that the person who knows why will always do better than the person who just knows how.

Since most of us live in a world characterized by 'one minute managers' and 'the acceleration of just about everything' (Gleick, 2002), we promise not to waste your time. We will follow Lewis Carroll's wise advice given in *Alice in Wonderland*, "Begin at the beginning... and go to the end, and then stop." But we also promise you this: "There is always time.....if you know your priorities."

CHAPTER 2

HOW DO YOU USE YOUR TIME?

Do not squander time.....that is the stuff life is made of (Anonymous).

Before asking you to determine how you use your time, let's look at how others use theirs. This information will help resolve the seeming paradox between feeling that we do not have enough time and the empirical finding that we do.

WHAT DO TIME UTILIZATION STUDIES TELL US?

Two major studies shed considerable light on this question. The first one (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005) asked 13,000 household respondents to describe how parents in the United States spend time during a typical week. These results are summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Time Utilization Patterns

<i>Personal care/sleep:</i>	Fathers: 69 hours, 30 minutes (41.5% of the week's time) Mothers: 71 hours, 30 minutes (42.8%)
<i>Work:</i>	Fathers: 42 hours, 30 minutes (25.4%) Mothers: 23 hours, 48 minutes (14.1%)
<i>Free time:</i>	Fathers: 34 hours, 30 minutes (20.6%) Mothers: 31 hours, 42 minutes (18.9%)
<i>Housework:</i>	Fathers: 9 hours, 42 minutes (5.6%) Mothers: 19 hours, 24 minutes (11.6%)
<i>Child Care:</i>	Fathers: 6 hours, 30 minutes (3.8%) Mothers: 12 hours, 54 minutes (7.5%)
<i>Shopping:</i>	Fathers: 5 hours, 18 minutes (3.1%) Mothers: 8 hours, 48 minutes (5.1%)

The second longitudinal study (Robinson & Godbey, 1999, 2005) reports similar time utilization patterns. Two patterns are especially important to note. First, those surveyed (approximately 20,000, aged 25-54, including those with children) believed they had fewer than 20 hours of free time a week, which was about half the amount actually recorded in their daily time-use diaries. Second, Americans of working age have as much leisure time as work time—about 35 hours per week (the discrepancy between work time here and work time in Table 2.1 is due to averaging across gender).

THE TIME PARADOX

The results of these two studies present an interesting paradox: even though people feel that they do not have enough personal time, it appears as though they do. How might this paradox be explained? Here we suggest three things to think about.

First, there are too many alternatives available to us that we can spend time doing. Barry Schwartz in his recent book, *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less* (2004) discusses three potential responses to being faced with choice overload: freeze and make no choice; make a wrong choice; or make the right choice, but question our decision. Each response impacts time usage and

reflects the well-known 'law of unexpected consequences.' For example, indecision leads to procrastination which, in turn, leads to inactivity and passive time loss. Making a wrong decision leads to active time loss when we engage in activities that may have little priority or importance to us. Questioning one's decision can result in excessive rumination and worry---both of which are time robbers.

Second, the paradox can be explained in terms of our being over-extended and for whatever reason, trying to do more than available time permits. Psychologically, being over-extended is frequently related to trying to please everyone, saying 'yes' to all [time-related] requests, and being 'other directed' wherein others control our time more than we do. Four additional phenomena that deny us more personal time: an irrational belief that "I can/will find the time" which reflects a poor estimate of available time; a feeling of always being frustrated that our personal priorities are not being met and therefore always under time pressures; a 'shot gun' approach to time management wherein we give a little here and a little there; or never feeling or being reinforced for completing important priority activities. This latter result is quite important since psychologists tell us that in order to be highly motivated, we need to be reinforced 75% of the time!

Third, the paradox can be explained on the basis of not knowing or understanding clearly our time allocation priorities. More of this in Chapter 4.

In summary, although we frequently feel we do not have adequate time, generally we do. As just discussed, this paradox can be explained in regard to having too many alternatives, being over-extended, or not knowing our time allocation priorities. If this is true, then effective time management needs to be based initially on an understanding of how we currently use time. This requires us to do two things: First, to do a baseline of how we currently use time (which is done in Table 2.2 below), and second, to analyze our time robbers (which is done in the next chapter).

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE USE TIME: DEVELOPING YOUR TIME UTILIZATION BASELINE

A time use baseline can be established on the basis of minutes per day (1440) or hours per week (168). In completing Table 2.2 use whichever method you prefer, but do your baseline more than one day since you need to increase its stability by analyzing your time use patterns across days wherein activities will vary.

Table 2.2. Determining Your Time Use Baseline

<i>Activity/Category</i>	<i>Minutes Devoted per Day (1440)</i>	<i>Hours Devoted Per Week (168)</i>
Personal care/sleep		
Work		
Free time		
Housework		
Child care		
Shopping		
Other		

There is no correct or optimal baseline---it is what you are currently doing. At this point, the key thing is to get an accurate picture of how you currently spend time. If interested, you can also compare your results to the time utilization studies discussed earlier (Table 2.1). Our next step forces you to list those activities that can potentially rob you of personal time... time that might better be spent on personal priorities. Analyzing your time robbers is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 IDENTIFYING YOUR TIME ROBBERS

Time is a great teacher; but unfortunately it kills all its pupils. (Berlioz, quoted in Gross, 1987, p. 350).

Few of us feel that we have all the time we need (or want) even though the studies summarized in the previous chapter suggest that we do (see Table 2.1). This 'time paradox' suggests that as time managers we have two alternatives: either to increase our efficiency by using effective time management strategies (see chapters 5-11) or reduce unnecessary or extraneous time usage. This chapter focuses on the second alternative and asks that you think about how you kill time....a concept we refer to as 'time robbers.'

Most of our robbing of time relates to discretionary time, which is generally referred to as free time or leisure time. According to various surveys (summarized in *Time Magazine*, October 30, 2006, pp. 52-53) Americans have gained from 4 to 8 hours a week of leisure time since 1965, due primarily to appliances that have reduced housework. On average, we have about 5 hours per day for leisure. Table 3.1 shows how people use their free time on weekends and holidays (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005) and on a typical day (Robinson & Godbey, 2005). It is clear from these data that our principal use of time is to watch TV or socialize.

Table 3.1. Leisure Time Patterns (Hours/Minutes per Day)

<i>Leisure Activity</i>	<i>Weekend and Holidays</i>	<i>Typical Day</i>
Watching TV	2.8 hours	2.6 hours
Socializing	1.1 hours	41 minutes
Reading	27 minutes	22 minutes
Computer use (including games)	24 minutes	17 minutes
Relaxing, thinking	21 minutes	20 minutes
Sports, exercise, recreation	20 minutes	20 minutes
Other	--	31 minutes

In addition to the leisure time patterns summarized in Table 3.1, the general time management literature (plus personal experience) suggests we spend excessive (and frequently unproductive) time on a variety of potential time robbers. Examples include: a cluttered desk (for example, we can add one year of life if we handle a piece of paper only once); making lists (making them may take more time than actually doing the activity/task); hoarding behavior (with corresponding time spent on organizing or trying to find _____; saying “yes” too often; being over-extended and not completing any one thing; and/or having a love affair with technology (including your computer, computer-related gadgets, and anything electronic). One of our favorite cartoons shows a person in a hospital bed hooked up to his ‘toys’: overnight delivery, cell phone, fax, fast food, Blackberry, iphone, and e-mail. The attending physician tells the nurse: “he’ll be fine...his essentials were depleted.” In Table 3.2 you have the opportunity to identify your potential time robbers. Your task is to indicate approximately how many minutes or hours per day/week you devote to each activity listed (plus any others you wish to add).

