

From the Heart...

... Life Skills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Anyone Interested in Time Traveling?

*"The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ, Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."
Edward Fitzgerald, 1809-83, in his poem "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám"*

Yet, how about time traveling? Is it really possible? This past week, my husband took me to see the movie, *Deja Vu*. We try to see anything starring Denzel Washington. He's one of our favorite actors. Although I certainly would not want to experience time travel with a terrorist/crazy man following behind me, I thought, "What would it be like to travel in the past and the future?" "What would I want to change in my life, if I had the chance?"

As the movie clip advertises, "Everyone has experienced the unsettling mystery of déjà vu—that flash of memory when you meet someone new you feel you've known all your life or recognize a place even though you've never been there before. But what if the feelings were actually warnings sent from the past or clues to the future?"

According to Nova (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time/through.html>), with the help of Newton then Einstein, we know that time travel need not be confined to myths, science fiction, Hollywood movies, or even speculation by theoretical physicists. Time travel is possible. For example, an object traveling at high speeds ages more slowly than a stationary object. This means that if you were to

travel into outer space and return, moving close to light speed, you could travel thousands of years into the Earth's future. Yet, there are so many “what ifs” still hanging out there for what kind of impact and world altering events may occur with just one slight change of the past. You will have changed the course of history, not just for yourself, but for the entire world.

So for now, it's still theory for you and me. I can't prove that it's possible. Yet, how about the real times in your past where it made a major impact on your life, even providing wisdom for your future with every decision you make today? Maybe then, we can all have a different perspective on how we spend our time right now.

Start with asking yourself these questions and choose to find the answer that is perfectly designed for your life today and the future:

- What one event in your life has impacted how you use your time today?
- Whether positive or negative, how do you want move forward in the month, year ahead?

Remember your core values you hopefully started to journal based on the year-ago February articles? Pull your list out and see how they line up with your SMART plans (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Actionable, Relevant/Realistic, Time-phased) and those relationships you have to make your dreams and goals come true this year. Look at your monthly calendar and reassess your current situation to see if any changes need to be made with time management.

Next week's article will review some of the typical time use areas we all have difficulty managing on a routine basis. Again, for now, *"The Moving Finger*

writes, and, having writ, Moves on.” Nor all my piety or wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line here, nor tear or word of it! Yet, here’s your chance to make some changes you long for. Enjoy the ride through the time of your life!

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The Way We Pass Time

In 1897, Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, observed that the distribution of wealth was predictably unbalanced. He first discovered this pattern in 19th-century England and found it to be the same for every country and time period he studied. Over the years, Pareto's observation has become known as the 80/20 principle.

This 80:20 Rule asserts that typically 80% of unfocussed effort generates only 20% of results. The remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort. While this ratio may not always exactly hold firm, it occurs so frequently and has become pretty much the norm in many areas of life. According to Richard Koch, in his classic 1999 book, *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Success by Achieving More with Less*, this principle can also hold true for the way we use our time. In 2004, he also wrote a practical application book, *Living The 80/20 Way: Work Less, Worry Less, Succeed More, Enjoy More*. His tips and tools offer common sense ways to achieve goals using less time with more focus and purpose. He challenges you in simple, fun ways to discover and rethink who you are, what you want from life, and how to achieve it.

Time will pass whether we are aware of it or not. In order to be more focused and aware of how time passes in just one day, ***here is a 24-hour time wheel clients find useful for looking over the daily routines that pass time and life.*** Make a

number of copies of this wheel. Then first mark one with what you do for each hour on a routine day. What do you see? What feelings and thoughts surface about your average 24 hour day? Are you satisfied with the use of your time? Is there any area you would like to change? If so, start a list of ideas to share with your family. Then commit to one of those changes this month.

