



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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LOOKING AT OUR USE OF TIME

The modern training director may not be able to explain the nature of time any better than the ancients, but he probably is more aware of it. We have come to know some characteristics of time all too well—it is an essential resource we cannot do without. In his lifetime, no man has more or less of it than anyone else; it can be measured but we cannot change its dimension; and once spent, it cannot be recaptured. These are sometimes fearsome negatives, and they sooner or later produce anxieties in all of us.

That some of us seem to suffer anxiety more acutely than others from lack of time might be attributed to our attempts to do more in a shorter period of time, but this may also be a reflection of our awareness of the four negatives, brought into sharper focus by our own measurements. With another perspective, we abandon the complaint, "... if only there were more hours in the day" and, instead, ask, "How can I use my share of time more productively?" This change in attitude is therapeutic, because it shifts the mind from futile contemplation of the impossible to healthy consideration of the possible.

No man experiences time quite the same as another man. Therefore, more productive use of time can be achieved only in accordance with one's self-concept. If to be philosophic about time is to be less beset with anxiety about it, perhaps we should reexamine those things with which philosophy is concerned—not clocks and calendars but values and goals.

In our culture, we weave our notion of time inseparably with money, or the things that money stands for. In fact, we are inclined to make a social pariah out of the independent soul who does not choose to have his life governed by such maxims—not for time or money or love. It well may be that, for the rest of us, the desire for social acceptance is a partner with self-satisfaction from achievement when it comes to the urgency with which we try to milk sixty seconds of something from every minute.

When a manpower development professional confronts the perpetual shortage of time, he will sometimes admit that it is his own reluctance to face what he has to do which is chiefly at fault. Why do we procrastinate? A prominent psychologist believes he has found two major reasons: fear of death and fear of evaluation. When we feel there is still work for us to do, we provide ourselves a perception that we will be around to do it, and thereby hurdle our fear of death. When we put off doing a job until the last possible moment, we are often setting up a defense against someone else's judgment of how well we do that job based on adequate time. It helps us to get by a fear of evaluation to be able to say, "If I had only had more time, I could have done a better job."

But let's assume we overcome these fears. What choices can we make? Most of us are so burdened with a desire to use time productively that we forget there is also a need to use time appropriately. Productivity might be seen as an external value, a contribution to others largely for others; the appropriateness of our use of time might be seen as an internal value, a contribution to ourselves largely for ourselves. Those of us who are most anxious about time usually have failed to proportion these two values advantageously for ourselves. The way we devote time is a result of many factors, but mainly our personality and experiences, our assessment of the situation in which we find ourselves and, of course, the culture in which we live. But all of us see time as though we are caught inside a triangle, the points of which represent:

- Present-situation oriented use of time.
- Future-oriented use of time.
- Self-oriented use of time.

Nature does not permit us to escape from this triangle, except for short periods of time; we cannot even remain long in a position equidistant from all three angles. Either we control for ourselves our gravitation toward one point or another, or we permit some

other influence to exert control over us. Each point can be productive or appropriate, often both. Thus, we must exert self-control and make decisions regarding the use of our time. Some guidelines I found useful are:

- *Establish goals.* We are achievement oriented; we have to have a sense of progress and accomplishment. But to what end? Decide this and the choices become fewer.

- *Work when you most feel like it.* Since each of us has his own energy cycle, a little self-analysis should enable us to tackle our most difficult tasks when we can bring the most energy to bear. Greater accomplishment at peak periods makes more time available for

renewal time of rest, relaxation, and reflection.

- *Develop a psychological self-reward system.* Whether it's a coffee break or a trip to Mexico, build in your own tangible recognition for a job completed and well done. Little satisfactions along the way make time more valuable.

- *Be flexible in response to situations.* Avoid getting into a rut, responding in the same way to all situations. Equanimity is a good trait, but it can be repressive and it somehow makes us feel time is wasted. Acknowledgement of a time for everything effects changes of pace — a time to cant, a time to praise, a time for action, and a time for reflection. We make time more valuable by living

life as it is for us individually.

- *Concentrate on what you consider essential.* Perhaps failure in this area alone causes the greatest apparent loss of time. It comes from struggling with the symptoms of our problems, rather than the causes. It comes from a failure to eliminate or delegate things which we simply do not have to do personally, and an inability to understand that anything else is only a manifestation of conceit.

Lastly, for whatever use you can make of it, heed the advice of a philosopher and a poet - Socrates: "The unexamined life is not worth living." George Herbert: "By all means use some time to be alone."

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OFFERED ON WEST COAST

One of ASTD's most sought-after institutes, the Organization and Management Development Institute, will be offered on the West Coast for the first time April 20-24 at Rickey's Hyatt House in Palo Alto, Calif.

The institute explores the nature and scope of fundamental changes occurring in today's organizations and the effect of these changes on the individual employee.

The guest speakers and leaders who have been lined up to present the institute have a wealth of experience in organization and management development and will relate easily to the needs of each institute participant.

Program coordinator is Howard R. "Ted" Smith, director of the executive development program and chairman of the Department of Management, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.

One of the sessions will be conducted by Waino W. Suojanen, chairman of the Department of Management, School of Business Administration, University of Miami. Professor Suojanen's book, *The*

Dynamics of Management, will be used as a textbook for the institute. The book was a 1966 winner of the McKinsey Award, given to the five best books on management published in the United States each year.

Other sessions will be conducted by Fred R. Bates, chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.; James L. Hayes, dean, School of Business Administration, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Merrill Hall, manager of professional relations and organization planning, Nuclear Energy Division, General Electric Company, San Jose, Calif.; M. Scott Myers, management research consultant, Texas Instruments, Inc., Dallas, Tex.; and John D. Arnold, president, Sterling Institute, Applied Synergetics Center, Boston, Mass.

All ASTD members will soon receive a brochure containing complete details about this institute and a registration form. *Journal* readers who are not ASTD members may obtain the brochure by writing the Program Department, American Society for Training and Development, P.O. Box 5307, Madison, Wis. 53705.