Table 3.2. Analysis of Potential Time Robbers

Activity	Estimated per Day (minutes or hours)	Estimated per Week (minutes or hours)
From Table 3.1 Watching TV Socializing Reading Computer Use Relaxing/recreation		
Video games		
Time spent un-cluttering desk		
Time spent finding hoarded things		
Saying “yes” or apologizing for being over-extended		
Technology love affair		
Other		

So, what’s the total time per day (or week) you attribute to these potential time robbers? If it significantly exceeds the five hours that you theoretically have, you are probably feeling time pressure and trying to determine how to either crunch time or reduce your time robbers. Potential solutions for both are found in the subsequent chapters on determining your time allocation priorities and using more effective time management strategies.

Completing Table 3.2 and analyzing the resulting time robber patterns should result in an increase in your *knowledge* regarding both the time paradox and how well you manage available time. Knowledge is power and this information should provide a good baseline for where you are. We still need, however, to work on where you are going, for as Yogi Berra (1998, p. 50) reminds us, “the trouble with not knowing where you are going is that you might end up in the wrong place.” Getting to the right place in terms of maximizing time is facilitated by *understanding* your time allocation priorities. This we do in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

DETERMINING YOUR TIME ALLOCATION PRIORITIES

Time is a precious commodity.

Thus far you should have: (a) agreed that reading this book will be helpful (Chapter 1); (b) understood better how you currently use time (Chapter 2); and (c) identified potential time robbers. This chapter is about determining your time allocation priorities and “being lamps unto yourself” (Buddha, quoted in Geary, 2005, p. 31).

Time is a precious commodity. Thus, how we use time needs to be aligned with those people, things, and activities that are our priorities. In this chapter, we suggest the following two guiding principles regarding how we determine time allocation priorities:

- Embracing the future and adapting to important social and political trends (‘the futuristic perspective’).
- Using a balanced approach to time allocation (‘the holistic perspective’).

Each of these principles will be discussed on subsequent pages, along with your having the opportunity to determine your time allocation priorities. By the end of the chapter you will have both a list of your time priorities (Tables 4.1 and 4.2) and the framework provided by futuristic and holistic perspectives that can be used to allocate personal time.

Human life is a constant preoccupation with the future. Psychologists, for example, recognize the key role that the future plays in our thinking, our actions, and our successes and failures (Lombardo, 2006). Futurists talk a lot about the need to understand a number of transformational trends. In reference to determining one's time allocation priorities, these include (Cetron & Davies, 2005; Covey, 2004; Friedman, 2005; Snyder, 2004):

- The impact of cultural modernization and its emphasis on equality, personal freedom, self-regulation, and self-fulfillment.
- The prevalence of economic globalization and universal connectivity.
- The emphasis on transactional transparency and the increased demand for social responsibility.
- The domination of technology on the economy, society, and ourselves.

These four trends have three profound impacts on how we use time and how we establish our time use priorities. First, life-long education and training is required. For example, the concepts of 'hyperjobs' is emerging. They are the kind of work that leverages peoples unique, noncomputerizable skills and abilities, and power the emerging global society. They are based on key skills related to (Samson, 2005): discovery (find the why of things), creativity (fashioning something new), implementation (making the fruits of creativity real in the world), influence (interacting with others to inspire, direct, or empower), and physical action (interacting with things or people in mindful ways).

Second, time capital (i.e. time availability) will become as important as social, political, or financial capital. In that sense, we will come to view time allocation in the same way as we currently view asset allocation and will continue to look for a good return on our [time] investment.

Third, time priorities need to be based on core personal values such as cultural creatives and the emerging global ethic. Cultural

creatives place emphasis on relationships, communities, spirituality, nature and the environment, real ecological sustainability, and responsible individualism (Eckersley, 2004). The emerging global ethic relates to individual responsibility, treating others as we wish them to treat us, respect for life, economic and social justice, nature-friendly ways of life, honesty, moderation, freedom (expressed in ways that do not harm others), and tolerance for diversity (Bell, 2004).

THE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Determining one's time allocation priorities has a lot to do with one's philosophy of life and the quality of life one wants to live. Our philosophy of life is reflected primarily in the roles and functions we perform (e.g. wife, husband, parent, sibling, employer, professional, employee, helper, learner, teacher, mentor etc.). Our quality of life is reflected in how we balance the 8 core quality of life domains listed later in Table 4.3. Implementing these two holistic perspectives is essential to determining our time-allocation priorities. Two exercises for doing so are described next.

Priorities Based on Roles and Functions

We should lead fairly balanced lives in how we devote time to the various roles that we play and the functions that we perform, realizing that any shift in prioritized roles and functions will impact time utilization. The following exercise will let you identify your preferred activities, and the discrepancy between the desired and actual time you spend on each. The exercise requires that you complete the four columns shown in Table 4.1 as follows:

Column 1: List the current roles/functions that you perform or would like to perform. Examples include husband/wife, parent, employee, professional, child care provider, writer/author, researcher, community member, friend, advocate, mentor, etc.

Column 2: List the number of hours your *currently engage* in each role/function per week.

Column 3: Indicate the number of hours per week *you would like to engage* in the respective role/function.

Column 4: Determine your discrepancy index. The difference (column 4) between columns 2 and 3 is your *time discrepancy index*.

A discrepancy can be either spending more time than you want to on a particular role/function, or less time than you want to. In either case, a large index (or discrepancy) reflects both a frustration and a challenge: frustrating (and a guaranteed stressor) since the psychological literature is very clear: a blocked goal leads to increased frustration and stress; challenging regarding the need to reduce the discrepancy (through either priority setting or using more efficient time management strategies).

Table 4.1. Priorities Based on Roles and Functions: The Discrepancy Index

<i>Roles/Functions</i>	<i># Current Hrs./Wk.</i>	<i># Desired Hrs./Wk.</i>	<i>Discrepancy Index</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

(Add more if you need them—but remember: Each role/function takes time.)

The discrepancy indices obtained in Table 4.1 can be very helpful in determining your time allocation priorities. Use this information to complete Table 4.2 that asks you to list your personal time priorities based on those roles and functions that you have found the time to complete (and thus will have a low or positive discrepancy) and those that you want to spend more time on (i.e. the ones that have a large and negative discrepancy). Once identified (and listed) give specific examples for each. These examples can be used as objectives to monitor time utilization patterns (that is, behavioral changes) as discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 4.2. Personal Time Priorities

Desired Roles/Functions	Specific Examples
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Priorities Based on the QOL Concept

At its core, the quality of life (QOL) concept makes us think about what we value most in our lives and to which activities we should devote our time. Over the last 20 years, we have been involved in studying QOL and doing research on the eight core domains listed in Table 4.3. The material found in Table 4.3 gives a very brief definition of each core QOL domain, and an indication as to why each domain is important in determining one's time allocation priorities.

