Time

By Jordan Johnson

Time is an in an interesting concept that evolves as we age and has through the ages. When we are young we want time to move faster, then later in life we want it to slow down. Within the confines of both arenas (young and old), we also want to departmentalize time for certain people, situations and/or events. At its most simple core, we want to expedite the painful and dreary, and prolong the good.

George Carlin said it best; we don't even know what time it is. When someone asks us what time it is and we give them the answer, it is not at the moment they asked. Also, when did we become the keeper of time. Everything is either in the recent past or the near future.

How do we manage time with regards to relationships, responsibilities, jobs and other tasks? There is a finite period of *time* in the day, 24 hours. The name of the game often seems to pack as much as we can into that *timeframe*, then anxiously await more tasks that require time for the next day. Here is a question: *How much time do we spend worrying about time?* My guess is a lot more than we should. Why? Is this a NOW culture thing, or have the generations before us battled the same issue. Personally, I think it is more of a now issue. We live in a time where gratification is now and we need faster speeds and faster results. Think about the evolution of communication and the time that was involved. Write a letter and mail it and then wait 2 weeks for a response. So, this becomes the approach to everything. Let's think how long it took to build a building only 100 years ago vs. now. If we knew the *time* commitment today would be what it was 100 years ago would we still move forward with the project?

As mentioned in previous articles and lectures achievement and/or success takes time. Mastery of skills takes time. There are no shortcuts, and it cannot be bought. In industry and healthcare, there are many productivity models designed to make the "process" more efficient. What about the individual as it relates to time? Does increasing the efficiency of the process only allow for more things to be squeezed in?

How are some so bound to the deadline and others carefree with regards to the perspective and perception of time? Carefree or constantly battling the clock? Do we truly prioritize our time? For many life becomes a checkbox- get it done check it off and on to the next task, job, relationship, friendship, etc.

Time can clearly be a curse or a blessing. How we utilize our time is the key. How we invest, our time is key. Who we let take our time is key. We can waste time, borrow time, save time, find time, make time, be pressed for time, lose time, gain time, have an easy time (a nice time) or a hard time, spend quality time, a good time or a bad time, race against time, take a stitch in time, serve time, time flies, have time on our hands, something can happen in due time (high time), we can live on borrowed time, or talk about "once upon a time."

I have two main points or thoughts:

The first is super hero mode. This is for those trying to squeeze it all in. Never saying "no" and taking on the next project, investing in the next person, and getting the next to-do checked off. This can and will be dangerous. We don't say "no," just add it on and it will get done. The problem is that there is only a finite period of time. This means that there will have to be neglect and sacrifice somewhere else and there will be a decrease in quality in other areas if we operate in this mode for an extended period of time. For the many that operate in this realm it becomes an addition and a challenge, but in the end is not sustainable. Let me clarify that last statement: not sustainable with purpose and meaning. There has to be and will be a breaking point. This may be with family, a job, a friendship or even your health. Again, all things in life take time and cannot be rushed, they must be processed and dealt with. Many use time as a way to run or a twisted coping mechanism per se. The more that occupies our time the less time we have to deal with critical issues. Those that squeeze 30 hours in 24 become masters of suppression and calculated delays. There must be time for reflection and processing. In my personal life and in my observation, there is no end game with chasing time. The change and impact happens at the point of reflection and processing not in one more task.

The second- What matters when it counts: I had a friend once tell me, "we are all bound by gravity and no one is getting out alive." This could not be more true. Where are we investing our time and in the end will it be worth it. Is our time about us, others, our impact our legacy? From my overflow, I once treated a billionaire for cancer and he said to me. *I have all of the money in the world, no friends, ruined several marriages and my kids don't know me. Here I am dying and my money won't save me. The agony of being alone is all I have.* This is definitely deep but necessary. We have to evaluate not only where we are investing our time but how much time we are investing. We know that there are Givers and Takers in life. Giving time requires giving energy and focus. To the point above, it is possible to give until you can't give anymore. Takes have an unlimited supply of energy, but not givers. Givers must be refueled and replenished. This requires investing time in yourself not someone else.

Try this: try not to focus on much of anything beyond today. Next, don't focus on anything beyond the next 7 days. See what this does to your health, attitude and relationships. I know you think I have everything planned out for the next 2 years. You may but how much *time,* energy and effort is this taking away from you now.

Time is something we can't get back, so we have to make it count. You must determine does your passion and impact live in investing numerous increments of time across an array of people and projects or do you/will you strategically pick things to invest more time in. There is often a push from society for the former, which leads to spreading yourself thin, burnout and missing the important things that matter.

Time must always be used wisely, as it is not promised to today or tomorrow.

What if you knew how much time you had left. How would you behave? How would you perform? Who would you invest in? Would you do more? Is what you consider important now and consuming your time be the same if you knew the exact date your time was up.

Time management is more than just managing time to fit more tasks in. Time management is directly related to personal and relational health.