8

WHERE DOES YOUR TIME GO?

Because time is so intangible, it can be easy to misconstrue; you may think things are going one way, when in fact what's happening is quite different. Things we don't enjoy (like chores, or weekly staff meetings) feel like they eat up all of our time, but there's never enough for activities we cherish (like spending quality time with family, or doing creative work).

Can that really be true? Or are your perceptions off? The goal of this chapter is to give you an accurate picture of exactly where your time goes and how in or out of balance you really are.

SIMPLIFY YOUR CATEGORIES

In order to check your balance, we first need to establish exactly what you are trying to balance your time between. Everybody divides the departments of their life a little differently. One of the secrets of managing your time well is to simplify your life categories. Below are some common life categories. Choose the five or six from the list below, or come up with categories that make sense to you.

- Work
- Family
- Self
- Romance
- Friendship
- Finances
- Knowledge
- Home
- Spirituality
- Community
- Health

If you've come up with more than five or six categories, reexamine your list.

Just as a closet can only hold so many categories of belongings, you can only juggle your schedule between so many categories of activities. It would be cumbersome to organize your closet into ten or twelve sections: skinny belts, wide belts, dressy belts, casual shoes, work shoes, dressy shoes, short-sleeve print tops, long-sleeve print tops, short-sleeve solids, long-sleeve solids, heavy pants, medium-weight pants, Acck!! It's way too much to keep track of. It's far easier to maintain control over three to five broad sections: tops, pants, suits, dresses, accessories.

Similarly, it's much easier to manage your time and monitor your balance when you're juggling three to six broad life categories instead of fifteen small ones. If you've come up with too many categories, consider what might be bundled under a single umbrella. What can you combine? Perhaps health, spirituality, and friendship can be bundled under "Self." Maybe finances and knowledge can be subsumed under "Work." Do whatever seems most natural to you. Like this:

Author, Speaker, Single Mom (me)

- Work
- Child
- Self
- Relationships

Here are some other examples of life categories:

Sculptor, Single	**Woman Exec, Married with Kids**
Day job	Work
Creative work	Marriage
Family and friends	Kids
Self	Mother (aging, infirm mom)
	Self

Divorced Dad	**Retiree**
Work	Learning
Kids	Volunteering
Romance	Travel
Self	Family/grandkids

What Are the Departments of Your Life?

This chapter's main focus is on your life outside of work, but you also need to balance your workdays between a variety of responsibilities. If you are having trouble managing your time at the office, identify the core responsibilities you need to divide your time between. What does your employer pay you for? Why are you there? What are your most valuable contributions? If you aren't dividing your time properly between your various responsibilities, you might feel out of balance.

Examples of work categories

Economist

Analytic work
Networking
Consulting/client work
Teaching

Social Worker

Patient care
Writing reports
Research on new support services
Continuing education
Family support

Salesperson

Customer appointments
Product research
Paperwork
Prospecting

Teacher

Lesson planning
Grading
Teaching
Counseling students
Extracurricular activities

What Are the Departments of Your Work Life?

____
____
____
____
____

GO BACK TO THE CLOSET

If each week is simply a container into which only so much can fit, the next step is to take a closer look at where your time is spent. The idea here is to make plain exactly where your time goes—we've got to peek inside the closet of your week and see what's really going on. There are two ways to accomplish this check:

Option A: Study your planner for the past two weeks.
Option B: Track your time for one to two weeks.

If your stomach is already clutching at the idea of putting your schedule under this kind of intense scrutiny, I understand. The act of tracking your time can feel incredibly tedious and overwhelming, and may even stir up bad memories of a horrible micromanager from your past. Rest assured that no one has to look at your logs but you. The more willing you are to honestly look at where your time goes, the better position you will be in to make adjustments to create the life you want.

Another reason you may dread this exercise has to do with facing your own personal fears. What if you don't like what you find out? What if you discover that you actually *can't* do everything, or that you've been wasting a tremendous amount of time each week on things you just don't care about?