Table 4.3. Quality of Life Domains and Their Importance in Time Allocation

<i>Quality of life Domains</i>		<i>Importance</i>
Emotional Well-Being	Experiencing contentment (satisfaction and happiness).	Accomplishment, completing tasks, rewards, motivation
Interpersonal Relations	social interactions and relationships	Source of support, feedback, and connectedness
Material Well-Being	adequate financial resources, job, and housing	personal well-being and life style
Personal Development	attitude, skills, and knowledge	personal competency, increased effectiveness and efficiency
Physical Well-Being	fitness, energy, physical and mental functioning	
Self-Determination	expression of autonomy and personal control	internal locus of control, self concept, motivation
Social Inclusion	integration and participation in the community	valued roles support systems, sense of belonging
Rights	respect, dignity, and equality	opportunities, self concept, motivation

In using Table 4.3 to help determine how you prioritize your time, please keep the following guideline clearly in mind. *Although some domains may be more important to you than others, don't overlook the holistic perspective in determining your time allocation priorities.* For example, good mental and physical health makes people more effective; self-determination will allow you to be proactive and take control; interpersonal relations and social inclusion result in readily available social supports; and personal development allows you to respond better to the transformational trends mentioned earlier in the chapter. A procedure for implementing this guideline is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Establishing a Holistic Approach to Time Allocation

QOL Domain	Currently Enters Into			Would Like			Discrepancy
Emotional Well-Being	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Interpersonal Relations	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Material Well-Being	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Personal Development	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Physical Well-Being	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Self-Determination	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Social Inclusion	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Rights	3	2	1	3	2	1	

Directions:

Column 1: Ask yourself this question: 'To what degree does each of the 8 listed QOL domains currently enter into my time allocation priorities?' Circle your response: 3=considerably; 2=somewhat; 1=little or none.

Column 2: Ask yourself a related question: "To what degree would you like each of the 8 listed QOL domains to enter into your time allocation priorities?' Circle your response: 3=considerably; 2=somewhat; 1=little or none.

Column 3: Place a check adjacent to the domain(s) where the score for what you would like is bigger than what you currently do (i.e. where there is a discrepancy).

Use these check marks as a compass or guide for determining your holistic approach to time allocation.

In summary, this chapter has suggested a useful framework to determine your time allocation priorities. It is a framework based on embracing the future, adapting to important social and political trends, and using a balanced approach based on preferred roles and a holistic perspective. There is always time, if you know your priorities. But even then, time is both scarce and precious. Learning how to maximize our time is the theme of Part II in which we describe six time management strategies that are based on good science and good judgment. Even though you may think you are currently handling time well (and maybe you are), we are certain you will find some helpful new strategies in the following chapters.

PART II

EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Be Proactive

Talk to Yourself

Be Organized

Stay Focused

Take Control

Recharge Your Batteries

CHAPTER 5 BE PROACTIVE

Don't expect the world to change unless you yourself are willing to change (B. Blatt)

Ultimately, each of us controls how we use time. Granted, everyone has externally based time demands, but in the end each of us decides how we use our discretionary time and the various strategies we use to manage ALL of our time. Hence, we need to be proactive in time usage and be forward thinking in our actions. In that regard, if you missed the basic point of Chapter 4, flip back and re-read the sections on the futurist and holistic perspectives. These two perspectives provide the framework for not just establishing our time allocation priorities, but also on being proactive in the development and use of the time management strategies presented in the following six chapters.

Being proactive means understanding three fundamental psychological principles: (a) knowing one's options and choosing among those options to increase available time; (b) maintaining an internal locus of control wherein one believes they have the ability to make a difference and control their lives; and (c) understanding the basic principles of behavioral change. Each of these principles is discussed in this chapter.

KNOWING ONE'S OPTIONS

The intent of the previous exercises resulting in understanding how we use time (Table 2.2), how we potentially waste time (Table 3.2), and what our personal time priorities are (Table 4.2) was to know one's options. The information contained in these tables should indicate clearly your fulfilled time priorities, desired personal time priorities, non-essential activities, and time robbers. Thus, you can now ask yourself:

1. "Can I fulfill my time priorities in less time by being more effective?" That's what the effective time management strategies discussed in subsequent chapters is all about.
2. "Can I increase available personal time by reducing the amount of time given to my time robbers?"
3. "Can I reduce the time devoted to non-essential activities by either outsourcing the task, saying 'no' more often, or combining two or more tasks into one?"

Being proactive results in answering each of these questions "yes." When you do so, you also exhibit what psychologists refer to as an internal locus of control.

INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

There is an extensive literature on the concept of locus of control, which refers to whether we feel we control our own behavior (internal locus of control) or whether we feel that our behavior is influenced more by others (external locus of control). In reference to time management, a sense of internal locus of control is basic to self-determination, personal control of time, and empowerment. Thus, an internal locus of control potentially reduces the number of 'other directed/initiated' and non-essential activities and some of the time robbers that you identified in Table 3.2. One other fact about internal locus of control: Those exhibiting it have both a more positive self concept *and* are more highly motivated.

Being proactive and changing one’s behavior to increase personal time is challenging. However, we do know that behavioral change is facilitated when certain principles of behavioral change are followed. There is ample evidence in the psychological literature that people can change their behavior (and hence get more time) by following the eight principles of behavior change summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. The Eight Principles of Behavioral Change

1.	Analyze where you are and where you want to go (Tables 2.2, 3.2, 4.2).
2.	Know where you are going (futuristic and holistic perspectives).
3.	Know how to get there (Chapters 6-11).
4.	Set specific, obtainable goals (e.g. increase my personal, discretionary time by 2 hours per week).
5.	Proceed in small, obtainable steps. The literature is very clear: make small changes over an extended time so that two things happen: you succeed, and you have multiple opportunities to reinforce yourself.
6.	Evaluate your changes (or outcomes) frequently.
7.	Reinforce yourself frequently for each successful step.
8.	Try alternative strategies if at first you don’t succeed.

In summary, gaining better control over both time demands and time usage requires that one is proactive. Since absolute time doesn’t increase (try as we might to get more than 1440 minutes a day or 168 hours per week) we need to think about those two options we mentioned earlier: either increase our efficiency or reduce unnecessary or extraneous time usage. Either option requires that we know our options, believe that we are the ultimate controllers of our time, and understand the basic principles of behavioral change. Thus, before beginning to read about, understand, and use the time management strategies suggested in the following chapters, let’s

do a reality check. Proceed only if you answer “yes” to each of the following four questions:

1. I agree there is a need for a book on time management and have completed all of the table shells presented thus far.
2. I understand the time paradox and how I currently use time.
3. I have a clear time management framework that includes my time use priorities, the options that I have to increase personal time, and the basic principles of behavioral change that underlie specific time management strategies.
4. I want to learn more.

CHAPTER 6 TALK TO YOURSELF

*You don't need a weatherman to know
which way the wind is blowing.
(Dylan, 2004, p. 20).*

Contrary to what you might have read or heard, it's okay to talk to yourself. The important thing is what you say to yourself. William James reminded us that ideas have consequences. For example, saying to oneself, "I can do it", "it will be okay", or "I have time" leads to very different consequences than saying to oneself, "I can't, won't, or don't have the time."

This chapter is about the yin and the yang of time management... that is, the effects on time management of positive and negative self talk. It's also about how our personalities affect both self talk and time utilization. Specifically, reading this chapter will increase your understanding of the effects of personality on time utilization, the power and efficiency of optimism, the time-robbing effects of irrational beliefs and cognitive traps, and factors influencing your self talk and use of time.

THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY

McCrae and Costa (1987, 1999) have developed a useful five factor model of personality. These five factors and their impact on time utilization are:

- Extraversion: characterized as outgoing, sociable, upbeat, friendly, assertive, and gregarious. Generally, extraverts get more done in a given time period.
- Neuroticism: characterized as anxious, hostile, self-conscious, insecure, and vulnerable. People who score high on this factor get less done; they are also less willing to delegate and trust.
- Openness to experience: associated with curiosity, flexibility, vivid fantasy, imaginativeness, artistic sensitivity, and unconventional attitudes. This factor is somewhat independent of time management, but closely associated with the theme of Chapter 10, "Recharge Your Batteries."
- Agreeableness: characterized as sympathetic, trusting, cooperative, modest, and straightforward. These characteristics fit well with the time management strategies related to the power of optimism (Chapter 6) and the effectiveness of synergy (Chapter 9).
- Conscientious: characterized as diligent, disciplined, well-organized, punctual, and dependable. This factor is closely associated with higher productivity, and efficient time utilization.

