

Elements Newsletter T for Time

October 2012

This edition of Elements is dedicated to "T" for Time. Like Goldilocks, we search for our "just right" time. It's always too short or too long. Average time you will potentially save by reading this: Priceless. This is the 20th newsletter in the Leadership ABC series!

"Time" won out as the representative for "T," but honorable mentions for "T" were: Team, Transformation, Tries, and Trust.

I wish you the best of times,
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Reflections on Time



It's gone. Time always moves forward, on a continuum that is irreversible. Measuring time is how we know it has gone. Measurement is what gives us a structure that allows for order, repeatability, and relativity. Each moment in time is unique; it may be filled with beauty, love, pain, or stress. We desire to control time and fill it with more of the good stuff. At work, effective and efficient use of time directed towards an end result is considered good time management - time is money. Another

view is that time is a moment that happens only in the mind; hence time is limited by the span of our own life. Make the best of your time, time is energy, and time is a resource - all are various views people hold about time.

Managing time lets us know if we are on-time or complete. Our beliefs about time shape our perceptions that there's never enough time, or that there is too much time. The vehicle traveling on the continuum of time is us. Are we a sleek sports car or a clunky broken down tricycle? Do we move through time effortlessly and well maintained or with creaks and groans as we go? The path our vehicle travels through time varies depending on the desired destination. Many references refer to the path of time as the "river of time." What does your path look like? A paved well-organized highway, or a remote little-traveled winding wooded lane?

Time is immune to the wants and needs of those who try to direct or control it. Mastering time is not building a time machine to change, repeat, slow down, or speed up time. Your beliefs about time are the first key to successful time management. Time is the moment in which accomplishments can be completed. Great leaders intuitively know how to manage their time. They keep the focus on moving themselves and others forward towards a vision, conquering in real time the unknowns and challenges. Time management is simply a tool for doing and being, for experiencing accomplishment and fulfillment. Time management tools themselves are easy. The hard part is creating the habit of using them, and ensuring that they are well-aligned along your desired path.

Time Management Junkie



I have a confession to make. I'm a time management junkie. I drool over planners. I lovingly read the [Franklin Covey catalog](#). My high school yearbook quote was, "Time like a snowflake, disappears while trying to decide what to do with it." Goofy, yes, I borrowed it from Readers Digest. The first job I loved was as a secretary to a senior executive at a large company. I had to manage his time and his calendar. The challenge of getting everyone in one place at the same time, of creating efficient and realistic schedules for people who have meetings all day, was exhilarating. This was done using paper calendars, a pencil, a multi-line phone, a "twix" machine, and lots of post-it's. I was the boss of my manager's time and loved it.

For 10 years I have been teaching Time Management workshops. The foundational material is the same whenever I teach it, yet each workshop is adapted to the needs of the audience. The underlying approach is working with time "Your Way." Each person, each situation, each moment in time is unique. The clearer you are about "you," the easier it is to apply time management tools and techniques that work best for you. The "you" starts with examining your beliefs about time. If you believe it, it is true for you. If your belief is, "there is never enough time," then there never will be! If you change your belief to, "the important things find a way of getting done," then you will have improved your chances, with some trial and error, of getting stuff done!

Keys to Time Management: Be a wolf



Time Management is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It lures in the unsuspecting with promises of everything being better if you learn how to manage time. Time management offers the comfort of a warm, fuzzy, welcoming, cuddly sheep. It promises if you use this tool you'll feel better. There are lots of great tips and techniques for managing time, but rarely is that the biggest issue. The two biggest issues in successful time management are 1) getting clarity, and 2) actually changing. New habits and behaviors must be cultivated, practiced, and then fully applied for time management to be successful and effective. Time management tools work best when you are clear on your goals, style, values, and path forward. True time management is ruthless, a personal and lone pursuit. It's your way and your path. It requires strategy and courage, like a wolf.

Here are three of the principles of Time Management:

1 - You are already doing it

You are already managing your time right now! We are experts, though perhaps not consciously, in our own time management. Every thought and action has the impact and the possibility to take us someplace. The actions you take and words you say will create something in the next minute or over years. A degree, a project completed, weight gained or lost is a result of prior actions in time. We are managing our time now and it is taking us someplace. Where is your current time management taking you?

2 - Your values, vision, and goals

A classic time management story tells of the person who was an excellent and hard-working performer his whole life. At a regular pace he was climbing the corporate ladder. When he reached the top, he finally stopped to look and gasped at what he saw. With great regret he realized he had climbed the wrong ladder; he wanted to be on the top, five buildings over! It takes courage to stop, reflect, and find answers to the question of what is the next step to take now. Do you go up the ladder, down a step, or jump off fast? Only you know what your values, vision, and goals are.

