



Time Management

Time is highly personal. We all receive exactly the same number of hours in a day, but each of us uses these hours differently. The way we elect to spend our time determines the quality of our lives. Some people always seem to have plenty of time to get their work done and to enjoy life. Many of us, however, often compromise our creativity and our natural sense of things in favor of daily routines. We grudgingly follow imposed schedules while secretly rebelling inside. We struggle with interruptions, paperwork, and procrastination while we yearn for more freedom, more flexibility, and more time. As we go through our lives feeling controlled by clocks, deadlines, and schedules, we may have many mixed feelings about time and how we use it.

.....Good Thoughts.....

“Father Time is not always a hard parent, and though he tarries for none of his children, he often lays his hand lightly on those who have used him well.”

“Those who make the worst use of their time most complain of its shortness.”

.....Key to success.....

An important key to being successful with time management is to make elephant hunting your highest priority. This means to go after your big, high payoff goals every day and to minimize the time you spend stomping on ants, those trivial details that take up so much time.

There will be ants and elephants in our lives. Unfortunately, many of us who are elephant hunters at heart end up stomping ants. The danger lies in making a career of ant stomping. We tend to go after

ants instead of elephants because we get a quicker kill and a higher body count. But remember, killing ants doesn't put much meat on the table. Hunting elephants will.

Chances are that you routinely set priorities, but do you set the right priorities on the right activities by keeping your long term objectives clearly in mind? Do you spend some time every day working towards achieving your important life goals or do you simply give high priority to items that demand the most attention? The key to setting priorities, the order in which you must accomplish things, is to ask yourself what is my payoff for doing this activity? How does it fit in with my long term objectives, with the overall direction of a particular project or with my career?

Often when we think about setting priorities, we lose track of the true direction we should be taking. We ask ourselves, 'What is the most urgent thing for me to be doing? What is the next most urgent thing? The items we think can wait often have the most significant payoff for us, perhaps not immediately, but in the future. *For example, everyone will agree that brushing our teeth daily is top priority, but they are not sure if exercising should have top priority.* Most people are more concerned about halitosis than heart attacks! Often we declare that we value certain things, but live our lives differently. Organize your workspace because you spend so many hours of your career in your work environment, it pays you highly to keep it clear of clutter and distractions. When your work area is clean and organized, you concentrate better, work faster, and remember longer. When you are under less pressure, you are more creative and you increase your problem solving abilities.



.....How to bag the big game.....

- ✓ Be realistic and aware of the limitations of your frame. Just as you can fit only so many marbles in a jar, you can fit only so many activities in your day. Don't over schedule. You'll feel much better when you finish 10 out of 10 items instead of 10 out of 20. What you leave undone can tire you; what you accomplish energizes you.
- ✓ Allow a time cushion. Don't cram every minute with activities. Provide for the unexpected such as clients are being late to appointments or projects taking longer than you estimated.
- ✓ Review your list every morning before beginning work. Keep it in sight. Refer to it periodically throughout the day to keep your objectives in mind.

- ✓ If you do something during the day that is not on your list, add it. At the end of the day, you can look back over your list and realize that you accomplished more than you had originally intended.
- ✓ Before doing each item on your list, ask 'Why me?' If someone else can or should be doing that item, turn it over to her or him.
- ✓ Group related activities. For example, if you have an important call to make, make your other calls while you are still at the phone.
- ✓ Hunt an elephant, or part of an elephant, each day. Focus on payoff instead of urgency. Do something every day to move you closer to your goals. Just dreaming is not enough!

.....Good Thoughts.....

"First say to yourself what you would be; and then what you have to do."

"Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men."

"Plan for the future because that's where you are going to spend the rest of your life."

.....Being Efficient versus being Effective.....

Let's get rich. If I had a hundred bills in my hand, ninety-eight of them Rs 1 note and two of them Rs 100 notes, and a whirlwind blew them all through the room, what would be your strategy for picking them up? If you are thinking in terms of being *efficient*, you would think, I'll pick up the money closest to me and work my way toward the two Rs 100 notes.

If you are thinking in terms of being *effective*, you would ask, where did the hundreds go? You would head for those even if they had blown across the room. Maybe you'd only get the Rs 100 notes and someone else would get all the rest. However, at best, the other person would have Rs 98, plus whatever else you picked up afterwards.

Know your objective and go for that! If your goal is making money and maximizing your return, go for the hundreds. If you are unfortunately caught up in the *busyness* of being *efficient*, go for the dollar bills.

Being efficient is doing the right thing within a given time frame. Being effective is doing the right thing right. Being effective as opposed to being efficient means the difference between hunting elephants and stomping ants.



.....Keeping a Time log so important.....

Where did my time go? Oh no I'm late again I worked so hard all day and yet, I feel like I haven't done anything

You already aware of the obvious time wasters which plague you, but do you realize all the little ways that time can drain away? Keeping a time log provides evidence of exactly where your time is going and why. It would be an excellent thing to log your time every day for three weeks, but in my experience, most people don't keep up with it for that long. Initially try to keep a log for one day a week for three weeks. This is the minimum dosage with which one can get by and still gain insights into your time slippage.

.....Good Thoughts.....

"You cannot run away from a weakness; you must some time fight it out or perish; and if that be so, why not now, and where you stand?"

"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."

"It's hard to aim the rifle if you can't see the target. Once you know where you're going, you can focus your energy and concentration on your goal there faster and easier."