How much people can change their personalities is debatable. By all accounts, however, to maximize how we use time requires that we move towards being more extraverted, open to experience, agreeable, and conscientious.

THE POWER AND EFFICIENCY OF OPTIMISM

Optimism is the general tendency to expect good outcomes and generally to not 'sweat the small stuff.' Optimists maximize the use of time and also have some additional characteristics that are time-sensitive. Four of these characteristics relate to social supports, coping with stress, locus of control, and right to left thinking.

Social Supports

Social supports refer to various types of aid and succor provided by members of one's social networks. Social supports and social capital have been shown to enhance health, subjective well-being, and available time (Willis & Fegan, 2001).

Coping with Stress

Research suggests that optimists cope with stress in effective ways (Aspinwall et al., 2001). Specifically, optimists are more likely to engage in action-oriented, problem-focused coping. They are also more willing to seek social support, and they are more likely to emphasize the positive in their approach to stressful event. Once again, being optimistic increases one's efficiency and thus available time.

Locus of Control

The issue here is to whom (or what) we ascribe the basis of our actions: an internal locus of control ("me and my") or an external locus of control ("you and they"). Evidence is quite clear about two things: First, people with a high internal locus of control have a more positive self concept and a higher level of motivation (thus they get more done within a given time period). Second, intrinsic motivation has more positive outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1994).

Right to Left Thinking

It has been our observation that optimists are comfortable in using right to left thinking that is characterized by looking at one's desired time-related outcomes and then asking, "How do I need to manage my time for these desired outcomes to occur?" That type of reasoning saves time since it *is action oriented, focuses on task completion, and allows one to marshal efforts towards a clearly defined goal or objective*. Thus, a person can reward themselves for completing the task. Internal reward leads to positive self talk,

increased motivation, and connecting effort to outcomes. These, in turn, increase effectiveness and efficiency---hence enhanced time utilization.

IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AND COGNITIVE TRAPS

Cognitive psychologists talk a lot about irrational beliefs and cognitive traps. As we'll see, each significantly affects what we think, what we do, and how we spend time.

Irrational Beliefs

These are beliefs that are difficult if not impossible to obtain regardless of how much time and energy are expended. Two common examples are "we must be competent in everything we do" and "we must be loved by everyone." It's okay to occasionally be a clod, and to accept the fact that some people just might not like us. Both situations are fine, and understanding the irrationality of these two beliefs can save countless hours of phone calls, goodwill efforts, buying flowers, and lost sleep.

Cognitive Traps

These are similar to irrational beliefs but don't reflect desired, albeit irrational, outcomes. The following six cognitive traps can be real time robbers:

- All-or-nothing thinking: You see things in black or white categories, and if a situation is anything less than perfect, you see it as a total failure. The reality is that most of life is a shade of grey.
- Overgeneralization: You see a single event as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as always or never.
- Mental filter: you pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively. One word of criticism erases all the praise you have received.

- Emotional reasoning: You act quickly on the basis of how you feel at the moment. Remember: count to 10.
- Should statements: You tell yourself that things should be the way you hoped or expected them to be. These statements can also lead to feelings of guilt and time spent worrying.
- Personalization and blame: You hold yourself personally responsible for events that are not entirely under your control.

WHAT IS YOUR SELF-TALK?

We have summarized in Table 6.1 the key factors discussed in this chapter. This is a simple table to complete since you need only to make two check marks per factor. Check ‘yes’ under ‘status’ if you exhibit the factor listed, and then place a second check mark in the column entitled, “effect on available time”--does the factor increase or decrease your available time? Once done, analyze the pattern of check marks. Use this pattern as a basis for behavioral change consistent with those principles summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 6.1. Factors Influencing Self Talk and Available Time

Factor	Status		Effect on Available Time	
	Present	Absent	Increases	Decreases
Extraversion				
Neuroticism				
Open to Experiences				
Agreeableness				
Conscientious				
Optimism-Effects on: Social supports Coping with stress Locus of control Right to left thinking				
Irrational beliefs*				
Cognitive traps*				

*See text for examples.

In summary, self talk helps us to put things into their proper perspective. In that regard, we need to remember three things: (a) don't sweat the small stuff (unless everything is small, which is seldom the case); (b) don't worry about things you can't control (95% of the things we worry about never happen); and (c) be proactive to increase predictability and control and thus reduce stress. Talking to oneself is a key time management strategy—assuming that it increases your available time. Hopefully, this chapter has sensitized you to that fact *and* suggested ways that your self talk can increase your efficient use of time. To that end, note the following general guidelines:

- Strive to be extraverted, open to experiences, agreeable, and conscientious.
- Be optimistic and remember that the power and efficiency of optimism relates to social supports, coping with stress, internal locus of control, and right to left thinking.
- Minimize your irrational beliefs, remembering that one does not have to be competent in everything and no one is loved by everyone.
- Watch for cognitive traps that relate to all-or-none thinking, over-generalization, mental filters, emotional reasoning, should statements, and personalization and blame.
- Complete Table 6.1, which will get you ready (i.e. organized) for Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7 BE ORGANIZED

If you build castles in the air, your work need not be lost: that is where they should be. Now put the foundation under them.
(Thoreau, 1960, p. 46).

Disorganization is one of the greatest—if not THE greatest—time robber. Our belief is that the most important time saver is an electronic, physical, or mental filing system that allows one to find things easily and thus prevents wasting time looking for needed things. Estimates are that we spend at least 40 minutes per day looking for lost articles, references, or other items. Furthermore, we can save two weeks per year of productive time if we handle each piece of paper we encounter only once. That could add up to increasing our lives by 1-2 years!

LISTS VS. FILES

No book on time management can pass the muster without discussing the importance of list making. So, before we turn to the major focus of this chapter—a usable information storage and retrieval system (yes, a filing system)—let's think briefly about list making and how that relates to being organized and time management.

We seriously doubt if making lists per se increases our effective use of time, even though it does help us be better organized. Making

a list is more of a memory cue and a way to prioritize activities than a time management strategy. Although our lists give others (and probably ourselves) the impression of being organized, our opinion is that lists deal more with memory than time. Even though you may disagree (and that is fine) let us point out our two main concerns about lists and list makers: First, some people spend more time in making their lists than doing the tasks or activities listed; and second, watch the tendency to use list making as a subtle form of procrastination. We've seen this a lot, especially among those who post or file their lists as if they were a commodity.

In distinction to lists, which are memory cues, files are used for information retrieval. In that regard, an effective filing system (or to use psychological jargon a usable information storage and retrieval system) that is based on important tasks and personal priorities accomplishes the following:

- Helps us organize and communicate our thoughts, plans, and creativity.
- Allows us to find things we need easily and therefore prevents wasting time looking for those needed items.
- Reduces our sensory overload. Everyone is bombarded daily with a million bits of information. We need to filter out unnecessary information and we can use files to do that.
- Allows us to stay ahead of the 8 ball and be proactive—and thus feel less stress, increased predictability and control, and get a good night's sleep the night before the exam or grant deadline rather than pulling an 'all-nighter.'
- Reduces the amount of time we shuffle papers on our desk or work area. Subsequently, we reduce both the time required to find something and shelf space. The criterion for a good article or book chapter, for example, is to rip it out and file it according to upcoming projects. It's amazing how much extra time that simple process gives (sorry book and journal editors).

