Time management: Resource 1: Thoughts on time

This Resource contains a number of extracts from books and articles about time. (More details in the Bibliography.)

From Time Shifting *by Stephan Rechtschaffen*

When I ask the question [Do you have enough time in your life?] in my seminars on wellness and time, only one or two people generally say yes – out of a class of fifty. When I ask these one or two how they feel, they tend to give a knowing smile: "I feel great about my life!" is the common answer. Invariably, these few people say that *they consciously* changed their relationship with time into one that brings them far more happiness.

The other 95 percent - like most of us - are experiencing what I call 'time poverty'. When asked what it feels like never to have enough time in the day, they say things like:

> "Frustrating, stressful."
> "Like I can't breathe."
> "I feel like I'm under constant pressure."
> "Whatever I'm doing I feel like I should be doing something else."
> "I feel trapped."
> "I hear the clock ticking. I keep thinking, Oh God, my life is slipping away."
> "Like life is zooming by, and I'm missing it."

Sound familiar? Statements like these are the refrain of contemporary life. Since almost all of us have these feelings, we consider them normal. *(p.2)*

From The Complete Idiot's Guide to Managing Your Time *by Jeff Davidson*

A funny thing happened on the way to the 21st century: It seems that all of society began marching to a faster drumbeat. Despite all the books written on time management, all the software, all the gadgets, and all the tools designed to make your life simpler and easier, the sad reality is that, for most people, there still seems to be too much to do - and too little time in which to do it. (*p.XX*)

From The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People *by Stephen Covey*

Likewise, in the area of time management, each generation builds on the one before it - each one moves us towards greater control of our lives. The first wave or generation could be characterized by notes and checklists, an effort to give some semblance of recognition and inclusiveness to the many demands placed on our time and energy.

The second generation could be characterized by calendars and appointment books. This wave reflects an attempt to look ahead, to schedule events and activities in the future.

The third generation reflects the current time management field. It adds to those preceding generations the important idea of prioritization, of clarifying values, and of comparing the relative worth of activities based on their relationship to those values. In addition it focuses on setting goals - specific long-, intermediate- and short-term targets toward which time and energy would be directed in harmony with values. It also includes the concept of daily planning, of making a specific plan to accomplish those goals and activities determined to be of greatest worth.

While the third generation has made a significant contribution, people have begun to realise that efficient 'scheduling' and control of time are often counterproductive. The efficiency focus creates expectations that clash with the opportunities to develop rich relationships, to meet human needs, and to enjoy spontaneous moments on a daily basis.

As a result, many people have become turned off by time management programs and planners that make them feel too scheduled, too restricted, and they 'throw the baby out with the bath water', reverting to first or second generation techniques to preserve relationships, spontaneity and quality of life. *(p.149)*