

Value-based decisions...

A personal word. By now you've discovered that gaining control of your time and life will not happen overnight. After all, you didn't lose control overnight. But, with determination and some diligence in how you allocate your time, you can gradually regain and enhance control of your personal agenda and life.

Often, in my time management sessions, I tell my audiences, that time management is really a series of **value-based decisions**. The choices we make give 'evidence' to how we value various parts of our lives and the people with whom we share them.

In Feb. 1999 I spoke at my dad's memorial service. I wanted to speak on behalf of the family; and most specifically as his son, about how much he had meant to us. I shared how he had modeled love, compassion and commitment in his everyday life. Dad wasn't a hero in the comic book sense of the word, but he was "my hero!" He showed me how it was done. That was part of his legacy and the time he invested in me. I remember telling those assembled that if you wanted to see what he valued, **then take a walk through his checkbook**. Or in another perspective, take a look at how a person 'actually' uses their time.

Our actions, however misguided, reveal what we 'truly' value. If you tell me you are committed to, and value building a retirement fund; then show me a systematic track record of savings, however small. If you tell me you are committed to, and value personal or professional growth; then show me the courses, books and tapes where you've invested your time and resources.

If you tell me you are committed to, and value relationships, then show me time spent with the people you value. After dad died, my mom who was already sick, need a lot more care. It was my privilege to be flexible in my role as a speaker to be able to take regular time off to be in Victoria to tend to her needs. I had the privilege of being able to hold her in my arms as she passed away, along with my sister. **I'd do it again in a heartbeat! Time is too precious to waste, and the people we invest it in are too precious not to invest it!**

Many years ago, I had a brief stint as a financial planner. I found it challenging and valuable in the insights and information I was able to bring to my client's lives, families and finances. One of the basic tenets of good financial management is "spend less than you earn!" But one more important one is the importance of "**paying yourself first**," as a form of self-management investment in your financial future. I was amazed at how few people did this simple little technique; a technique that has proven valuable in providing solid investments and retirement income. Again, a sense of value-based decisions in paying other people first and trying to live, save and invest on the leftovers. The result is most people cannot afford to retire!

The principle works in time allotment too! **Always, schedule time for yourself first!** This will ensure the activities and people you truly value will have the time you want them to have. **A simple idea, but a very powerful one.** Why not value yourself as highly as you would those around you. Like, "Love your neighbor as yourself!" But you have to love yourself first to be able to truly love your neighbor, or your family, or your career.

I'd like to challenge you to take a few minutes to think about what you really value in the various areas of your life. This is different than the priority exercise I use in my seminars, in that priorities change, but values tend to be a little more anchored.

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This can be a very crucial investment of your time; if you are truly serious in regaining control of your time and life, and in being more productive.

Enjoy this process!

- **Personal**
- **Time**
- **Family**
- **Spouse**
- **Kids**
- **Career**
- **Community**
- **Professional development**
- **Pleasure**
- **Financial**
- **Spiritual**
- **Material/possessions**
- **Personal legacy**
- **Other**

These are not designed to be the definitive list, but as a memory jog for you, as you take a moment to decide what you really value in life.

The challenge after you've done this exercise, is to go back through your priorities exercise and your time log with these values in hand. **When you are aware and sensitive of what you really value, it makes it easier to schedule your 'priorities,' and say NO to the time wasters in your life.**

I wish you a speedy recovery in your quest to regain your time and your life. It will be a challenge, but it can be done!

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