We do not think it makes any difference whether one uses paper folders, electronic devices, or mental files (all of us know people whose filing system is in their heads). What is important are two things: First, organize your files around topics or projects that are important to you personally. Second, one needs to understand how an effective [filing] system work.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM

Effective systems have an input, a throughput, and an output. So should our filing system. The *input* is controlled by important and prioritized projects or topics. The *throughput* includes ideas, articles, and other relevant information related to those important and prioritized topics/projects. The *output* refers to what you do with the information--the report/article written, the trip taken, the tax return filed, and the book or poem written (and hopefully published).

At this point, throw the file away! Don't become a file hoarder or one who keeps files that are never looked at again. Files should be active participants in one's life. As stated by James Gleick in *Faster, The Acceleration of Just About Everything* (2000), ...a factoid much bruited in the time-management business holds that 95 percent of all documents ever filed remain filed forever, in the eternal file-folder night, never to be looked at again. Thus....thou shalt index thy files, for the sake of organization and quick retrieval. But don't forget to empty your inbox and purge six files, any six files, every day. (p. 229)

In summary, the effective use of time requires organization. This chapter has suggested primarily that our organization increases (and thus gives us more discretionary time) through the use of an effective filing system. But there is more: Being organized also involves the following time-related aphorisms that we have developed:

- Treat time as capital. Just as political and social scientists talk about political, social, and financial capital, we also need to appreciate the importance of time capital, and treat time as a commodity. Viewed from this perspective, good time management is like a good investment—it pays handsome dividends.

- Be early in meeting deadlines. That will allow not just more discretionary time, but will also reduce the stress connected with overnight deadlines and missed deadlines. It's so much easier in the long run to be early.
- Write it down before you forget it. Remember the earlier discussion of why making lists is important.
- Respect the computer, but don't become its slave. Two recent articles in the *Futurist* (2006) caught our attention in this regard. The first article discussed how the internet will increase the need for social connections and indicated that new forms of mental anguish (referred to as mental illness in the article) such as 'digital depression' and 'connected aloneness' are on the rise as people spend more time engaging virtually with others. This relates directly to a second article that discussed how computers may soon have artificial empathy for their users. The thrust of this article was that computer scientists are developing ways for machines to sense their users' mood, and that a more user-aware computer could one day pick up on your body language, facial expressions, and tone of your voice and then perhaps pull up a soothing photo of your puppy to calm you down if you're upset.
- Maintain a healthy balance among your essential toys: overnight delivery, cell phone, fax, e-mails, and electronic devices. Remember, he who dies with the most toys [may not] win.
- Throwing things away is okay. It saves shelf space, storage bins, and shuffling time.
- Organize your ideas. If you need help, check out the "Science Fair Web Site Plan." Here you will find reference to Mindmanager 6 (currently used at 60 of the FORTUNE 100 companies for brainstorming and streamlining meetings), and Inspiration 7.6 (used in schools throughout the country to teach students how to outline).
- Don't overlook the time saving advantages to a good nights sleep, balanced nutrition, and proper weight. That too takes organization.

CHAPTER 8 STAY FOCUSED

*It is not enough to have a good mind.
The main thing is to use it well.
(Descartes; Geary, 2005, p. 20).*

The mind is a funny thing....it likes to be organized and process information in a fairly determined and well understood way. This chapter is primarily about understanding how the human brain processes information and how that understanding can help us stay focused, and in the process use time more efficiently. Our understanding of how the brain works leads to two observations: multitasking might not be all that effective (or efficient), and using aphorisms help us stay focused and save time.

HOW THE BRAIN PROCESSES INFORMATION

The crowning glory of the central nervous system is the brain. Although the human brain weighs only about three pounds (regardless of your IQ) it can be held in one hand. It contains billions of interacting cells that integrate information from inside and outside the body, coordinates the body's actions, and enables talking, thinking, remembering, planning, creativity, dreaming, and yes...using time efficiently.

The human brain processes information and forms memories in three sequential steps (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968, 1971; Weiten, 2004):

- *Sensory memory* is a very quick process that holds a large amount of information just long enough (generally less than a second) for a small fraction of it to be selected for longer storage. This type of memory provides the basis for information storage and retrieval that involves three key processes: encoding (entering information or forming a memory code), storage (maintaining encoded information in memory over time), and retrieval (recovering information from memory stores). Thus, for information to be retrieved in a timely fashion, it must be encoded--and this requires paying close attention (and maybe even rehearsing) to the information impacting one's sensory memory.
- *Short term memory* is a limited-capacity store that can maintain unrehearsed information for up to about 20 seconds. Three important qualities to short term memory are important for time management. First, the information in short term memory is lost quickly unless it is rehearsed. Second, short term memory is limited in the number of items it can hold (about 7+/- 2 digits—or about the number of digits in one's telephone number). Third, you can increase the capacity of short term memory by combining items, facts, or ideas to facilitate later retrieval.
- *Long term memory* is an unlimited capacity store that can hold information over lengthy periods. The key thing about long term memory is retrieving it, and that is where lists and filing systems come into play. However, these preclude the impact of one other aspect of human information processing: why we forget. Forgetting is generally due to ineffective encoding, decay due to non-use over time, and interference from other material. The first and third of these reasons suggests that even though very popular and commonly used, multitasking may not be an efficient way to process information and save time.

CAUTIONS ABOUT MULTITASKING

Given what we have just discussed about how the human brain processes information, consider this oxymoron that appeared in a recent *Time Magazine* article (January, 16, 2006, p.72): “E-mail and cell phones help us multitask, but they also drive us to distraction.” It is not our intention to either down play the potential importance of multitasking or to knock it (if it works for you, fine); however, it is our intention to point out ‘a potential myth of multi-tasking’ and that it may not be all that effective in the long run as a time management strategy (Kirn, 2007). Note, for example, the following statement by Jordan Grafman, chief of the cognitive neuroscience section of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS):

Decades of research (not to mention common sense) indicate that the quality of one’s output and depth of thought deteriorate as one attends to ever more tasks (*Time*, p. 51).

Scientists are just beginning to assess the impact on memory of multitasking as well as its effects on learning, reasoning, socializing, creativity, and [as you might guess] time management. There is increased understanding of ‘togglng action’, the anatomy of multitasking, and the suggestion that if one were to multitask, allow enough time for—that is pay extra attention to—the sequential nature of information processing. As a sidebar, two interesting phenomena are occurring in reference to information overload and multitasking. One is that we now have a new generational name: The Multitask Generation. The second interesting phenomenon is found in Ed Hallowell’s recent book (2006) entitled, *Crazybusy: Overstretched, Overbooked and About to Snap—Strategies for Coping with a World Gone ADD*. Therein, the author introduces three new terms to our lexicon: *Frazzling* (which is frantic, ineffective multitasking, typically with the delusion that you are getting a lot done, but with the quality of work poor); *pizzled* (which is how you feel when someone you’re with pulls out a cell phone or a BlackBerry and uses it without an explanation or apology); and *doomdart* (which is the internal distraction of a forgotten task that pops into our mind when you are doing something else; doomdart is a side effect of frazzling).

Two popular and frequently referenced books are *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms* (Gross, 1987) and *The World is a Phrase: A Brief History of the Aphorism* (Geary, 2005). An aphorism is a concise statement of a principles or a terse formation of a truth or sentiment. According to Gross and Geary, the major characteristics of an aphorism are: it is brief (e.g. "I never let school interfere with my education"), is a generalization (e.g. "time is money"), it offers a comment on some current aspect of life but meant to be permanent and universally applicable (e.g. "make love not war"), is a form of literature that bears the stamp and style of the mind that created it (e.g. "life is like playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument at the same time"), and it stands by itself (e.g. "human life is a constant preoccupation with the future").

So, what do aphorisms have to do with time management? A lot. They stimulate our thinking, help us to organize our thoughts, communicate, and stay focused. Thus, they provide a framework for thinking and doing, and in that sense allow us more time for other endeavors.

