

Busyness has made many of us feel overwhelmed. There's always something begging for our attention, whether it's our smartphone and the constant ping of urgent emails or our personal life and all its associated demands. We really need more time to unwind and do what we want with our days. Even when we do have free time, we often waste it fretting that we aren't getting as much done as we should or wondering what the next item on our to-do list will be.

So, how can we live lives that are both fruitful and enjoyable?

To discover out, we'll have to look at why some people seem to have unlimited time while others never seem to have enough.

In the chapters ahead, you'll discover why most modern businesses have evolved busyness cultures and why it's now commonplace to have a large portion of your spare time monopolized by useless meetings. You'll also discover how to modify your attitude about time so that you may become calmer and make time for the people that are important to you in your hectic life. You'll also discover what you can do right now to feel less overwhelmed and accomplish more.

You'll learn all you need to know in these chapters.

- How spending time with our loved ones may help us to have more time;
- Why do we see time differently when we make happy memories; and
- what our time expectations have to do with our achievements.

Chapter 1 - Keeping a record can help you figure out exactly what you're doing with your time, even if it worries you.

Most of us have an obsession, even if we don't acknowledge it. For example, the author is preoccupied with time and the many ways in which we pass it. She's so fascinated with tracking how much time she spends on various hobbies that she's spent years doing it. Her journal is meticulously detailed. For instance, she may tell you that on Friday, July 14th, 2017, she awoke at 6:45 a.m., worked for 45 minutes on paperwork from her child's school, and then dealt with her mail for 30 minutes.

Prior to keeping track of her time, the author assumed she had a solid idea of how she spent her days. Her logbook, on the other hand, rapidly revealed that she had no idea.

For example, despite informing folks she worked 50 hours a week, she was surprised to learn that she only worked 40 hours on average. She isn't the only one who is prone to exaggeration. According to a 2011 research by the Labor statistics, those who claimed to work more than 75 hours per week were overestimated by around 25 hours. In fact, the author recently spoke with a young man who claimed to work 180 hours a week. Given that this is twelve hours more than a week, this is a remarkable achievement.

This raises an essential question: Where does our time go if we're not working as much as we believe we are?

Interestingly, many individuals are uninterested in learning the answer to this question. Many of us are opposed to the concept of time monitoring, despite the fact that it gives us a better knowledge of how we spend our time each week.

For starters, we could be concerned that keeping track of our time would reveal how many hours we're squandering on activities that aren't important or valuable to ourselves or our loved ones. Second, we may be concerned that keeping track of our time will continually remind us of our limited time on this planet, causing anxiety over squandering each minute.

Despite these drawbacks, the author discovered that time monitoring enabled her to re-calibrate her life. She was able to make beneficial adjustments in how she spent her time after gaining more knowledge.

She got inspired to set out time to arrange her reading habits more carefully after discovering she was spending about 327 hours each year reading trashy periodicals. She replaced her consumption of celebrity gossip with a more healthy diet of quality titles after developing lists of good books and allocating time to acquire them.

Chapter 2 - Fill your hours with intriguing experiences to make them unforgettable.

We all have experiences that shape who we are now, both good and terrible. Our memories, it turns out, play a crucial influence in how we view time.

In general, the more memories we create, the more time we perceive we have. The explanation for this is due to the way the human brain analyzes and archives its surroundings.

Much of what happens to us in our daily lives is swiftly preserved in the depths of our brains or tossed away altogether. For example, do you recollect what you were doing three years ago on this date? You might be able to if anything really significant occurred, but you generally won't be able to if it was just another ordinary day. Why? We don't think about our established habits since we aren't aware of them. In fact, it is because of this lack of thought that our daily routines feel comfortable.

Sadly, our brains do not keep track of our normal time as a result of this lack of thought. For example, if you travel to work for 235 days a year for four years, your brain would most likely choose to store all of these journeys — almost a thousand of them — as a single trip! Suddenly, a thousand of your valuable hours have been reduced to just one. Concerningly, if your brain is bombarded with too much similarity, entire years might evaporate into memory voids.

Now, how can you expand your time perception and prevent wasting hours in your daily routine?

The aim is to produce powerful or new memories in some way. Travels, for example, are an excellent opportunity to create such memories. Since we don't know what we'll need to recall in the future, our brains create memories from unique encounters. As a consequence, they keep track of everything new.

So, if you want to pass the time, go on an adventure. In our daily lives, for instance, we may only recall a handful of fascinating events over the course of a fortnight. However, if you go on vacation to an unusual location, you'll almost certainly have that many new experiences before you've even had breakfast.

