

SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

Transformations

Making The Most Of The Time You Have

The Post's inquiry this month (If you had some extra time, how would you spend it?) got me to thinking. If the perception of "not enough time" is such a common dilemma -- and we all know it is -- what can we do about it?

I use the word "perception" of not enough time because the idea that there is "not enough" is just that, a perception. It just happens to be a perception that most of us have come to believe as true. You know the theories of "like minded others" and "truth amongst the masses," right? Well, here we are all given the same amount of time -- 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week, 720 hours a month (give or take a few), 8760 hours a year, and 657,000 hours in a Lifetime (with the average age calculated at 75 years old). If you are well into the 500,000th hour and you haven't done some things that are either pleasing, purposeful, meaningful or flat out outrageous, than put down this newspaper, pick up your phone and call me quick! I'll make darn sure that the remaining 157,000 hours of your life count for something.

Six hundred and fifty-seven thousand hours. Say it with me, "six hundred and fifty-seven thousand hours." It doesn't sound like many does it? Imagine it in dollars and imagine that it is all you could possibly earn in your lifetime. You would have to live on \$8760 a year for life. Could you do it? What would you have to give up? Think of how precious each dollar would be.

So how are you spending

your time? More importantly, what can you do about it if you feel you are always coming up short? Choose Differently. That's right, if you are less than thrilled with the way you spend your time, make different choices. For example, if you work 40 to 60 hours a week at a job you dislike and complain that you, "don't have enough time for fun, family, travel or to acquire new skills," perhaps it is time to find another job with better benefits and more flexibility. In fact if you work any more than 10 hours a week at a job you dislike, start looking for an alternative because that is 25% of your working life. If you work 40 to 60 hours at a job you happen to like/love but wish you had more time to do the things outside of work you also love, consider the following options:

1) See if you can job-share (find a coworker who can share in your responsibilities 1 or 2 days a week.) This is a brilliant alternative because it allows someone else to expand their skill set, it offers the company more flexibility in resources (crossed trained individuals, new ways of seeing things) and offers you the freedom you desire to explore new horizons. In order to choose this option you have to know your own worthiness and be willing (and not afraid) to let go of some control. What I've learned over the years about "control" is that the more you are willing to relinquish it, the more (and the sooner) you will expand. You will be both free and liberated with the knowledge that it is a Big, Big World, and within it, a little bitty lifetime.

The second option is to

bring more of what you love into the workplace. If you love yoga but don't have time to practice before you set out in the morning, bring your yoga mat with you to work. There are probably countless periods at work when your time is spent in ways that are less productive than they could be (i.e. answering personal emails, making vacation plans, or browsing through Match.com). Instead, close your office door or take your mat to a quiet corner of the building and do a 15-minute practice. You'll feel refreshed, more focused and be more productive. Your boss will love you for it and you'll feel like you exercised time wisely on your own behalf (while also maybe getting paid for it; see how smart you are?) If you love to be around water (and wish instead of work you were at the beach) bring in a desktop fountain and a sound machine that replicates the ocean's surf. If you wish you could spend more time in nature, surround yourself with flowering plants, orchids, and artifacts from nature and a sound machine that plays the sounds of nature. No matter what your passion, there is always a way to surround yourself with more of it.

I speak a lot about "work" and time because work seems to be the area of life that stands most in the way of our dreams. "If only I didn't have to work I would have more energy, and inspiration," we might say. Or "if only I were independently wealthy, then I would really live."

I say, "Really? Would you? What would you do differently? Do you even know? Do you even allow yourself

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to dream?" If you don't, it's a good time to start. Without a dream, it is unlikely that one will ever come true.

There are two other possibilities I'd like you to consider. One is this: Why do you work to begin with? What is it you are working for? If you are busting your booty to pay for the "right" to own your own home, and the reality of this is causing you great stress (which is not uncommon in an area where the average home comes with a \$5000-\$7000 monthly mortgage), perhaps renting or even moving might be the better way to go. By reducing your financial burdens you can move more freely through your life and make choices that are ultimately more fulfilling.

Here's the second thing I'd like you to consider: Do you have a plan? Do you realize how many people are without a plan? Perfectly wonderful people have the most beautiful desires for a better life -- more friends, harmonious

family, more wealth, more time, brilliant ideas bursting forth that could be beneficial to us all -- but have no plan to carry them out. Perhaps they feel unworthy or that it is easier to be an Indian than a Chief. Perhaps they fear their own success and who they might become. Perhaps they don't know how/where to begin or are looking for the just the right motivation. Sayings like, "failing to plan, is planning to fail" and "a half baked idea brought to fruition is better than 10,000 unfinished good ones" exist for a reason. It's because they are true. Without a plan it is unlikely that anything will change.

So tell me, "if you had some extra time, how would you spend it?" Six hundred and fifty-seven thousand hours goes by quick. Tick. Tick. Like the moon, come out from behind the clouds! And Shine!

BALLARD STREET by Jerry Van Amerongen



"Stay in the present, Charles!"