In summary, staying focused saves time. For that to occur, however, we need to understand how the brain processes information and how essential it is to get material into the memory system to facilitate its storage through good mnemonics, and retrieve it in meaningful ways. Meaningful and organized information is stored and retrieved much more efficiently, and that is a real time saver. That's why a good writer always starts with a detailed outline.

From our perspective, the jury is still out regarding multitasking. So, be cautious. As the Roman poet, Manlius suggested: *finis origine pendet*: the ends depends on the beginning. For many of us, however, aphorisms do help in either getting or staying focused as well as stimulating and organizing our thinking. As Descartes reminded us, it is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well.

CHAPTER 9 TAKE CONTROL

*Don't wait for the last judgment.
It takes place every day.
(Camus; Gross, 1987,p.347)*

Aristotle had it right when he suggested that the purpose of all thought is action. In addition, there are three kinds of people in reference to the wise use of time: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened. Converting thought into action and making things happen depends on taking control of one's life.

Taking control of one's life requires that we make decisions, understand our cognitive learning style, cooperate with others (a concept referred to as 'synergy'), be persuasive, and use a number of 'take charge tactics.' Taking charge is important not just as an effective time management strategy, but also as an effective mechanism for reducing stress. Never forget that the two major causes of stress (including stress related to having no time) are lack of predictability and lack of control. Thus, this chapter is really about both how to reduce stress and how to increase discretionary time by getting more predictability and control into your life.

MAKING DECISIONS

Decision making involves evaluating alternatives and making choices among them. Although it sounds simple enough, decisions regarding how we use our time are complicated due to external factors over which we might have little control, and internal factors such as the lack of a framework for establishing time use priorities. Not making decisions can be a real time robber if it leads to procrastination, excessive worry, and/or inaction. Thus, decision making can be facilitated (and thus one can save time) through analyzing the pros and cons of each alternative. A framework for this analysis is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1. Decision Making Analytic Framework

Alternatives	Relative Importance	Advantages	Disadvantages
1.			
2.			
3.			

Completing the analysis involves a fairly simple 4-step process. First, list the alternatives (generally there are three or fewer). They may involve spending time on one activity vs. another activity, buying product 1 or 2, spending time with family vs. working on a manuscript, attending a meeting or managing by walking around, building a house or renting, moving, or not moving etc. Second, rate the importance to you of each alternative on a 3-point scale: 3 = highly important; 2 = somewhat important; 1 = not very or not important. You should check your time use priorities (Table 4.2) if relevant. Third, list the advantages and disadvantages to each alternative. Fourth, analyze the results. The relative 'importance x advantage factor' will be key in making a decision.

Over the years we have used this 4-step process both personally and professionally. It generally works very well in regard to assisting one to make decisions *and* saving considerable time that otherwise would be spent in excessive worry, procrastination, debate, indecision, and inaction.

COGNITIVE LEARNING STYLES

People learn and process information very differently. For example, visualize a matrix with a horizontal and a vertical axis. In reference to the horizontal axis, we can *gather information* by attending to details ('receptive') or looking for general points or relationships ('perceptive'). Analogously, in reference to the vertical axis, we can *process information* by being 'systematic' or 'intuitive.' Time utilization is inherently involved in these two processes. It takes more time to be 'systematic receptive' than 'perceptive intuitive.' Thus, from a time management perspective, we should attempt to be more perceptive intuitive.

This suggestion and observation underlies the key theme in M. Gladwell's highly successful book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (2005) in which he discusses the concept of 'rapid cognition.' Effective time management strategies based on the effectiveness of both being perceptive intuitive and practicing rapid cognition include:

- Look for cues, general points, patterns, and relationships. Don't get bogged down in compulsive details.
- Be willing to use trial and exploration. Give ideas a chance; most decisions can be reversed.
- Avoid preconceptions like "I don't have time."
- Rely on a delicate balance between deliberation and intuition.
- Recognize that frugality matters in time management. Reduce things down in decision making to their simplest elements. Remember the acronym KISS ("keep it simple stupid").
- Complete the loop and finish the task. Make the decision and then reward yourself.
- Explain cognitive learning styles to those colleagues who are systematic receptive and encourage them to be more perceptive intuitive. This will save both of you time.

SYNERGY

Steven Covey (2004) introduced the concept of synergy as a principle of creative cooperation. Indeed, $1+1$ frequently = 3. Synergy is built on trust and cooperation. The process can also save us significant time. Creative cooperation (i.e. synergy) can be both an effective time management strategy and a time booster as we:

- Build on one another's strengths and contributions. There is no reason to keep reinventing wheels.
- Be proactive and involve others in creative endeavors and overcoming challenges. Everyone likes to be a part of a winning team.
- Think "win-win" so that through collaboration everyone wins. The corollary is that shared responsibilities result in more time for everyone.
- Know your strengths and limitations, and then delegate or outsource if necessary. You can waste a lot of time for what a repair person can do in very little.

PERSUASIVENESS

How much time do you spend persuading yourself and others to do something? It could add up to quite a bit. If the purpose of all thought is action, unfortunately time spent in persuading others is frequently lost time. How then can we save time persuading ourselves and others? Very simply: by understanding the persuasive process and key factors affecting that process.

The process of persuasion essentially boils down to who (the source) communicates what (the message) by what means (the channel) to whom (the receiver). Key factors affecting each of these variables include (Lippa, 1994; Petty & Wegener, 1998; Petty et al., 1997):

- *Source factors*: Credibility, expertise, trust worthiness, likeability, attractiveness, similarity. These factors relate not only to the person attempting to persuade others, but also to

how one feels about themselves in regard to credibility (e.g. good judgment), expertise (e.g. do you have the facts?), and trustworthiness (e.g. do you accept your own judgment?).

- *Message factors.* Fear vs. logic (logic is better), one sided vs. two sided argument (two sided is better as exemplified in the 4-step decision making process described earlier), and repetition. A recently published and very popular book, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (Heath & Heath, 2007) expands on the source and message factors. In this book, the authors explain how to get people to pay attention to what you say and suggest specifically that you create traction by taking your idea and present it as simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, and [as an] emotional story.
- *Channel factors:* In person (by far the best), phone/texting (effectiveness depends on many factors), or computer (quite effective, but if important, most people will want a hard copy and/or follow up with a call).
- *Receiver factors:* expectations (it is good to forewarn) and prior knowledge of the issues. Information and knowledge in the receiver generally facilitate the effectiveness of our attempted persuasion and hence saves time.

TAKE CHARGE TACTICS

You can't take charge without being assertive. One needs to take charge of as much time as realistically possible, realizing that we have jobs, families, personal/ professional responsibilities, and hobbies. You can take charge of time and still have friends by employing the following take charge tactics:

- Be decisive, make decisions quickly, and don't procrastinate.
- Learn to say no. As suggested by William Ury in his new book (2006) *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes*, to say yes to the right things requires having to say no to a lot of other things. Suggestions offered in that regard include: (a) serve your no sandwiched between two yeses; (b)

focus on underlying interests instead of positions; (c) develop a plan B; and (d) say no without saying no as in 'I have other plans' or 'I would rather decline than do a bad job.'