3 - Your time management tools

She slammed her day-time planner down on the desk, a bit embarrassed and frustrated. She needed help, it wasn't working for her. For the past three years, as a Christmas gift, her husband had bought her a beautiful planner to solve her time management problems. She was impatient, but willing to hear what I had to say before writing the class off as a waste of time. When I started the style section, she lit right up and started squirming in her seat. She politely waited until I finished and then started blurting her thoughts. She had figured it out. Her husband's linear and logical style (the style that most planners are based on) wasn't for her. She needed a time management tool that matched her style of being a creative and serendipitous person. She was always starting things but never had to finish them. He had to finish things. She left the class exploring alternative time management tools that better matched her style - such as visually-based tools, mind mapping, buckets, and blank rather than lined planner pages.

Summary of Five Time Management Principles and Key Questions to ask:

1. You are already doing it, managing Time, and it is taking you someplace - Where do you want to go?
2. It's YOUR vision, mission, values, and goals - Are they clear?
3. You have a unique style and how you manage your time must reflect you - What tools do you need?
4. It's your being and doing - Are you conscious and proactive about what you are being and doing?
5. It requires effort, the willingness to change, and courage - What changes do you need to make and how will you make them?

Beyond the Keys: Tips and Techniques



Those five principles are the basis for excellent time management. In the time allotted for a workshop, the bigger questions are rarely answered. Therefore the workshop focus is on doing exercises, sharing, and learning many tips and techniques that can be used immediately. The exercises focus on prioritizing, goal setting, tool selection, and examining your beliefs about time. Here are some of my students' favorite tips:

1 - Learn how to use your time management tools, for example Outlook. Outlook is a very powerful time management tool; spend a few hours learning more about how to use it. Learn about: filters and folders, how to add in holidays, booking 0-minute meetings as reminders, and using reoccurring meetings of 0 minutes as daily "to do" lists, and trying out the task manager. In Outlook, a calendar is a folder. You can move relevant emails directly into an appointment. Adapt the tools you must use so that they can work for you. Have one central planning tool or space.

2 - Prioritize and focus daily. Have a system that is visible and easy for you to access and update. Ensure that you have short and long term goals, and that they are aligned. Only have 1-3 must do goals per day and do it!

3 - Be clear about what you have control over and where you have no control. If you have no control over something, accept it, avoid it, remove it, or re-plan it. If you do have some control in an area, - break it down further into more specific categories of "control" or "no control."

4. Learn to say "no," so you can say "yes" to the bigger things.

Chock full of tips is Brian Tracy's book called [Eat That Frog](#). It consists of 21 time management strategies to get more done in less time, and to stop procrastinating. "Eating that frog" is doing, right off the bat, the thing you must do and dislike the most. By doing it first you avoid spending the rest of the day thinking about it, which can sap your energy.

Time Quotes

The bad news is time flies. The good news is that you're the pilot. Michael Althsuler

Manage your energy, not your time. A Harvard Business Review article by Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy

I'm always making sure I've got a good balance of how I spend my time. Bill Gates

Time is our most precious asset, we should invest it wisely. Michael Levy

You can do anything for 15 minutes. www.flylady.net

The best question to ask over and over is, "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" Brian Tracy

Timing plays a big part in success. Anita Roderick

You must master your time to achieve success. Brian Tracy

We'll get there fast and then we'll take it slow. Beach Boys

Events and Articles

Speaking

Lead, Coach, or Manage: Which Hat to Where and When? [PMI North American Global Congress Conference in Vancouver, Tuesday Oct 23, 9:30 - 10:45](#)

Public Trainings

To register for the events below, go to: www.corpedgroup.com
Leadership and Communication Skills for Project Managers
Chelmsford, MA - November 20

Leading & Developing High Performing Teams
Waltham, MA - November 27, 28

Effective Communication and Influencing Skills
Waltham, MA - November 29, 30

Facilitation Skills for Project Managers
Chelmsford, MA December 14

Articles

Setting [Appropriate Work Boundaries](#): Start with your Smart Phone by Pete Hunt, I'm quoted in it!

Lead, Coach, or Manage: Which Hat to Wear and When, by me. Requests welcome.

About Us

Star Leadership is a seasoned management consulting firm that offers coaching, training and consulting services for business. What makes Star Leadership LLC unique is the focus and delivery of measurable goals and proven results in the areas of communication leadership and team. Our approach is direct, results-oriented and geared to the bottom line. We are able to quickly map, translate and align your broader vision to the concrete details of skills and behaviors. We have an impact on the results you want in an open, informal, non-judgmental and supportive way. We take pride in being able to offer a wide array of experienced associates, resources and expertise to be brought into play as needed to help clients. Star Dargin is the founder and has been creating vision and direction for the company since 1996.

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