PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | TIME MANAGEMENT

Winning the Relentless Competition Against the Clock

This method of increasing your performance means that you will never again take for granted any fifteen-minute block of time.

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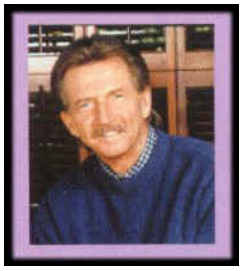

What's the difference between someone who earns $100,000 a year and someone who earns $1,000,000 a year, other than $900,000? Does he or she work harder? Is the million-dollar earner smarter? Not necessarily intellectually, but certainly with the use of time and energy.

Everyone has about 24 hours a day from which to carve out his or her life, so what's the difference? It can only be a result of what they do with the time they have, how they "spend" their day.

Accelerated income growth cannot be achieved through incremental steps of doing "more of the same." If you want to move forward quickly, you have to shift into overdrive, into a pattern of new thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Think about it – more of the same can only produce more of the same. Change a little in the right direction and you achieve a little change; change a lot and you get lots of change.

Try harder and you can expect better results, right? Well, possibly to some degree, but not always. Sooner or later you are going to reach a point where you just can't work any harder. There are no more hours in the day and you are stretched to the limit both physically and mentally. You reach a point where your personal output becomes your downfall

and trying harder and harder produces less and less. Increased personal efforts can even produce more and bigger problems, like stress, burnout, or anxiety.

I'm not saying that you don't need to have persistence or self-discipline. You need both, and they both can contribute greatly to your success. In fact, it would be hard to have any degree of success without both, because discipline and staying power are essential to producing a successful outcome.

So, if you want more, if you want to move to higher levels of achievement, more effort is not the answer. What is the answer? How can you make the changes needed to win the relentless competition against the clock? Does it take a miracle to stop the clock long enough to give you a chance to play "catch up"?

Well, I am convinced that everybody can unlock the secrets of maximum personal productivity. I am convinced that everybody can dramatically improve their life, achieve greater financial rewards, and still have more time to enjoy life. Everybody can make his or her dreams come true, sooner rather than later.

> ***Two things are essential: the will to make a change and the skill to become smarter about the use of your time.***

You can't stop the clock, but you can learn new skills that will allow you to harvest more of what you want in less time. You can become "result oriented" instead of "effort oriented." I'm going to offer you a simple system to follow that, when used daily, will absolutely "turbo charge" your performance. It will show you how to take a broader view of everything you do, to look at your day from a whole different perspective.

Time, as we commonly know it, exists in three forms: past, present, and future. The past is the time we've already spent, the future represents "unused time," and the present is where everything happens. But every second that passes can represent lost opportunity.

Let's look at this in the context of performance. Your past can be an incredible learning resource. Maybe you have discovered something or

developed some skill that has worked for you in the past and you can now utilize that same skill to repeat the same actions again. You don't have to relearn the skill all over again. In a case where you may have gained less than favorable results, you can use that experience to adjust future actions to avoid repeating the same mistakes. In both cases, the past can be of great value.

However, none of us can change the result that has already occurred. We can't push "rewind" and do it over again. It doesn't matter if something happened three years, three months, three hours, or three minutes ago, there is nothing you can do now to change the results you produced in the past, no matter how hard you try. The only value the past has is the knowledge and skills gained from the time you've invested acquiring the experience. It's like learning the skill of driving a car. You don't have to relearn it every time you get behind the wheel. You don't have to get in and say, *"Now I wonder how to drive this thing?"*

The future, on the other hand, is yet to be determined and is comprised of an unlimited universe of possibilities. Any of these possible futures is where your "someday" dreams, goals, and strategies will be made real, or not. Only time will tell just which possible future will become *your* reality. Time *and* your performance, that is – because when it comes to determining which of the alternative futures actually becomes your reality, it will be your performance right now, in this passing moment, that makes all the difference. There is absolutely nothing you can do, no matter how hard you try, to alter the past; and there is nothing you can do about future results that do not yet exist. What you can do, however, is to make corrections to improve your actions and performance right now.

> ***Becoming more effective with your time is really quite simple-- it's realizing that your ability to cause something to occur, from the inception to the completion of a task to the realization of your dreams, can only happen at this moment in time.***

If you can perform better right now, the future automatically becomes better, doesn't it? And your actions, your performance, your aspirations, and intention to be a success is what molds the future into what you want.

When you begin to work smarter, you will gain unlimited power over your performance *right now,* which will deliver to you all your hopes and dreams, sooner rather than later. Again, there are just twenty-four hours in each day. Do rich people get more than their share? Is there more time allotted to people with certain talents and abilities? We all have the same amount of time --1,440 minutes each day to spend any way we choose. If you subtract roughly five hundred minutes for sleep, you are left with about nine hundred minutes in which all your dreams will become realized, or they won't.

