



## 1. INTRODUCTION.

When I first decided to write a book on time management, the first question that arose in my mind was its relevance in the midst of umpteen books on the subject. I had come to the decision to write a book on time management because I felt that a large number of people, even today in 21<sup>st</sup> century, have not realized the importance of time fully, and also the fact that life cannot be fully enjoyed up to the brim without utilizing time prudently and effectively.

In my own experience, I have observed that people generally waste quite a lot of time and also spend it in an unplanned manner.

This fact was recognized 2000 years ago. Thus wrote Roman stoic philosopher Seneca :

*“The common complaint is that we are cursed with too short a life span which often seems to end just when we are getting ready for it. The fact is not that we have too short a time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough and sufficiently generous amount has*

*been given to us for the highest achievements if it is well invested.”*

Indeed highest goals have been achieved by a great many number of people and history is not short of them. These people indeed made optimum use of their time.

Time is the most decisive of all resources available to man including men, materials, machines and money. Though a large number of people waste or mis-use their time, they do not believe so since they are doing something or other all the time. Also since most of the people achieve some degree of success in some or the other areas of their life, they think that they are utilizing their time well enough. Hence they do not even feel the need to pause and ponder over whether any review or reflection is required upon their use of time and its effectiveness in achieving their goals and realizing their full potential. Incidentally many people do not even set goals in major areas of their life.

Essentially we should not just satisfy ourselves with doing something or the other but should ensure that we do all the right

things to achieve our goals, success and happiness in our life. Life is not a black and white affair. It is a rainbow. It is multi-hued and multi-coloured. There are so many pleasures in life. Life is just not to be lived, but enjoyed. The pity is that many people define their life narrowly as 'work and more work' aimed at achieving material success in life and enjoying carnal pleasures. Life is many a splendoured thing. There is so much abounding nature all around us offering endless pleasures free. Without proper time-planning and utilization of time to the utmost optimum use, we will miss upon a significant measure of life's myriads of pleasures.

As Vice-Principal of a corporation's training centre, I had lectured on time management. My extensive study on the subject revealed that most of the books on the subject were highly technical and made heavy reading. Hence I felt that my book on time management should be a simple and easy guide that will enable people to understand time in proper context, realize the importance of spending it prudently and wisely to reap optimum benefits, and utilize it in a planned way so as to enjoy life in all its glory.

I have sincerely attempted to make this book serve its intended purpose. I have laid great stress on the advantages of managing time well as also the disadvantages caused by failure to manage time well. The book deals in detail with the holistic approach to time management aimed at achieving one's desired goals in the domains of one's career, family, health care, personal development, self-enjoyment, social obligations and spiritual enlightenment, so that one realizes his/her full potential, attains a state of satisfaction and much sought after peace.

A separate chapter is included on achieving the elusive happiness which is the bottom line of not only time management, but also life. The book is written in simple language without using many jargons. It highlights the attitudes and habits that come in the way of good management of time, giving a wide range of examples elucidating underlying principles of time management. The book proceeds systematically to cover every aspect of time management. It also explains, in detail, an illustrative example of actual time-log and time-chart that will help one to plan one's

daily activities for effective use of time. A list of do's and don'ts for better time management has also been added.

I trust readers will find the book useful. It will help them in realizing the importance of time, in managing their time better, in realizing their full potential and in achieving their goals in all areas of life.

## 2. TIME, AS IT IS.

From time immemorial man has been trying to understand what "time" is. He is still grappling with the problem without having found a satisfactory answer.

Once, a Russian who was crossing a road in London, wanted to know the time. As there is no definite article in Russian language, he asked a passerby who happened to be a Professor of Physics. "What is Time?" With a very grave face, the professor replied, "Young man, you have asked an imponderable question over which scientists have been contemplating for ages and are yet to arrive at a conclusion." The puzzled Russian who just wanted to know the time must have thought of the other person as loony.

But the fact remains, as P.G. Wodehouse put it, that though man has, over the ages, tried to measure time through sundial, hourglass, pendulum clock and quartz watches, time is yet largely immeasurable. For our convenience we have divided the period taken by the Earth to complete one rotation on its

axis into 24 hours and the period taken by the earth to rotate around the Sun into 12 months and so on. This has enabled us to understand time better. But the moot question is, "**Is it so?**"

### **What is time?**

It can be said that "Time", for man, is life itself. For, the life of a man is the time-span between his birth and death and how great he becomes depends on how well he uses this time-span. Benjamin Franklin said,

*"DOST THOU LOVE LIFE? THEN DO NOT SQUANDER TIME FOR, THAT IS THE STUFF LIFE IS MADE OF."*

However, till we grow up to a certain age, we may not be able to understand the importance of time and the years spent before that cannot be counted for making the best use of our life. But the pity is that many of us grow into adulthood, middle age, and some of us pass into old age too without understanding the importance of time and consequently without managing life well.



The famous Roman stoic philosopher Seneca wrote thus two thousand years ago, which is true even today.

“The common complaint is that we are cursed with too short a life span, which often seem to end just when we are getting ready for it. Such complaint do not emanate from the man on the street, but from the unthinking mass of people. The same feeling lay behind complaints from even distinguished men and women who undoubtedly had the affluence and the means to enjoy their leisure. The fact is not that we have too short a time to live, but that we waste lot of it. Life is long enough and sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements, if it were well invested.”

