

Time Management Is Dead

Time management has had a good run. Time management was great for a long time. But its run is over. It is based on old assumptions and no longer meets today's reality. It is time for a new paradigm. It is time to strategically invest our time in other people, according to our priorities, and in ways that bring the most rewards.

Time management is based on the assumption that we can manage events around us. It made sense when communications were based on postal mail. It made sense when interruptions happened on a slower pace. We could manage when there was time between events.

Today, events can cascade over our work lives. We experience phone calls while dealing with email and text messages during those phone calls. And people want to drop in our office and talk. There is no way to "manage" all that. And we need time to actually do the job – forget about learning new skills and personal development. Family time? What's that?

A different paradigm recognizes all the different requests. Time is not just in short supply; it is our most critical resource. Instead of "time management", we need a paradigm of allocating scarce resources.

One paradigm is based on investments. By considering our time to be the most valuable and scarce resource, we choose how to invest it to get the best results.

Just like a farmer has to rest fields and pastures so that the land recovers, we start by planning how to rest and recover from the other demands. We consider our other priorities and plan out time for family, what activities we can be part of, and what other people can do. Only after that, we allocate time for work.

For many people, this approach is totally backwards from what they have been doing. Many people put work first and try to fit family around work. When work is scarce, that makes sense. When work has taken over our lives, we have to plan totally opposite in order to properly handle work.

Many times, we have to break free from the current organization in order to use time

properly. We have to face the facts that when we are overwhelmed with work activities, we are not operating at our best. We can't. We only operate at our best in work when work is limited to its proper place in our lives.

Companies are starting to realize this and a few companies are insisting that people not do work at home after leaving the office. Other companies are putting limits on how others can break into our work. In some places, people are allowed to block off time for thinking and for concentrated work and only afterwards, handle email, phone calls, and interruptions. The results are that better work is done.

By putting limits on work, we do better work.

Events Cascade Over Plans

Giving Thanks

As we end this year, it is appropriate to give thanks. We don't always realize just how rich we are and how much luxury we have. We have luxury in energy use, housing, and food. Giving thanks for this helps us be better people.

In the 1850's, the richest plantations of the American South had over 20 slaves working the fields with some owning hundreds. The Great Houses of England each had about 100 servants. When we take our energy use and average it over everyone, Americans use machinery and power at the energy equivalent of 100 servants. We are living comparable to the richest people of the past and can be thankful for that.

As far as housing, we need to compare with most of human history. Archeology is finding the evidence of how people used to live. Throughout history, housing was normally a bunch of tree branches with perhaps an animal skin or a layer of mud put on top. We had just enough room to spread out for sleep. This was partly due to the need to move often. Many people moved several times a year in the search for food. Our centrally heated homes with multiple rooms per person are indeed a great luxury.

Anyone who has hunted knows that few people go out and make a kill when they want to. Most time is spent waiting for an opportunity or being on the move to a spot where we think prey can be found. The big cats of Africa make a kill on perhaps one in five attempts. Human hunters can go weeks without a kill. A real "paleo diet" would include going without food for days. Our supermarkets and megastores filled with food all seasons of the year are indeed a luxury.

Research suggests that giving thanks is one way to actually be happier.

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Risky World

Fake emails are improving all the time. Recently, an art forgery was accompanied by fake emails to "prove" its authenticity. And companies are being scammed out of investment funds by "man in the middle" intercepting emails and taking the cash.



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