- Be perceptive intuitive in how you gather and process information. Filling a sponge takes time.
- Be synergistic. Not only does $1+1 = 3$, but increased social supports and time sharing are frequent by-products.
- Be persuasive. Valuable time can be saved if we understand that it is not just the message, but also factors that relate to the message, the channel, and the receiver that determine our persuasiveness. 'Made to stick' makes good sense from a time management perspective.
- Add predictability to your life. This can be done by turning off e-mail during parts of the day, scheduling a set time of day for writing or other important tasks (e.g. exercise when you are watching or listening to the news), working away from the major source of interruptions (e.g. the office, the living room), turning off the phone (85% of cell phone calls are social, not business related), putting a 'do not disturb' sign on your door (people will still like you), or establishing a consistent wake/sleep cycle (irregular cycles are a major cause of insomnia and thus decreased productivity).
- Recognize that the task at hand can frequently be performed later, considered from a new angle, or if a waste of time, ignored.
- Stop fooling oneself about our capacities to juggle. We need to resist the self-talk that "it will only take a second" impulse to read an e-mail, answer a text message, or talk with a colleague or friend.
- Stop pretending that we are machines that can endlessly process tasks without a break. As suggested by Hallowell (2006), prioritize ruthlessly and cultivate the lilies or the things that fulfill you and cut the leeches that deplete you. This suggestion relates to the strategies suggested in Chapter 10

related to recharging your batteries, and described in Chapter 4 regarding determining one's time allocation priorities.

- Be aware of successful execution factors. As discussed by Clovey (2004) these relate to *clarity* (knowing goals and priorities), *commitment* (buying into the goals), *translation* (understanding what one needs to do), *enabling* (perceiving the proper structure, system, and freedom to do the task), *synergy* (working with others), and *accountability* (celebrating success and holding ourselves accountable).
- Simplify your life.

In conclusion, we cannot put off living until we are ready. As discussed by the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset (referenced in Gross, 1987, p. 348) the most salient characteristic of life is its coerciveness; it is always urgent, 'here and now,' and without any possible postponement. Thus, to get time, we need to make time by taking control. This chapter has suggested that taking control of one's life requires that we make decisions, understand our cognitive learning styles, cooperate with others, be persuasive, and use a number of take charge tactics. And as Dr. Johnson in *The Idler* (1758, referenced in Gross, 1987, p. 349) reminds us, "time ought, above all other kinds of property, to be free from invasion."

CHAPTER 10 RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES

*Nature refuses to rest.
(Updike, 1997)*

Batteries wear out when are used for long periods without being recharged. The same is true of people. Psychologists use the term 'burnout' to reflect this condition.

Burnout is a well researched phenomenon whose major characteristics include the development of a negative self concept; reduced interest in people, jobs, and activities; and a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose. Some of the major work on burnout has been done by Leiter and Maslach (2001) who describe the antecedents, components, and consequences of burnout. The *major antecedents* are work overload, lack of social support, lack of control and autonomy, and inadequate recognition and reward; the *major components* are exhaustion, cynicism, and lowered self-efficacy; and the *major consequences* are increased physical illness, increased absenteeism and turnover, decreased commitment to one's job, and reduced productivity. Each of these three characteristics result in less efficiency and poorer time utilization. Thus, we can gain time and at the same time become more efficient by recharging our batteries. In this chapter we suggest three strategies for recharging one's batteries: pursuing creative outlets, practicing effective stress management, and stopping and rewarding yourself.

PURSuing CREATIVE OUTLETS

Creativity involves the generation of ideas or products that are original, novel, and potentially inventive. Creative thinking is fresh, innovative, and inventive. Although some jobs require and/or reinforce creativity, most jobs focus on convergent rather than divergent thinking. The difference between the two is important in time management.

- Convergent thinking involves narrowing down a list of alternatives to converge on a single correct answer, approach, or product. This is the type of thinking we use in decision making (see Table 9.1).
- Divergent thinking involves expanding the range of alternatives by generating many solutions, ideas, or works of art. This is the type of thinking that should guide our use of personal time to pursue creative outlets. Such thinking also increases the sense of meaning that people need to feel.

Why is pursuing creative outlets an important time management strategy? There are a number of reasons. First, it allows you to control time, rather than feeling being controlled by time. Second, it prevents burnout due to repetition of jobs or tasks. Third, it allows you to be creative and produce something of which you can be proud, and for which you can receive either internal or external reward.

PRACTICING EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT

Prolonged stress can lead not only to burnout but physical complications as well. Either effect reduces available time. Stress is best understood as a 3-phase process that involves potentially stressful events, subjective cognitive appraisal, and one or more stress responses that can be emotional, physical, and/or behavioral. Increased time for personal priorities results when we: reduce stressful events by focusing on how we can increase their predictability and the control we have over them, reframe how we perceive the stress (e.g. viewing the event as an opportunity rather than a problem), and minimize our non-productive responses.

Successful stress management strategies focus on reducing the three major sources of stress: lack of predictability (understand the antecedents and consequences of behavior), lack of control (use those ‘take charge tactics’ discussed in Chapter 9), and negative self-talk (wherein one frequently tells themselves, “it will be okay” and “there is time”). An effective stress management strategy also uses constructive coping strategies that (Weitan, 2004):

- Involve confronting problems directly.
- Are based on reasonably realistic appraisals of stress and coping mechanisms.
- Involve learning to recognize, and in some cases inhibit, potentially disruptive emotional responses.
- Include making efforts to ensure that my body is not especially vulnerable to the possibly damaging effects of stress. Proper rest (recommended: 7 1/2 to 8 hours per night) and proper nutrition (count those calories and understand the food groups/pyramid) are essential.

The benefits of these four strategies are that when used effectively, they improve our psychological and physical wellness and thereby increases both the effective use of time and the amount of discretionary time.

STOPPING AND REWARDING YOURSELF

Are you surprised that stopping and rewarding yourself can be an effective time management strategy? It should not surprise you, since self reward may be the only kind we get and rewarding behavior leads to many positive consequences, including increased available time. This section of the chapter explains why.

Psychologists tell us that in order for people to be motivated they must be rewarded 75% of the time. That is, people need to be rewarded frequently in order to be motivated. Thus, we need to think about how to internally (and occasionally externally via gifts to

ourselves) reward ourselves. Some examples of self talk that involves rewarding yourself are:

- I did a good job.
- I stuck to my diet.
- I completed that manuscript/project ahead of time.
- I understand the food pyramid and follow it.
- I delegated and trusted....and the results were good.
- I killed one more time robber.
- I found personal time.
- It's okay to work hard and then play hard.

Stopping and rewarding oneself is directly related to a positive sense of psychological well-being. The work of C. D. Ryff (1989), for example, provides a useful psychological well-being framework for identifying the areas wherein one can self-reinforce and at the same time understand the importance of outcomes from its use. According to this framework, a person should stop and reward themselves for self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

In conclusion, effective time usage and recharging one's batteries are highly (and positively) correlated. The bottom line is that we will have more available time—and use the time we have more efficiently—when we take the time to recharge our batteries through pursuing creative outlets, practicing effective stress management, and stopping and rewarding ourselves.

So, how long does it take to recharge one's batteries? How long it takes is not the issue. The effect of the recharging is what is important, and recharging one's batteries is not a thing that we do; it is a life style that we lead.

PART III
TIME MANAGEMENT IS MORE THAN
CRUNCHING TIME

*Time Management Strategies and Criteria Used
by Surveyed Time Gurus
Strategies and Scenarios*

CHAPTER 11

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND CRITERIA USED BY SURVEYED 'TIME GURUS'

*Find out how things work and then accept it.
(Schopenhauer, Geary, 2005, p. 113).*

As part of the development of the material for this book, 27 colleagues and friends whom we consider good users of time (i.e. 'time gurus') were surveyed regarding the top three time management strategies they used, and the top three criteria employed to allocate time. Each respondent (see Acknowledgments-page 83) is a well known and well published professional in the fields of intellectual disability, developmental disabilities, special education, or management. Respondents were 11 females and 16 males from 10 countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Mainland China, Spain, Taiwan, and the United States).