Even if we had 1000 years to live, our life would still shrink into the shortest span because our 'vice' of wasting our time and allowing others to trespass on it, would swallow up any amount of time that is given to us. Everyone hurries his life and suffers from an yearning for the future and wariness for the present. The greatest hindrance to living is expectancy which depends on the morrow and

wastes today. We thus dispose of that which lie in the hands of fortune, while letting go of that which is in our own hands. He who bestows all of his time on his own needs, who plans out his every day as if it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the morrow.

"Why do you delay? Why do you sit idle?" questions the philosopher and adds, "unless you seize the day, it flees, even though you seize it, it still will flee; therefore you must vie with the time in the speed of using it and, as from a torrent that rushes by and will not always flow, you must drink quickly."

Hence time is as precious as life itself and time wasted is life wasted. Besides time, there are two more things which are very important in life. They are Health and Wealth. It is possible to manage to acquire wealth after having lost it. It is also possible, to a good extent, to get back the good health after losing it. But it is impossible to get back the time lost. If you do not use it, you lose it. Time lost once is time lost forever.

*"Time wasted is existence, used is life."*

*-Edward Young.*

## **TIME, THE FIFTH RESOURCE :**

Economists identified four resources, 'the four 'M's', Viz. Men, Materials, Machines and Money. Optimum use of them could lead to success of any human enterprise. It however took them long to understand that even the optimum use of the four resources cannot guarantee success if the fifth resource "Time" is not used well. If production does not bring out the product on time, it may not get sold or the sales-order may be cancelled. A man with an idea to produce a product can have all four traditional resources, but if he does not have time to manage the resources, he cannot produce anything. On the contrary, if he has time, and none of the other four resources, he can still borrow money with which he can hire men, buy materials and machines, put them into use, and can produce the chosen product. That is the importance of Time as the most critical of all resources.

Leon Alberti, an Italian merchant of fifteenth century wrote –

*"He who knows how not to waste time can do just about anything; and he who knows how to make use of time will be lord of whatever he wants."*

### **THE DIMENSION OF TIME:**

Time, unlike money, cannot be stored, borrowed, or saved. There is a belief that time lost can be made up by doing subsequent things faster. This is only a myth. For example a pilot taking off one hour behind schedule may make up the time lost and reach the destination on time by flying the plane faster than the normally scheduled speed, but in that event, he would have spent more fuel than what is spent normally. The truth is that time lost cannot be made up or made good without spending more of some other resource.

Time is relative and can mean differently to different people and differently to the same person at different times.

*What is 3 minutes?*

*It depends upon whether you are inside the public telephone booth or outside.*

*One hour can mean a long time when you are waiting for a train but a very short time when you are with your lover.*

*In youth, days seem to be shorter and years longer. In old age, days seem to be longer and years shorter.*

### **MYTH ABOUT TIME MANAGEMENT:**

#### **A Busy man is efficient?**

The above statement is often false. There are many men and women who are always busy doing something. That does not mean that they are efficient or effective. Most of the time they may be busy doing nothing i.e. nothing of importance or they may be doing a ten-minute job in two hours. They are like our Babus in government office. There is a joke about how people in government work. It goes like this.

*In an Olympic swimming pool there were many swimmers, some were swimming in free stroke, some in backstroke and some others in*

*breaststroke. But there was one man in the centre of the pool, who was creating a lot of noise by splashing water all around and swinging his arms in all directions. But he was yet stationary and made no progress. An inquisitive swimmer asked him, "What stroke is it?" And he replied, "Government Stroke."*

It has become company-culture in many organizations to spend long hours in office. Working long hours is equated with hard work. Long hours of work need not necessarily produce efficient and effective results. In fact, with long hours of work, fatigue sets in. In the long run not only efficiency, but also health suffers.

It is not a question of quantity of time spent in the job but the quality of time spent that matters. Working smart is just as important as working hard. As noted Management Guru Shiv Khera says,

*"Winners don't do different things, they do things differently."*

Further, if one spends 12 hours or more a day in his office, he is bound to miss out on his other duties and responsibilities towards his family, social obligations, taking care of his health, personal development and general enjoyment of life. One has therefore to balance the time spent on work with the time spent on himself and his family.

### **EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS:**

Doing things right is efficiency, whereas doing right thing is effectiveness. One has to do things right, no doubt, but more than that he has to do right things. There is one more dimension to it i.e. time. To put it succinctly *one has to do right things rightly and also in right time*. There are many who do wrong things rightly and then spend more time correcting it. Doing right things wrongly or at wrong time can also cause problems.

### **DOES TIME FLY OR CRAWL?**

Time in fact neither crawls nor flies. It moves on and on inexorably in uniform speed undeterred by whether it is sunny, rainy or windy. It is the man concerned who may crawl or fly. Speed with which a person does a job is

directly related to good or bad time management. The man, who does things faster, does more things in a day. The greater the speed, better the time management. Here speed means speed without losing correctness and efficiency. But there is an optimum limit for speed also. A salesman who talks fast closes the deal more quickly than the one who drags, draws, and talks slow. But if the salesman talks too fast to be understood, the customer would foreclose the deal.

*For a man who does more things in a day, time flies and for a man who hardly does anything in a day, time crawls.*



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