Facing the truth can be hard, but it is well worth the effort. By looking closely, you are likely to find hidden pockets of time you didn't realize you had, and certain activities and tasks that you can cut to make room for what's more important to you. And who knows, *you might be doing better than you think*. You'll never know until you look.

GETTING REAL

Lisa, Teacher—Hidden Pockets of Time

Lisa loved every element of her life—juggling children, job, home, and relationships. She told me there was nothing she was willing to give up. Yet she was always sprinting from one activity to the next, constantly running, and pushing everyone else in her life to run faster, too. Lisa's goal was not to do less but to manage it all with less stress. She longed to savor each moment of the wonderful life she had created.

I gave Lisa blank weekly schedules and asked her to track her time for two weeks. (Appendix A provides a blank Time Map.)

She found the exercise challenging. Beyond her work hours and her children's school and after-school schedules, Lisa was surprised to discover how little time she could account for. She realized that household chores and errands had no particular place in her schedule. Rather, she haphazardly squeezed them into any day, at any time, at any hour. She paid bills while sitting through her daughter's dance class, made phone calls from her son's baseball games, sorted her mail in the doctor's office.

No wonder Lisa couldn't enjoy the moment. She was never really in it!

Her first reaction was to feel overwhelmed. "How do we live like this?" she wondered. "When do we get anything done?"

Upon closer examination, we were able to make three significant discoveries.

1. Looking for something to cut, Lisa eyeballed three hours spent every Wednesday afternoon attending a training class for new teachers. When she'd first become a teacher, this made sense, but she was about to begin mentoring new teachers herself. If she were to stop the class, she could create an oasis of time for herself in the middle of the week—to do anything she liked. Lisa loved that idea but was afraid she'd be tempted to fill the three hours with family errands. To guard against that, I suggested she create a limited menu of acceptable activities for that time slot; she chose antiquing, exercise, browsing in a bookstore, a manicure. Excitement reigned.
2. Fridays were comparatively calm, Lisa noticed, because everyone was home by 4:30 p.m. and there was no pressure to get homework done. A hidden pocket of time! We declared this as Family Night and then developed a routine that would become a welcome tradition: 4:30–6:00 Household Chores (with everyone chipping in); 6:30 Dinner; 7:30 Board Game or Movie Night. With all the chores and cleanup done, that family time could be sacred and undiluted by distractions and worries about anything she wasn't getting to.
3. Lisa still needed time alone with her husband. But Saturdays were extremely hectic, with Todd coaching baseball and games often going on until 7 p.m. We decided that going out every Saturday night would be too much, but alternate Saturdays would be perfect. For a weekly shot, Lisa decided to apply her parents' long-standing offer for babysitting to Mondays, a typically stressful day. If Lisa's parents took the kids out for dinner that night, she and her husband could enjoy being home alone together once a week. The kids and their grandparents loved the idea, and Lisa's schedule began to take a saner shape.

> The simple act of tracking her time for a week allowed us to initiate a few significant shifts in Lisa's life. Her days still felt full and rich, but with the added balance in her week, Lisa felt calmer. Lisa cherished those hours each week as her time to refresh and renew for the week ahead. She finally had time to live in the moment.

Are you ready for your close-up? Choose whichever tracking technique you're most comfortable with.

Option A: Highlight Your Planner for Two Weeks

If you are relatively diligent about using your planner for recording your to-dos and appointments, you can get a decent view of your balance by studying your planner.

Assign a different color highlighter to each of your life or work categories (e.g., work—blue; family—pink; self—yellow), then go through your planner and highlight each meeting, appointment, to-do, call, and activity with the appropriate color to indicate what's what. (NOTE: If something falls under two life categories, highlight it with both colors, in a striped pattern.)

This may not yield as accurate a read as if you tracked your time because your planner is likely to be missing some of the activities you really did do (e.g., interruptions and distractions, unplanned activities) and how long you actually spent on each task, but overall, it will give you a quick visual impression. To make the exercise more precise, think about time spent on anything (meal, activity, outing, etc.) that wasn't actually documented in your planner.