To get an even clearer picture, try this: divide your day, the nine hundred minutes, into fifteen-minute blocks of time. That's sixty blocks. Your fifteen-minute blocks of time begin ticking away the second you jump out of bed in the morning. If you hit the fifteen-minute snooze alarm, there goes one block, and you now have fifty-nine left. You spend a half hour reading the newspaper, there goes two more 15 minute blocks.

> ***You spend one fifteen-minute block after another, from the beginning to the end of your day. The question is, how are you spending them?***

In my first experiment with counting time, I decided to track where I spent my time for an entire month. If you want an awakening, try doing that! Every fifteen minutes, write down what you did for the last block of time. Shower, shave, and get dressed, three blocks. Eat breakfast, thirty minutes, two blocks of time spent. Drive to the office, thirty minutes, another couple of fifteen-minute blocks. Watch television for two hours, that's eight blocks spent.

I remember having a two-hour business lunch that was completely nonproductive. As I wrote it down on my calendar as eight 15-minute blocks, it was a rude awakening. I suddenly got a totally different view of my day and why I had a problem getting all the things done that I wanted to do. Once you become aware that the fifteen-minute blocks are ticking

away day after day, the question becomes, what are you going to do with each block?

This is a very different view of your day from the traditional time planners and appointment schedules. What you have here is a countdown clock that starts when you get up in the morning, and runs out when you go to bed about sixty blocks of time later. And there is nothing you or anyone else can do to gain back even one minute from your countdown clock. When your 900 minutes are over, they're over; when each fifteen-minute block is over, it's over. The question is, "What did you do with your last one?" And, more importantly, what are you going to do with your next one?

> ***Learn from your last fifteen-minute block. And if you stop to regret how you spent your last block, wishing you'd done it differently, you are only wasting the next block of time. So, don't spend any time regretting mistakes, move on! It's over! Next!***

When you begin to break down your day into "bite-sized" portions, you become aware of your performance in the present, right now, which is all you have anyway. I call these fifteen-minute bite-sized portions "power points." When you look at your day in this way, you no longer lose hours of time and wonder where it went. You now have sixty chances to put forth your best efforts and to gain more rewards sooner! You also have sixty chances, sixty power points, to make corrections to your actions and improve your performance. You are now in total control of the present moment, where the real action is taking place. And if you find yourself off track, you can quickly move in the right direction toward your desired outcome. Plan for the future, yes, but stay focused on the present moment.

Try this exercise for the next week or so, and watch how your performance immediately improves. Every fifteen minutes, stop for a moment and ask yourself, "Did my actions during the last fifteen minutes

move me closer to my desired results, and if not, why not?" If not, what can you do differently that will move you in the right direction faster?

The reality is that no one can perform at their optimum level and achieve the success they want without first doing something about their fifteen-minute blocks of time. And fifteen minutes is the perfect slot of time, the right-sized power point, because it's enough time for you to do something significant toward your success. And it's short enough that if you find yourself moving away from your objective, you can correct your actions before you waste a lot of time going the wrong way. There's nothing worse, in my thinking, than discovering at the end of your day that you have been moving really fast in the wrong direction. We all do it, and in this busy world it is easy to do without realizing what is happening.

> ***Gaining just fifteen minutes each day can be very powerful. In fact, over the course of a year, you would gain an extra ninety-one hours. That's over two working weeks!***

What if you improved ten of your power points? What about all sixty? What if you saved yourself an hour in each workday? That's more than eight 40-hour work weeks in a year. What could you do with those extra weeks each year--get rich, enjoy life more, take an extended vacation, produce more?

When you become more observant of your actions, the time you spend on them, and the results you are actually producing, you will be able to improve your performance at will. This method of increasing your performance means that you will never again take for granted any fifteen-minute block of time. Observe yourself periodically throughout the day and ask yourself, *"Right now, am I producing the results that I'm capable of getting with the time I'm investing?"* And after you apply this method of self-observation for a while, it will become second nature, a habit.

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Jim Britt is the author of numerous best selling books including "Rings of Truth", "Money, How to earn it, How to make it grow", "Unleashing Your Authentic Power" and "Do This. Get Rich" just to name a few. He is an internationally recognized leader in the business community and a highly sought after key note speaker for all audiences. He is a result producing success coach and one of the leading experts in peak performance training for the small business entrepreneur.

His background includes all levels of experience, research and education. Jim served as President of Dr. Denis Waitley's Psychology of Winning, Vice President of Jim Rohn's Adventures in Achievement and President of Dr. Maxwell Maltz's, Psycho Cybernetics International.

Jim has served as a human behavior specialist, performance educator and success coach, to more than 300 corporations throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, helping their employees improve their performance, access their true potential and to live lives filled with advancement professionally and personally. Throughout the world for over three decades Jim has presented seminars on The Power of Letting Go, personal achievement, entrepreneurship and small business success strategies, and all aspects of peak performance and personal fulfillment to audiences totaling more than 1,000,000 people.