Jim and the Art of Time Management
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Why is it that there are so many books and training modules on how to effectively manage time? This tells me a few things - that time is sufficiently important to people to warrant so many experts to write on the subject - that they believe that time can be managed.

So, how do you manage time – Doesn’t it just happen all on its own? Is time really something that any of us have any control over?

Can you recall an instance when you were rushing to meet a deadline at work, running late for a client meeting or for the last train home and you just missed it? What needs be to recognised is that ‘time’ is not the important element here - it’s what time represents to us that really matters and in this example “…Nothing is as far away as one minute ago”.

So time management is really about managing ourselves better. What would happen if we did? Who would we need to become? It necessarily involves becoming the leader of our own life. It requires being responsible and accountable for our own actions or inactions and the consequences of these... Are you ready to take this step?

Shifting the focus to ‘self’ enables us to ‘blow out’ the over used excuse of ‘time’ forever and start viewing time for what it really is: A man made, relative concept, a method of measurement. Time is a pseudo-word, just ask yourself... Have you ever tripped over a hunk of time on the way out of your front door and said “…Damn – who left that time there?” Could you pass me a slice of time with my tea or put a packet of time in your fridge? So, what’s the big hold that time has over us? What is it that time ultimately represents?

Time consists of seconds that measure the divisions between sun and moon each day. In turn, these measure the distance between life and death. Given that every passing day takes us closer to our end, how much are we really living in between?

Seeing time for what it really is, we can choose to become leaders of our own lives, managing ourselves to map out the life we want to live. How much more empowering is that than being dictated to by some man-made concept?

Choosing to be solely responsible for ourselves and how we plan our lives, it’s imperative to get our priorities right – and that means doing those things that
are really important to us, not just putting them on a wish list for five years later when we’ve made enough money. You probably know in your head what the really important things are to you. Take time out and write these down. Title it ‘My most important priorities for living a fulfilling life’. I know you know these things already... the point is to take them out of your head and write them down on paper, making them instantly tangible – to serve as a guiding reminder for how you want to live your life. As you draw up your list, notice how your thoughts on the subject become clearer, as you think about what you’re writing down. There’s one more list to create called, ‘How I currently live my life’. Once you’ve drawn up this list – start to compare these, notice the gaps between the life you want to live and the life you end up living.

What if your life could be different? Imagine stepping back and observing the wonders of life, breathtaking mountains, lush rainforests, crystal clear oceans, people in love, wandering along a beach, hand in hand having fun.

What if you had already reached the end of your life and just didn’t know it – after all tomorrow is not ours – all we have is the present. “Who is stealing your chance to walk barefoot in the sand today?” What if you gave yourself a second chance, an opportunity to live an invigorating life where you get to do all the things you’ve always wanted to. How eager would you be to embark on that new life journey right now?

Well, here you are, what are you going to do with those lists you made now? A friend of mine once informed me that “life is not a dress rehearsal, what we do, counts now.”

What are you going to do today that you have been putting off? Did you go strolling along the beach, plunge into the cool water to swim, sit and watch the sunset with a cool drink, contact loved ones, laugh with friends, take time to make a healthy meal and smile as you look back on a day well lived?

How long would you keep this up for? Remember there is no contract, no sub category ‘time’ stating you will live 80 or 100 years, we are all visitors here for a short brief moment in the history of existence – what we do with our time here, what legacy we leave to enhance and inspire the lives of future generations is up to us. Think about it, every day we let slip through our hands is irretrievable. We cannot go back and re-live it at a later, more convenient time. Yesterday is now gone, tomorrow is not guaranteed, today is all we have.

If today is all we have, where are these precious moments being eroded? What about time spent waiting for others? What boundaries have you created to protect and serve you? Acknowledging that patience is a great virtue, the fact still remains that we only have one life to live and it’s important that others know that we value ours, be it in work, family or social contexts.
How well do you currently manage yourself? Many people divide their working day into work, rest, and play. If so, is work something you do out of obligation?
Have you accepted misery and boredom as unavoidable traits of your work?
Is rest something you do simply because you are exhausted?
Is play something you do to forget about work?