Now, look at this snapshot of your life. How balanced is it? Are there any surprises? Are you spending more time in one department than you realized, and less somewhere else? Is there an additional category of life you forgot to include in your original list?

Are there any hours you can't account for? What do you think is going on during that time? Is there any structure to your week at all, or is every day completely out of control? Are you wasting any free time, or are your days so tightly packed that it gives you a headache? Are there tasks that might be deleted or moved to give you more hours to work with?

Examine your daily to-do lists and see how many things you actually checked off. If you didn't get to your list or make it all the way through it, what stopped you? What derailed your schedule? Was it someone else's crisis? Aimless procrastination, like chitchat and surfing the Net? What else do you notice?

Option B: Doing the Math—168 Hours in a Week

There are 168 hours in a week. Find out the ratio of time you are spending on each department, by tracking your time for a week or two. Make a copy of the blank schedule grid below, or create a similar one on your computer. For one week (or two), keep close track of where your time goes every day. In the beginning you may feel like you're spending more time keeping track than anything else! But hang in there—the information you gain is well worth the effort.

As you track your time, be sure to tie each task and activity to one of your major life categories. You can be as general or specific as you like. If you tend to concentrate for long stretches on the same kinds of tasks, you can just block off whole hours and give them a category—work (9–5), sleep (11–6), family time (7–10 p.m.). If you tend to shift back and forth between life categories, making a personal call in the middle of your workday, or doing some work-related e-mail at night before you go to bed, tracking will require more work. Imbalances are often obscured by frequent shifts. If you can quantify the hours you spend on each category, you'll discover how truly in or out of balance you are. If you are scrutinizing the time you spend on the phone, try to indicate which department of your life a specific call belongs to. For example, if you make a call about your child's ice-skating lessons, mark it as "Family"; if you call to set an appointment for a massage, tag it as "Self."

Don't forget to account for time spent commuting and waiting. What do you do during that time? If you are reading for your job, tag it as "Work." Talking to your kids? Tag it as "Family."

Once you've tracked your time for at least one week (two is ideal), add up how many hours you spend on each department of your life. When you are done, divide each sum above by 168 (hours in the week) to determine the percentage of time you spend on each department of your life.

TOTAL: 168 hours

Work_____hrs._____%	Friendship_____hrs._____%
Family_____hrs._____%	Romance_____hrs._____%
Knowledge_____hrs._____%	Health_____hrs._____%
Finances_____hrs._____%	Other_____hrs._____%
Self_____hrs._____%	

Common Stuck Points

Having a hard time accounting for the following?

Household chores: Consider which department of your life you attribute them to. If creating a peaceful, well-organized home is a source of joy and pleasure for you, either give it its own category, such as "Harmonious Home," or tag it as "Self" time (because it's something you do for your own peace of mind). If caring for your home is one of the ways in which you create a warm, inviting family life, tag it under "Family."

Activities that fall under more than one life category: You may find that some activities fall under more than one life category—taking a brisk power walk with your daughter may be "Health" (fitness) and "Family." I say, the more activities that fall into more than one category, the better! When it comes time to calculate, either split the time between the two categories, or count it under whichever department you consider the dominant goal.

At the end of the week, evaluate your log:

1. How do you spend most of your hours?
2. What departments of your life are completely neglected?
3. Is your schedule balanced?
4. Are there any surprises (i.e., you thought you spent more time with your kids than you actually do)?
5. Is there a structure to your week or is it somewhat random?
6. Are there any hours that you cannot account for?
7. Any patterns?
8. Are you happy with how you spend your time?
9. How do you decide what has to be done on a daily basis?
10. What throws your schedule off? How do you deal with interruptions and unexpected requests?

Then search for:

- **Hidden Pockets of Time.** Look for hidden pockets of time (that aren't being utilized). What could you use them for?
- **Things to Cut.** What activities might be deleted or moved to help restore the balance? Are you doing chores out of habit that you might be able to delegate or eliminate altogether? Are you spending time on activities that you've outgrown?