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In Table 11.1 you will see the rank ordering (based on percentage) of the time management strategies used, along with exemplars of each strategy. It is clear from these data that the four most frequently used time management strategies are being organized, taking control, being proactive, and staying focused. Synergy, recharging batteries, and talking to oneself are strategies reported to be used less often.

Table 11.1. Rank Ordering of Time Management Strategies Used By the Respondent Group

Strategy and Exemplars		Percent Using
Be Organized	Lists	38%
	Schedules (calendars, electronic organizers)	
	Files (especially for high priority areas)	
	Blackberries and e-mail	
	Mind watch and outlook calendar	
Take Control	Prioritize tasks and requests	21%
	Schedule time for writing	
	Turn off e-mail during parts of day	
	Outsource non-essential tasks	
Be Proactive	Schedule time blocks outside the office	15%
	Arrive at work early to plan and prepare	
	Establish personal deadlines	
	Plan ahead	
Stay Focused	Do things right the first time	12%
	Do most important things first	
	Work on endless tasks a little at a time	
	Balance time costs with personal benefits	
Synergy	Involve others	8%
	Team work	
	Invest time in others	
Recharge Batteries	Use prime productive time to increase efficiency	3%
	Schedule personal rewards	
	Allow time for regular exercise	
Talk to Yourself	Build on previous successful experiences/ materials	3%
	An hour is made up of minutes...use them all	
	Give yourself time for personal reflection	

TIME ALLOCATION CRITERIA

Five time allocation criteria were mentioned most frequently (and in equal percentages) by the respondents: family, quality of life considerations, professional contributions and responsibilities, personal values, and the development of others. Key aspects of each included:

- Family: the need to attend to family issues, relationships, and commitments.
- Quality of life considerations: the importance of a balanced life; the need for a holistic perspective; and the relevance of personal growth, physical well-being, self-determination, and social relationships.
- Professional contributions and responsibilities: the need to meet deadlines, pursue professional growth and development, obtain tenure and promotion, and honor key roles (e.g. commissions, offices, positions).
- Personal values: whether and how closely the opportunity matches values, life goals, and contributes to a better world; whether the opportunity will help one learn and develop as a decent and responsible human being; and whether the activities are truly important to oneself or others.
- Development of others: investing one's time in making the time of others more productive; determining whether someone else could do the same task as well or better, in which case let them do it; supporting others; and keeping others on task and responsible for producing outcomes.

The equal weighting given to these five criteria suggests strongly that they are not discrete phenomena and that we use time allocation criteria in an interactive and dynamic way to reflect the importance of—and obligation to—one's family, profession, colleagues, personal values, and desired life of quality. In that regard, life would be simpler (maybe) if only one criterion for allocating time was required to be met. At the same time, however, it is good that we have the opportunity to make choices and allocate our valuable time to those

entities, activities, and responsibilities that we value. Prioritizing criteria will obviously vary from person to person and understandably for any one person, from time to time. What's worth remembering, however, is that for most of us, time will be allocated on the basis of factors related to family, profession, personal values, and supporting others.

TIME MANAGEMENT APHORISMS

The respondent group also provided a number of potentially very useful time management aphorisms that are listed below. We trust that these aphorisms will be beneficial, effective, and make you think.

- An hour is made up of minutes...use them all.
- Schedule time for writing....like a meeting with yourself.
- Schedule time for personal rewards and regular exercise.
- Be proactive: anticipate upcoming issues and problems...and plan ahead.
- Use technology to simplify routine tasks and enhance personal efficiency and effectiveness.
- Prioritize lists and update daily.
- Use prime productive time for just that...productivity.
- Do things right the first time so they don't have to be redone.
- Don't compile the traditional 'to do list' based on habit and ritual. The key thing to finding time to do the important stuff is to no longer spend time on the tasks and responsibilities that we need to let go—hence develop what 'I'm not going to do list.'
- Arrive early with a clear head.
- Throw away hard copies of everything you can....and store the rest on line.

- Look for 'two-fers', 'three-fers' etc. to get multiple benefits/needs addressed from one investment effort.
- Always look for the smallest task that will produce the largest effect.
- Invest your time in making the time of others more productive.
- Start each day with the most important task, not the most pleasant task.
- Balance opportunities with how well they match personal values, life goals, and the development of others.
- Don't look at emails (other people's priorities) until you have completed your priorities.
- Give yourself personal time.

CHAPTER 12

STRATEGIES AND SCENARIOS

*....and now I have a better understanding
of which problems are important and which
ones aren't (Kandel, 2007)*

Time management is more than crunching time. Rather, it is ALL about knowing your time utilization priorities and practicing effective time management strategies. It is also about understanding which time-related problems are important, and which ones are not. Thus, rather than attempting to crunch time, we should focus on maximizing the available time that we have and making good time allocation decisions. To do so requires the book's suggested mantra: priorities and strategies.

Throughout this brief book we have stressed the importance of understanding the value of time and the importance of choices. That understanding is based on how one uses time and how time is allocated. But as the Japanese proverb reminds us, 'vision without action is a daydream.' Thus, we need to implement effective time management strategies such as those six described in Chapters 5-10: be proactive, talk to yourself, be organized, stay focused, take control, and recharge your batteries.

Each of us uses one or more of these strategies to one degree or another and to varying degrees of success. To maximize that success, let's review the key points stressed throughout the text.

- Effective time management involves understanding one's priorities and using effective time management strategies.
- Effective time management starts with understanding how one uses time, identifying one's time robbers, and determining one's time allocation priorities.
- Time allocation priorities reflect both futuristic and holistic perspectives.
- Effective time management strategies are based on being proactive, talking to oneself, being organized, staying focused, taking control, and recharging one's batteries.

In conclusion, human life IS a preoccupation with the future. The jury is still out, however, regarding whether or not in the future we will have more or less control over time demands and our use of time. Note the following two scenarios (Robinson & Godbey, 2005):

- *In the future we will have more control over our use of time.* More flexible work schedules and 24-hour services will allow people to customized their daily and weekly use of time, and technologies will reduce the time involved in any one activity. In addition, workers will insist on flextime and part-time schedules, fewer people will have to travel long distances for essential goods and services, services will be more customized and personalized, technology operating in real time will allow more people to work outside of the traditional 9 to 5 workday, a decline of standardized life stages will mean a broadening of the concept of retirement, and differences in perceived time scarcity will highlight 'time poverty' as a legitimate social problem.
- *In the future, we will have less control over our use of time.* Factors contributing to increasing time stress in the future includes the growing elderly population that demands care giving from working adults, terrorism and security-related delays at public facilities, transportation gridlock, and sensory overload.

In addition, the jury is still out regarding the impact of technology on time utilization and time management. For example, Ray Kurzweil in his recent (2005) book, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, discusses the future where the pace of technological change will be so fast and far-reaching that human existence will be irreversibly altered. According to Kurzweil, we will combine our brain power—the knowledge, skills, and personality quirks that make us human—with our computer power in order to think, reason, communicate, and create in ways we can scarcely contemplate today. This merger of man and machine, coupled with the sudden explosion in machine intelligence and rapid innovation in gene research and nanotechnology, will result in a world where there is no distinction between the biological and the mechanical, or between physical and virtual reality. But, one should ask, “will this movement towards ‘singularity’ give us more time?”

Regardless of which of the above scenarios prevail in our futures, what is certain is that we will still be dealing with how we allocate 1440 minutes in a day and 168 hours in a week. That decision is essentially ours. Thus, it will continue to be important to understand one’s time allocation priorities and use effective time management strategies that result in our having sufficient time to do those things that we value....assuming that we know our priorities and use our time well.

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