Complete a time wheel also for a weekend day. Then keep a couple blank ones handy for future use. Nothing helps more than to take time to write down and journal your thoughts, goals, and the way you use your time. I encourage you to do this exercise. In 1953, a major study at Yale University surveyed students to see if any students wrote down their life goals. Less than 3% of the students actually had written goals. Then after tracking all the students for almost twenty years (1973), these 3% significantly showed they were better adjusted emotionally, socially, and in their families. They also found a measurable difference economically. These 3% were worth more in financial terms than all 97% class members combined. ***Setting goals and creating clear direction with the use of your time are essential in order to excel in life—personally, professionally, and financially.***

In the next article a number of time tips will be offered to help you optimize your time, energy, and effort in those areas most important to you; and to ensure the greatest benefits possible with the amount of time available to you.

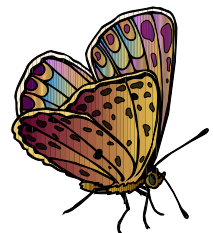
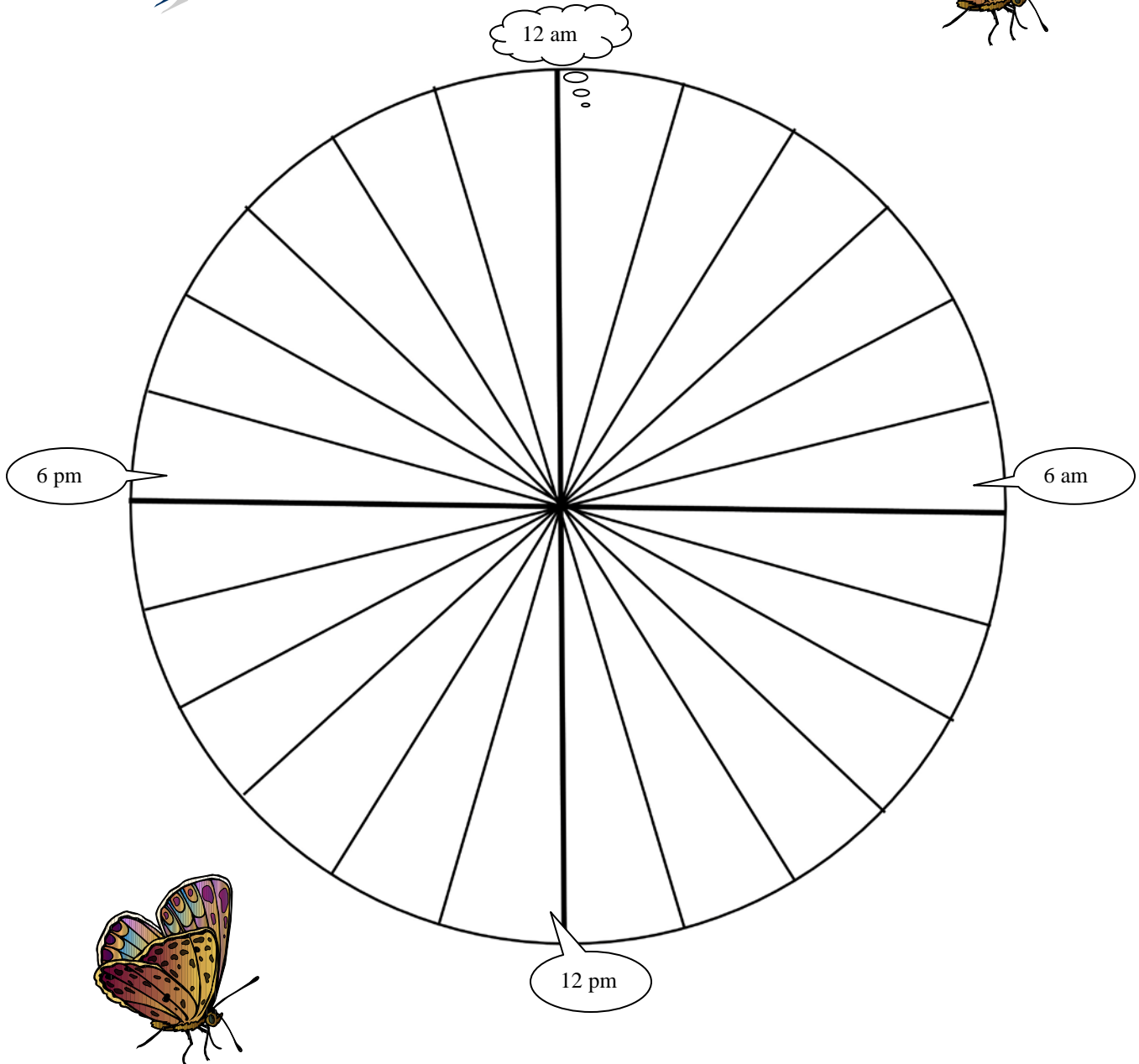
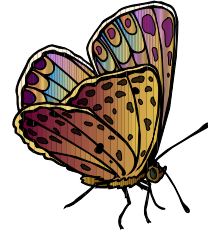
***Remember, time may be a gift to us, but we must
consciously possess it. So, take the time!***