- **Time of Day.** If any task or activity took you much longer than anticipated, were you trying to do it at an unrealistic time, given your body's energy cycles or other demands of that time of day?
- **Pace.** Do you feel like you never have time to stop and think? Is there enough relaxation time, or alone time, built into your days? Clearly you won't be able to do it all, but have you carved out enough time in each day, or week, for what's most important?
- **Routine.** Did you really get up and go to sleep when you planned to? Did you struggle to keep your categories separate and distinct from one another? Were you constantly switching gears, hopping from one department of your life to the next in a matter of seconds? Taking personal calls in the middle of your workday, or dealing with work issues after-hours, are just two of several ways to blur those lines.

BALANCE AS AN INDICATOR OF GOAL CLARITY

Checking your balance will also provide an interesting view of not just your time management challenges, but also the clarity of your goals. It's been my observation that the areas we spend the most time on are the areas where our goals are the most clear. If your life feels out of balance, look to see where you are spending the majority of your time. Chances are that your time is being spent in those areas of your life for which you have well-articulated goals. For example, if work takes the majority of your time, your work aspirations are probably crystal clear, whereas your goals for your personal life (which you rarely make time for) are less developed.

I've always believed that if you aren't where you want to be, you're either on your way or you're not so sure you want to get there. If you say you want to exercise, but aren't making the time, ask yourself if you are ambivalent about being in top shape. If you keep promising yourself to make time for your friends but never

do, you must ask yourself if there is something about those relationships that makes you anxious.

Pay attention to the areas that monopolize your time. Are those where your goals are the clearest? In order to truly create balance in your life, you need to clearly set goals for each department of your life. Part 4, "Strategize: Designing the Life of Your Dreams," will help you define those goals and make them clear and specific so you can create the life you desire.

9

DEFINING YOUR GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

What's it all about, Alfie?
—Burt Bacharach/Hal David

Your dreams and desires are the heart of time management from the inside out. I wholeheartedly believe that you can accomplish just about anything you want when you set your mind to it. First, you must be clear on what you want.

It's time to step away from the daily details and take a bigger-picture view of your life. When you look at the big picture of life and think about what you want, you get in touch with your deepest values, the fundamental things that will make you happy.

There are two steps to strategizing and defining the life you want:

1. Defining your big-picture goals
2. Selecting activities to help you achieve those goals

This chapter will help you focus and define what you really want out of life. Chapter 10 will help you design a schedule to make it happen.

DEFINING GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Let's begin by defining the difference between goals and activities.

- A goal is the destination. It's *what* you want to achieve.
- An activity is *how* you get there. It's the specific means to your higher goals.

Big-picture goals are based on your core values, and they tend not to change much over the course of your life. For example, warm and loving relationships, well-adjusted kids, financial security and wealth, expertise in a particular area, an inviting and comfortable home, a sense of connection to your community—they are all values you are likely to hold on to throughout your life.

Activities (how you choose to achieve those goals) do change over the course of your life. There are many ways to achieve any one big-picture goal. For example, you can gain a sense of community by volunteering, attending religious services, organizing the block party every year, becoming the neighborhood's hangout house. You can maximize your health by working out, meditation, eating healthily, and getting regular checkups.

People often confuse activities with goals. If you've ever heard yourself make such New Year's resolutions as "My goal is to exercise three times a week," "I am determined to spend more time with my family," "This year I'm going to look for a new job," and found yourself unable to stick with your commitment, it's because you were focusing on the activity, not the goal. Exercise, spending time with family, and job hunting are activities, not goals.

The question is *why* do you want to do these things? What is the purpose of exercise? Motivation to take action comes when you see something on the *other* side of the activity that you really desperately want. Why exercise? To feel stronger. Why spend time with family? Because you want to feel a sense of connection. Why search for another job? In order to provide for a more secure future.

So, be sure to distinguish between a big-picture goal—the point of it all—and an activity, which is what you use to get there.

To give your life focus, we are going to first define your big-picture goals and then, in the next chapter, choose activities that will help you achieve those goals.