Chapter 3 - Our own fears keep us busy all the time, therefore learn to clear your schedule.

Most of us are so busy all of the time that we automatically believe that every other industrious professional is experiencing the same thing. When the author asked Jeff Heath, a senior director at a technology firm when he would be willing to meet, he casually remarked that he was free all week, so when was fine for her? How did a top executive end up with so much free time?

When asked how he managed to retain blank spaces in his calendar while working in corporate America, Jeff said it was all because of his mindset.

He also escapes the mental trap that so many other experts fall into. Notwithstanding their complaints about not having enough free time, Jeff believes that most professionals dislike having empty space on their calendars. Why? Because having a packed schedule offers folks the emotional comfort of knowing they're accomplishing something worthwhile with their time. For example, we spend so much time in meetings because they make us feel so important and busy.

If something is arranged at a certain time, with specific people, it is inherently more essential than unscheduled activities, according to this busy-is-good mentality.

Consider a couple that has hired a plumber to fix a leak in their residence. The partner who has no meetings booked for that day at work is far more likely to remain home and let the plumber in than the one who has multiple meetings arranged. But consider this for a moment. Are those meetings truly more significant than the time the other partner might have spent thinking about his most pressing job issues? Probably not.

Avoid this negative mindset by resisting the need to fill all of your free time. You are not obligated to appreciate activity simply because the rest of the world does. Don't agree to

meetings just because you're accessible in theory. If you're feeling bad about denying them, remember that the dirty truth about meetings is that they usually take up more time than the issue they're discussing justifies. Do you have any doubts? If you look at your agenda, you'll notice that every meeting is 30 minutes or an hour-long, regardless of how much work has to be done. So, unless they're very vital, say no.

Chapter 4 - Spending time with loved ones might distort our perspective of time and potentially lengthen our lives.

Friendships enrich our lives by making them less lonely and more meaningful. But what does the research on time management say about lingering with our beloved companions? Isn't it true that sticking to a rigid time-management routine makes it impossible to spend long afternoons and nights with friends?

It's a prevalent misperception that time management and social time are mutually exclusive. Making friendships a priority is, in fact, a wise approach to managing your time. Why? Because dedicating more time to your critical connections makes you happier and gives you the illusion of having more time.

In a poll of how people spent a single day, those who spent the most time with family and friends on that day were also the most likely to have experienced the feeling that they had the most time overall. Those who believed they had the least amount of time in general, on the other hand, were the most inclined to spend less time with family and friends during this day.

Significantly, individuals with the lowest time perception ratings did not have less time than the rest of the respondents; rather, spending time with friends and family is often a calming, feel-good experience, and so makes you feel as if you had all the time in the world. Spending time on Twitter, for example, will not give you this sense.

Additionally, individuals who strongly agreed with the statement "Yesterday, I made time for my loved ones" were 15% more likely to report that they had enough time in their life to do everything they desired in another poll.

Making time for individuals you care about might not only lengthen your perspective of time, but it can also physically stretch your time in the long term. How? According to a study, persons who have greater social relationships live longer than those who do not.

This is most likely the case since caring friends and family members encourage you to take care of yourself as well as care for you when you are unwell. Because of these positive aspects of friendships, sustaining strong bonds is similar to quitting smoking in terms of longevity.

Chapter 5 - Accept the limitations of your time and set a lower bar for yourself.

The writer, like many of us, comes from a large family and has a busy life. She was thinking of those authors who seem to spend months away from their family in remote garrets, with lots of time to work, during a recent and extremely hectic week. Why couldn't she use her time in that manner? Many of us have felt the unpleasant gap between our expectations and reality, but what can we do to bridge the gap?

The best thing we can do is change our mindsets about how we should spend all our time.

Crucially, the author seemed to miraculously be able to do more in the short time she had after she made a conscious decision to lessen her expectations about how much she should accomplish. She discovered, for example, that she could write the first draft of a magazine piece in a few hours and edit it in 90-minute blocks of time in between other home duties.

What happened to make this miracle happen? When we limit our expectations for how much we can do, we don't waste time fretting about how much more we could be accomplishing. When our expectations exceed the reality, we frequently cause ourselves anguish. This self-imposed anguish is followed by hours of stress about our lack of productivity, which keeps us from relishing the time we do have.

As a result, rather than setting lofty goals for how much time you should spend on your job, the secret to long-term success is to continually establish and fulfill realistic goals.