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How Time Flies!

24 Hour Clock



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Time Tips for Winning Over Procrastination

Are you stressed out, burnt out, or just plain tired? Is your life out of balance with seemingly too much to do, and not enough time for family and yourself. Do interruptions throw you off track? Do you procrastinate what's important? Feel unprepared and under pressure much of the time?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are then missing out on your greatest potential for get more done in less time. Many people spend their days in a whirl of busyness, but achieve little because they are not focused on the right things. According to Don Wetmore, The Productivity Institute (<http://www.balancetime.com>), there are five top time management mistakes we all need to avoid.

1. Start your day without a plan of action.
2. Get out of balance in your life.
3. Work with a messy desk or work area.
4. Don't get enough sleep.
5. Don't take a lunch break.

Manage your Time—Winning over Procrastination

All five of these mistakes have at least one thing in common—procrastination. People who are chronically affected by procrastination lose out on utilizing their capabilities to

the fullest and often disrupt not only their personal lives but also professional careers. According to Mind Tools (<http://www.mindtools.com>), Procrastinators also typically—

Do something that is more enjoyable, comfortable, or more urgent in the moment.

Feel overwhelmed by a particular task.

Wait for the “right” mood or time.

Fear failure or successes.

Have poor organizational skills.

Are perfectionists at heart.

So, here are some time savings steps for breaking the procrastination pain in the neck. You will then create more time work for you in your every day life and with those special dreams you want to see come true.

Step 1—Recognize you are procrastinating (i.e. starting an important task then immediately going off to get some coffee or make a “quick” phone call; rereading a task on your to do list many times without doing anything about it)

Step 2—Identify why you are procrastinating (main reasons—the task is unpleasant or overwhelming)

Step 3— Know your important priorities, then take action (i.e. commit to small steps that support the overall larger task; learn the difference between urgent and important tasks)

Step 4—Develop accountability strategies for continued follow through (i.e. set up rewards for yourself; ask someone to help you stay accountable by checking up on your progress (professional coaches are particularly skilled at helping

you stay accountable to your short-term and long-term goals); write down the tangible and intangible cost of time and consequences of NOT doing the task) Procrastinators work as many hours in the day as most people but invest their time in the wrong tasks. Isn't it time to get focused and "on task" with what is important in your life? If you agree, then start today to break the procrastination habit in your everyday life with these four simple, time-saving steps for managing your time.

The next article will cover how Americans specifically spend their time and life.

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How Americans Spend Their Time & Life

If you had a 24-hour calendar in front of you, how would you see your daily life fly by? So often, we are in such a hurry every waking moment, time doesn't seem to be there to reflect on where it went. Even our dreams during sleep are filled with a long list of to do's while our body parts move to the pace.

So, for just this moment as you read this article, think about how your daily life compares with the average American. We all have personal care activities—sleeping, eating, and drinking. Then add the daily household activities—housework, food preparation and cleanup; lawn and garden care; purchasing goods and services; seeking professional and personal care services; caring for and helping family and friends.

Let's not forget what pays the bills—working at a job, advancing your career through educational activities, attending class, doing homework and research. Then, of course, we all volunteer and attend organizational, civic, and religious activities. With this long list, we definitely need to add leisure and sports in there; then socializing, going to movies and watching television. For those more physically inclined, you are routinely participating in sports, exercise, and recreation in some

form. Then don't take for granted the hours we all spend on the telephone, mail, and e-mail.