DEFINING YOUR GOALS—LET YOURSELF DREAM

To feel nourished, energized, and balanced, you need to set big-picture goals for each category of your life. Many of my clients set career or financial goals, but neglect to set goals for other critical areas of their lives. If your life feels out of balance, look to see where you are spending the majority of your time. Chances are that your time is being spent in those areas of your life for which your goals are clear-cut.

In chapter 8, you identified the five or six major departments of your life. (If you didn't read chapter 8, answer the question now: How do you divide your life? What are you trying to balance your life between?) You probably are juggling at least some of the following:

- Work
- Finances
- Family
- Knowledge
- Self
- Home
- Romance
- Spirituality
- Friendship

Now look at your major life categories. Consider your deepest values and ask yourself, "What would make me happy in each of these key areas of my life? When all is said and done, what am I working toward? What do I dream of attaining in each life department?"

For family, Diane wrote: "I want a home that is a warm, inviting place for my family to live and to spend time with friends." Terrence's big-picture family goal was: "To make my kids feel really loved and important." For work, Alan, a caterer, chose: "I want to be recognized as the most innovative caterer in the city." Jill, a lawyer and mother, combined career and family goals into one: "I want work that nourishes me, while leaving me time to nourish my children." Pauline's big-picture relationship goal was: "To make sure my husband always knows how happy I am I married him." Maria's big-picture knowledge goal was: "To become an aficionado of theater."

Write down just one or two big-picture goals for each major life category. Don't belabor the language, and don't make a big list. You don't have to do it all. You just have to do what's really important. Get quiet with yourself, and ask, "What's it all about, Alfie?" Keep your big-picture goals simple and heartfelt. You don't have to think about *how* to get what you want. All you need to say is *what* you want in the broadest terms.

WRITE IT DOWN, MAKE IT HAPPEN

Writing down your big-picture goals is essential to making them come true.

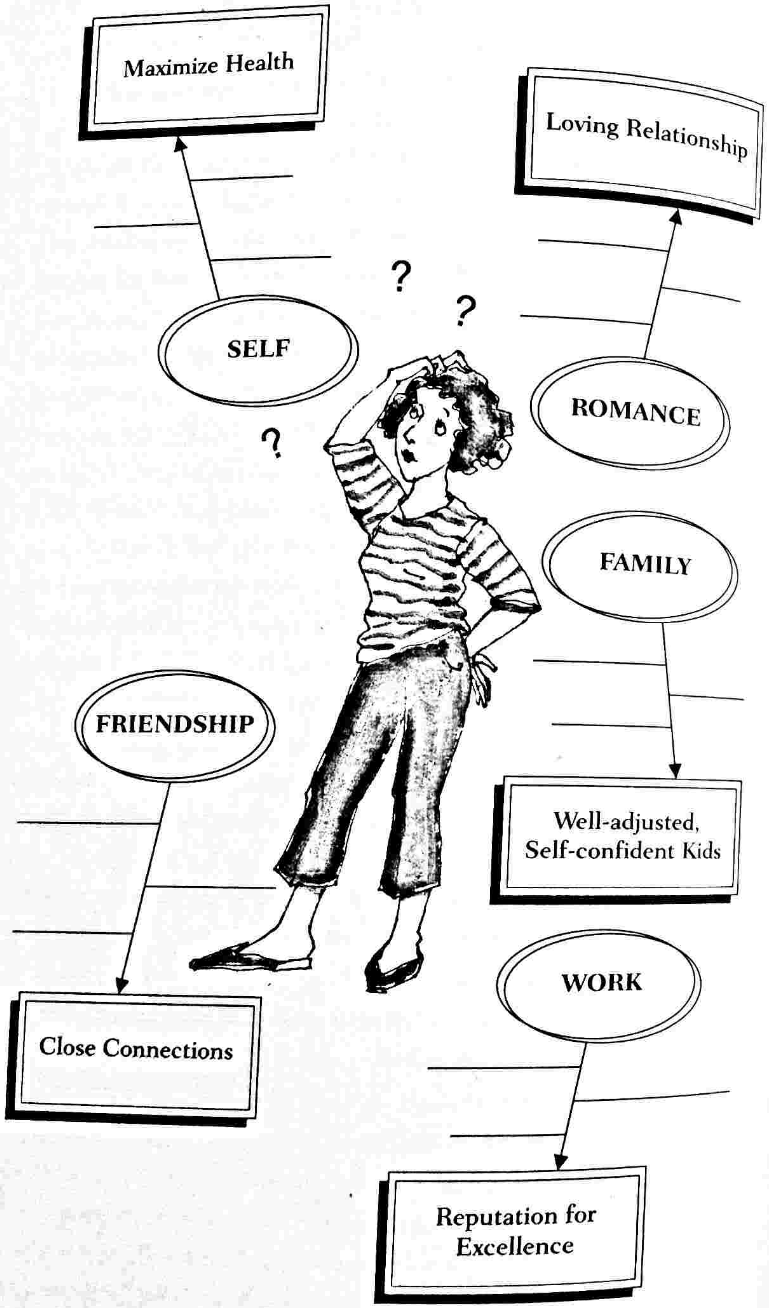
In a well-known study of the Yale class of 1953, the recent graduates were questioned about their future plans. Only 3 percent had written out their goals and plans of action. Twenty years later, this 3 percent appeared happier and more content than the others; furthermore, this small group had achieved more wealth than the remaining 97 percent of their classmates put together.

