



## **Homework week 12: Time – are you spending or investing?**

So we agree time is more valuable than money – but do we, really?

Time is a tangible asset, not unlike money in many ways, and listed below are ways to invest our time to yield higher returns—better memories, more hours well spent, even minutes that nourish us instead of fly by. Think of these as blue-chip time investments that can't go wrong—and that will yield high dividends for a more fulfilled life.

### **1. Invest in “Life-Extending” Time – moving out that expiration date**

Investing time in caring for your health is an obvious one that will certainly yield you more time, literally—in days, months, if not years tacked on to your life . Yet we often take our health for granted until we experience a wake-up call - health threat of our own or the unexpected death of someone else.

You can proactively invest your time in your health by eating well, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and seeing your doctors for check-up's and blood work on a routine basis. Know, and track, healthy biomarkers for a long life.

Invest heartily in those non-physical markers of well-being as well: emotional, mental, and spiritual health —you will reap many hours of well-lived life from them.

## Invest time in:

- **building in daily natural movement and activity daily**
- **eating food that was once alive and close to it's original source**
- **lowering stress**
- **having close friendships and,**
- **being part of a faith-based community.**

## 2. Invest in “Foundation-Building” Time – personal growth

How I manage my time changed completely when I took the Stephen Covey's seminar on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. According to him, we spend our precious 24 hours primarily on four types of activity:

- Quadrant 1 - Urgent and important (crisis, deadlines, putting out fires)
- Quadrant 2 - Non-urgent and important (building relationships, identifying opportunities, prevention, planning)
- Quadrant 3 - Urgent and non-important (interruptions, phone calls, meetings)
- Quadrant 4 - Non-urgent and non-important (TV, email, time wasters)

Covey says that we spend most of our time in quadrants 1 and 4 focused on stress building deadlines and firefighting or dead time where we try to unwind from that stress. But the real area of personal growth is in quadrant 2. If you're spending more time putting out fires than building the right foundations, you'll never get out ahead of your to-do list.

## Spend time in Quadrant 2!

## 3. Invest in “Do-Nothing” Time – chill out

In America, we don't feel our time is well spent unless we're either producing or consuming, which is a limited ( and frankly, stressful ) perspective. I spent far to many years of my life thinking that just floating in

the pool was a complete waste of time. I was addicted to “busy-ness” and getting things done.

In other parts of the world, such as India, it's normal for people to enjoy each others' company without activity or even conversation. Investing in do-nothing time will help us slow down and experience a different pace of life, in which time's value is not measured by its productivity. I now know the value of an hour at the end of each day just having conversation with my husband without technology or reviewing the endless “to-do” list.

**Spend some time doing nothing - just chill.**

#### **4. Invest in “System-Creating” Time – creating extra time**

It's well-established in happiness psychology research that making small improvements to your life pays out exponentially in happiness.

I am a firm believer in systems and routines to help me manage my life efficiently. For example, putting a keyhook by the door so that you don't spend five minutes every morning hunting for your keys. Or rearranging your closet so you can actually see everything, and not spend 20 minutes each morning figuring out what to wear. Better yet – choose what you are going to wear the night before in your organized closet. Or coming up with a better filing system for your digital photos, or your expenses (check out expensify), so your personal administrative time can be cut in half.

**Look at the tiny time wasters in your day and invest some up-front time in creating better, more organized system to address those things. A little time up front to organize your life will reap you lots of time in the long run.**

#### **5. Invest in “Cushion” Time –see the world around you**

This is one of those time investments that's so simple, but can yield such great results in your life.

Being in a rush may be preventing you from being the kind of person you want to be—the kind to stop and help someone in need.

**Build in lots of cushion time in your schedule and prevent “constant hurriedness syndrome” to make a great investment in yourself and in the quality of life of those around you.**

## **6. Invest in “Savoring” Time – the small pleasures**

A recent study published in the Association for Psychological Science found that wealthy people have a lower “savoring ability” - which is the ability to enhance and prolong positive emotional experience- like taking in the colors of a sunset or the taste of a cold drink. Apparently, having access to the best things in life may actually undermine your ability to reap enjoyment from life's small pleasures.

**Slow down—take a few extra seconds to really look at the colors of the leaves, or munching slowly to enjoy the texture, smell and flavor of a bite of a warm, ripe peach. Investing time in savoring all the unique sensorial moments of your day will guarantee your moments don't flash by in a dull blur.**

## **7. Invest in “Time Assessment” Time – life tracking**

You wouldn't keep spending or investing money without assessing how well things were going every month, quarter, or year, and the same thing should apply to your time. Spend:

- **5 minutes a day to make sure you've invested time in at least one thing on this list.**
- **15 minutes a week to review your past week's schedule and what you wish you had made time for, and what time investment made you happiest.**

- 1 hour a month (or two to three hours a season) of quiet time with a journal to assess the past season, how your time felt, and how you'd like to invest your time in the coming season—this can pair nicely with the tempo of the period. For example, holidays may mean more family investment time, the new year can be career-focused, and summertime may have a big leisure time component.
- 1 day a year of time alone or with a friend or partner (best if you can physically go somewhere peaceful and different from your daily routine), assessing the past year and where your times and energies went, setting goals for the new year, and whether you are closer to achieving what is truly important to you in life.

Until next week

Live Rich!

*Cindy*