Imagine all the things you could get around to if you choose to utilise your day to live your life more on purpose. As an exercise, take a snapshot of your daily life, right now, and write on one side of a piece of paper, ‘energy gains’ and on the other side ‘energy drains’ this provides a useful way to be able to cut out or minimize the amount of time spent on those activities that do not serve us. Let’s face it, if we continue to do what we’ve always done, then it should be no surprise that we’ll continue to get what we’ve always got.

Self-management doesn’t mean ignoring our responsibilities or resigning from corporate life to take up subsistence farming, or filing for divorce. As on their own, these will not lead to happiness. Self-management is about being well adjusted, balancing the rough with the smooth, acknowledging that solutions and happiness do not come from merely escaping – all that changes is the geographic location, we still remain the same.

If the life you are living is different form the one you dream of having then it’s time to start creating, forging out the life you want to live. If you’re unsure, ask yourself how much of your life is marked by effort, struggle and obligation. Wouldn’t it be more compelling to start living a life of power, freedom and joy? Intuitively we all know what we need to do and although we may invite people to help us along the way, ultimately this is a path we have to walk alone.

Embracing what life has to offer us and having the courage to respond appropriately by simply being true to ourselves is the greatest gift that we have to give ourself and to others… When we are true to ourselves we are true to others too.

How do we be true to ourselves when there are so many competing interests? Most people focus their lives on ‘doing’, getting things done, ticking off tasks etc. In doing so they miss what the essence of life is all about. We are all human beings, the point to note that focusing our lives on ‘being’ and not ‘doing’, is where the soul is at. The secret is ‘soul connection’ so when we allow ourselves to just be... to be the best person we can, everything we then do will be textured with greater meaning. Hence, self management is not about a list of tasks to be completed in order of priority to a specified deadline, it’s about how we choose to live our lives. Life constantly passes by, it’s happening all the time, when we are standing in a queue, late night shopping or completing our tax returns – the way that we approach life is the difference that makes the difference.

Given that self is all we can manage and how we ‘be’ ultimately affects the quality of our lives pause and consider the following:
How much time you spend in stuck or unproductive states of being?
How long did it take you to recover from feeling insulted, angry, let down and disappointed?
How long have you spent sulking or baring grudges?
Who have you still not forgiven?

What if you had the personal mastery to shed this heavy baggage, would life be more of a party?
What if your outcome is simply to be happy in life – then why wait?
Outcomes require steps to achieve them, whereas how you feel is an emotional state of mind that you can change in an instant. Try it on for a moment, simply recall a memory where you were really happy, sit with that cherished moment and just start noticing what you see happening?
What are you doing?
Who is there?
What are the surroundings like?
Notice what’s being said (or not).
What you’re saying to yourself?
How are you feeling inside, whether you’re smiling, laughing etc.? Hold on to that thought and just know how easy it is to change your state of being any time you choose.

Recognise the power is within to impact the quality of your life. What will you choose?

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

From "A Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

To learn more about James Holden and how to create the wonderful life that you deserve to live, please contact Equilibrio 9363 9998.

Inspired by the writings of:
Jona C Nadar, ‘How to Lose Friends and Infuriate People’
Dr Michael Hall – International Institute of Neuro-Semantics
“…Nothing is as far away as one minute ago” Jim Bishop.

Author: James Holden, Executive Leadership Coach is a master practitioner of Neuro-Semantics and NLP. He has developed executive leadership and personal mastery leadership programs to assist people to become leaders of their own lives. He has also designed and led a specialised corporate expedition program called 'The Ultimate Leadership Journey', during which teams are coached through challenges to develop personal, professional and businesses skills to build a powerful performance team.

James is the only person in the Southern Hemisphere who has a specialist background in designing & leading expeditions to remote locations AND provide coaching before, during & after the expedition. He is both outcome and process driven to ensure that your team reach their 'Mountain of Success', and successfully transfer all key learnings back to the workplace.