When you put your goals in writing, opportunities to realize your dreams begin to present themselves to you, almost as if by magic. Some people say that's because when you put your goals in black and white, you begin to attract what you need. I have a different theory. I believe we are surrounded by opportunities to achieve almost anything we want every day of our lives. But we don't notice them; it's all a big blur. Once we have written down our goals, and made them clear, we begin to notice the specific opportunities in our path that will help us get where we want to go. Clarity of goals produces clarity of vision.

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, authors of *Chicken Soup for the Soul,* set a tremendously ambitious goal of selling 1.5 million copies of their first book in a year and a half. Each of them wrote the goal on an index card and reviewed it a minimum of four times a day. Did they achieve their goal? In eighteen months, they sold 1.3 million. Pretty darn close. Danielle Steele had a twenty-five-year goal of selling 500 million books; she made it.

Copy the following chart. Write each of your life categories in one of the circles. Write your big-picture goals in the frames. Our next job is to find the activities that will help you achieve those goals.

Alternatively, take out a piece of paper and make a list of your life categories and alongside them your big-picture goals. Our next job is to find the activities that will help you achieve those goals. If you are having trouble defining your goals, be sure to spend some time reading the next few pages.



HAVING TROUBLE DEFINING YOUR BIG-PICTURE GOALS?

There are many people who find articulating their goals difficult. There are whole books written on the subject of defining your *dreams*. Authors who have written excellent books on this topic include Barbara Sher, Brian Tracy, Cheryl Richardson, and Martha Beck.

I believe that all of us at our core know what would make us feel joy and contentment, but many of us are afraid to give ourselves permission to achieve what we really want. Remember that the truth—what you really want and believe—is always there, whether you acknowledge it or not. What is in your heart will direct your decisions, with or without your cooperation. If your dream is to start your own business, but you won't acknowledge that, and you insist on working for someone else, you will always feel conflicted and unhappy. Your body is going right, and your heart is pulling you to the left; or your body is going left and your heart is tugging you to the right. You have a choice to make: Either pay attention to what your gut is telling you and be one with the truth, or disregard it and find yourself in eternal conflict.

Sometimes clients are afraid to articulate their goals because they are afraid of locking themselves in or picking the wrong ones. They may feel so overwhelmed with choices that they think they can't possibly narrow them down. They're consumed with self-doubt. "Well, I think that's what's most important to me, but I don't know if that's right," or "My mother/husband/wife thinks I should do this," or "Do I really have the right to want that?" or "Is it wrong to want this much alone time?" Even worse, they question whether they're smart enough, or deserving of such happiness. They may feel so worried that they aren't capable or worthy of what they want, they don't dare wish for it.