





Building a Life

Most of what WILL “happen” to us tomorrow is the result of what we do (or don’t do) today, NOW!

Surprisingly, constructing a fairly successful life is relatively easy since there are only four possible building blocks – days, weeks, months and years; get these in BETTER (not perfect, just better and better) order and a good life will result! Even a fairly poor builder, giving some thought to his task, will do a better job than the 99% of people that never think it.

But there is a key : Setting reasonable priorities and then, through discipline, fighting  to maintain and improve upon them. Improvement and progress does NOT mean being perfect in our priorities and disciplines, but just getting better step by (usually very little) step.




We will all “spend”
24 hours today
7 days this week
12 months this year

The only difference will be – Who will do this with reasonable disciplined priorities?


And setting reasonable disciplined priorities is not brain surgery or rocket science – no one can use the excuse that they are not smart enough to improve themselves by giving SOME thought to this! The following are the universal elements EVERYONE must use to be successful and around which they can then insert their unique goals and aspirations:


24 Hours Today

-  Sleep – it is foolish not to get 8 to 9 hours of sleep a night (and that as consistently as possible) because those who do not simply make the rest of their day less productive. You can eventually get to where you want to be (unless you run out of time first) by going 30 miles an hour, but 60

miles an hour will get you there faster! Too many people are unproductive because they are constantly tired!

(See how easy this is? 1/3 of your time is already taken by setting reasonable priorities.)

 Spiritual time – you don't have to do anything physical to require spending time on bodily hygiene; just living requires daily cleaning. In the same way (and maybe even more), the world soils our spirit and soul. A day without spiritual hygiene is a poor day – a day in which we really should not want to be around others for fear of offending them – unless, like the bum, we are the only one (because we are use it to) that does not notice the bad smell!

 Physical exercise – 1 minute a day times your age, 6 days a week. Like sleep, physical exercise, in the long-run, adds time to your life – it does not cost you time to exercise, it costs you time not to! Exercise is simply internal physical hygiene – those who do not exercise do not properly clean their insides.

And with these as a foundation, you then have to consider time with your spouse, children . . . and last (and least) work. It should be clear why most people have an unsatisfactory (to them) life – they reverse priorities. They let the necessary crowd out the more important (foundational) priorities. Life becomes work and whatever else we can fit in around it! Sleep, the spiritual and physical, families, etc. suffer at the expense of “trying to get ahead.” Or, by not thinking of the consequences, we budget time unwisely, like not considering the “cost” of commuting when we want a home further in the country (which in basic English means around newer and bigger homes). We can teach mice the relationship between pushing a lever and receiving a reward easier than most people learn that EVERYTHING they buy has a cost – a wise person, before boxing themselves into large future costs, will STOP and evaluate what they are trading for what they are getting!

Now, with the above as a basis, you can fill in the blanks for the rest of the 24 hours a day, but if you steal from any of the critical priorities, you are simply playing the fool's game of “robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

7 days this week

Now, we need to ask ourselves what is different about a “good” week than just placing 7 good days together? Just one. We fight nature (set-up by God to work this way) when we do not take a day off, EACH week, for rest. People think they “have” to do some work on Sunday to keep their heads above water – it is usually thought of as the best day to catch up on what could not be completed the other six days. But while this is logical, it is wrong! It is no better than thinking that if we are behind, we should skip a night's sleep to get caught up. God made the universe, He made the rules and to fight them is just to struggle with an unwinnable foe! Life math is that a person can accomplish more in 6 days than they can in 7.

So, here is another 1/7 of our time we properly “spend” by setting reasonable priorities. Easy, huh?

12 months this year

Probably the one thing people ought to do monthly, that few currently do, is spend an hour or two getting and keeping their financial house in order. Can you imagine living in a house month after month and never cleaning it? That is how most people treat their finances – they work 40 or more hours a week to make money, then spend, spend, spend until it is gone and wonder why they are not satisfied and why their finances are a wreck. If they would spend a little time, each month, getting their finances in order (doing the mundane like reconciling bank accounts, keeping tabs on their debts, comparing their income and expenses) then, when “push comes to shove,” they are the ones pushing, not being shoved.

Yearly



Make sure (especially if you are married with kids) that you take a vacation, preferably for two CONSECUTIVE weeks. Vacations are the greatest opportunity to make lasting memories for children – and there are too few years, as it is, to be with them. Here is another 2 weeks wisely spent.

Conclusion

The way to make more time is to set priorities (allocate time to the more important tasks) so that at the end of a week, month, year and life you don't find out most of your time was frittered away on the unimportant. Even if two people dramatically differ on what they want to accomplish, each can only best accomplish their objectives by setting personal priorities consistent with the "natural" priorities (sleep, rest, exercise . . .) and developing disciplines to follow them.

Just as the cause of financial problems is rarely the lack of money (and the solution, seldom more money), the cause of not accomplishing what a person wants to achieve is hardly ever a lack of time – it is a failure to set priorities. The result is that relatively unimportant, unfulfilling, business steps forward, demands our time and attention and we give into it UNLESS and until we confront and defeat this with the more important priorities we have set and, through discipline, fight for.

How Many . . .?

-  Once in a life time children's events have been neglected to spend a few more minutes in relatively minor tasks at work?
-  Opportunities to take a walk, be with (not in the presence, but be WITH) friends or family, read a good book, spend time exercising to greatly improve one's health . . . have been sacrificed to watch another mindless TV show?

How many great opportunities do we have and how many are we willing to sacrifice by not giving a LITTLE thought to keeping priorities to build a better life? It is a fight worth fighting!