This abundant list of daily living actually comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to the BLS (2005, <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/atus.pdf>), here is how average Americans (15 yrs old and up) spend their time and daily lives (including travel time):

Daily Activities (15 years old and up)	24 Hour Day (average)
➤ Working (employment) & working-related activities	3.69 hours (employed fulltime = 9.01 hours)
➤ Household activities (food preparation and cleanup Lawn and garden care, Household management)	1.82 hours
➤ Leisure Time & Sports = (Socializing and communicating, watching television, participating in sports, exercise, and recreation)	5.14 hours
➤ Personal care activities (Sleeping)	9.43 hours (sleeping = 8.63)
➤ Eating & Drinking	1.24 hours
➤ Purchasing good & services (consumer, professional, personal goods & services)	.80 hours
➤ Caring for and helping family members (including children)	.54 hours
➤ Caring for and helping non-household members	.23 hours
➤ Educational activities (attending class, homework, and research)	.45 hours

Daily Activities (15 years old and up)	24 Hour Day (average)
➤ Organizational, civic, religious activities (religious and spiritual activities, volunteering—organizational and civic activities)	.31 hours
➤ Telephone calls, mail, email	.18 hours
➤ Other activities, not classified	.17 hours

These averages will, of course, differ depending on age, employment status, gender, and other characteristics. For example, *age 15 and over* worked for 3.7 hours as noted in chart, and spent 1.8 hours doing household activities, spent 5.1 hours doing leisure and sports activities, and slept 8.6 hours. The remaining 4.7 hours were spent in a variety of other activities, including eating and drinking, attending school, and shopping.

By comparison, *persons employed full time* who worked on an average weekday spent 9.1 hours working, 0.9 hours doing household activities, 3.0 hours doing leisure and sports activities, and 7.6 hours sleeping. The remaining 3.4 hours were spent in other listed activities. As you can see, there are significant differences between the hours worked, leisure time, and sleeping.

In addition, during weekend days, employed individuals (ages 25+) with a bachelor's degree or higher worked half as many hours as those with less than a high school diploma (3.7 versus 7.1 hours). Men also worked one hour more than women, in general. 74% of those employed in management, business, and

financial operations occupations reported working on a given day—a greater share than those employed in any other occupation.

For *household activities*, married persons spent more time doing household tasks than unmarried persons—2.1 versus 1.4 hours per day—and women, regardless of marital status, spent more time doing these activities than men. Examples of tasks were housework, cooking, lawn care, or financial and other household management duties.

For *leisure time & sport*, watching TV was the leisure activity that occupied the most time (2.6 hours per day), accounting for half of leisure time, on average, for both men and women. By contrast, the next most common leisure activity, socializing—such as visiting with friends or attending or hosting social events—accounted for only about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour per day for both men and women.

For the *caring of household members*, the overall average of time spent is a little under one hour. This is quite different for families with children under six years of age. The time spent providing primary childcare averaged 2.5 hours for women and 1.3 hours for men. In addition, the educational activities numbers go up with a younger age group than with full-time older adult population.

Needless to say, this typical 24 hour day only shows what we already know—over half of our daily time is for working, eating, sleeping. Then add another five hours for leisure time. That means you have about 4 hours left for everything else. Does this sound familiar? Do you actually spend, on the average for the entire week, about five hours each day in leisure time activities? Remember, TV watching is part of this time slot.

How does your life spending time size up with the average American? How about sitting down with your family and mark down what each person thinks he spends on these activities. I can guarantee, you will then have an interesting conversation about who watches too much TV or plays too much soccer—although I know that’s just not possible with the more passionate soccer families in the hill country!

As you go through your day, may your work be exactly what you love to do; your personal care for your body and soul be healthy and whole; your sleep be sweet; and your play, whatever it is, round out a daily life of purpose, pleasure, and peace. With next week’s article, career/money management will be the topic of the month. So, get geared up for looking at ways to be fulfilled in your career and in the ways you spend your money.

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