Imagine how far a little child may progress in language learning. Long hours of intensive language education and harsh punishments for sluggish progress are not necessary for their growth. Rather, children progress slowly, and each new word learned and little verbal breakthrough is celebrated. We adults should adopt similar expectations of slow and steady development toward our own goals if we want to achieve similar progress.

Chapter 6 - Spend your money on increasing the number of good events while reducing the number of unpleasant ones.

We are all given the same amount of time - 168 hours each week to be exact. While our weeks have the same number of hours, our bank accounts do not have the same amount of money. Where does our money account, though, fit into our pursuit of happiness? Is it true that money makes us happy, or that the more money we have, the more issues we may expect?

Surprisingly, it's how you utilize your money, not how much you have, that matters when it comes to happiness and money.

Money may make you happier if you spend it on items that make joyful experiences easier. These encounters become treasured recollections — never-ending sources of pleasure from which we might take mental nourishment. Importantly, beloved memories do not suffer from the same decreasing returns of enjoyment that actual goods do. For example, a youngster who receives a new toy will be eager to play with it at first. She'll probably become tired of it after a time and cease using it. In other words, it will no longer offer her happiness. If you buy a tent and then use it to go camping, on the other hand, that tent may provide you enduring enjoyment. Why? Because the starry evenings and campfires of that journey will be with you forever.

Furthermore, if money is used to increase happiness, we must reconsider how we assess pleasure.

When we assess how happy we are, we frequently consider solely life satisfaction, or how well we believe our lives are doing in general.

So, if you have a decent career and a nice home, you can consider yourself fortunate. However, life satisfaction may not be the most accurate indicator of happiness. Indeed, your emotions are frequently influenced by your daily events rather than your overall life pleasure. If you have a long daily drive to your ideal work, for example, your mood may be gloomy on a regular basis.

With this knowledge, we may begin to evaluate which of our everyday activities make us happy and which make us unhappy. We may then carefully use our funds to expand or reduce these operations. According to studies, traveling to work is typically the least enjoyable part of a person's day. If this is the case for you, you may put your money into relocating closer to work, shortening your commute, and improving your mood. Despite the fact that it may be costly, it would be a worthwhile investment in your happiness.

Exclusive: You'll have more time to go on excursions.

Laura Vanderkam offers five suggestions for feeling less rushed while doing more.

Have you ever had the feeling that time is slipping from one end of the hourglass to the other? No one can manufacture more time, but a few basic tactics might help us feel richer and more fulfilled in the time we do have.

1. Figure out where the time goes in real life. People tell themselves a lot of stories about how they waste their time ("I'm so busy!"). I don't have any spare time!") so why not find out for sure? For a week, keep track of your time. You may use an app, a spreadsheet, or a notepad — whatever is most convenient for you. Most people find that they have some spare time that may be used for more important pursuits if they so want.
2. Make little experiences a part of your plan. We don't recall the time that isn't noteworthy. That's how entire years may vanish into memory chasms. Make small experiences a part of your daily routine to make the days stand out. It is not necessary for these excursions to be detailed. Gather your coworkers for a picnic

lunch. After supper, take the kids to a playground. Simply do something to break up the monotony.

3. When it comes to "yes," be cautious. You can't jam your calendar with things you don't want to do if you want to have time for adventures. Is there only one strategy? If you're asked to do something in the future, consider if you'd do it today. This clarifies the opportunity costs. If the response is that you'd rearrange your schedule or cancel plans to accommodate this new duty, then respond yes. However, if the response is a resounding no for tomorrow, it's likely that you'll be saying the same thing in the future.
4. Take it easy. You will feel pressured if you haste. Try to recall a time when everything was peaceful. Draw your attention to sights, sounds, and details consciously. Take a few deep breaths. Savoring pleasant times makes them appear longer, which can lengthen the perception of time.
5. Make a list of your pals and add them to your calendar. Individuals who spend a lot of time with their family and friends feel like they have more time than those who spend the same amount of time watching TV or scrolling through social media. A dinner party requires effort, but it is more satisfying than scrolling through photographs of other people's dinner parties on Instagram. This week, try to include some unstructured time with friends. You'll look forward to it, and you'll feel like you're the type of person who makes time for pals. That will immediately make you feel less occupied.

Off the Clock: Feel Less Busy While Getting More Done by Laura Vanderkam Book Review

Although we all have the same amount of time each week, our mindset may have a significant impact on how we perceive that time. We feel as if we have more time when we spend it with family and friends and create happy memories. Worrying about our productivity and going through the motions of a mundane routine, on the other hand, might make us feel as if we have less. To make the most of our time, we must stop worrying, abandon our routines, and begin enjoying experiences with those we care about.

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