

## **Tyranny of Time**

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Note: As I always maintain, everything I say below is only my opinion, which is based on my own experiences and observations. – *Swami Devanand*

### **The tyranny of time**

Much has been said and written about the phenomenon of Time. The unstoppable Wheel of Time has intrigued and troubled innumerable philosophers, scientists, and poets since the beginning of human Time. Einstein relieved the stress a bit by declaring that Time was not all that potent, that it can be slowed down and even be stopped altogether! But, we know that that is just wishful thinking; that we can live longer lives only in Einstein's equations; and for all practical purposes Time continues to be the single-most stubborn force of Nature that is totally impervious to the human situation. Time marches on, unstoppable and cruel, with no regard to our desire to pause and enjoy the moment. It won't let us hold on to a moment longer than - well, the moment itself.

Yes, Time causes much stress at the philosophical and poetic levels - we are miserable little creatures whose destiny is to die one day, and we are expected to enjoy the speck of an interval that lies between birth and death. And there is absolutely nothing we can do to change that fact.

Time causes untold stress in human life - much beyond the philosophical levels. We are all bound by the deadlines of our daily life. Everyday, billions of people leave homes stressed with the thought of reaching late. School kids are mortified about punishment, workers are scared of losing wages, sales people are troubled by the thought of losing customers. The proverbial "missing the bus" is almost everyone's standard worry.

### **How do we deal with this tyranny of Time?**

Well, smart people have thought about this problem, and have come up with loads of wisdom called "Time Management". But, really, we could follow a few simple basic rules and relieve much of the stress. "Time Management" can then be used as icing on the cake.

The first rule is just ignore Time. And really, if you think about it, we humans have created a monster out of Time, by deifying it and by giving it too much importance. We install clocks all around us, wear expensive watches on our wrists, and even set the screensavers of our digital devices as clocks! Just get rid of as many of those clocks and watches around you as possible. Hide them away. Or simply put them where you can't see them easily. The less you see them, the less you will think about Time, and the less troubled you will be. Look at them only when you absolutely must.

The second rule is to subvert the artificial intervals that we have ourselves created. The 24-hour day, for example, is a human creation. Yes, it does align nicely with the natural cycle of sunset and sunrise. But, we take such intervals and then try to cram all our activities and missions in them. Of course, many activities do require a 24-hour cycle. But, many of them don't. And, that is exactly the point. Figure out the appropriate interval for each activity - be it a day, a week, or a 48-hour "biday"! You will be much better able to manage your activities that way. For example, you could do your "daily reading" once every 2 days.

The third rule is to always err on the positive side when you are allocating time for activities that are out of your control. Travel to office in your own vehicle, for example, is controlled by a lot of external factors - traffic, climate, road condition, etc. For such activities, there is no scientific formula to give you the exact required time. Many surveys clearly show that a high percentage of road accidents are caused by people who were in a hurry! Even if you don't get into an accident, your vital signs are surely under tremendous stress. So, give a bit more time and reach earlier rather than later. In general, it is always better to provide a buffer zone for all activities.

The fourth, and the last (for this article), rule is to resign to the Supremacy of Time. There is no point fighting it. Irrespective of rigorous Time Management, you will reach late on many occasions, miss appointments, not be able to finish things by their deadlines, and so on. Don't even think about it. Blame it on Einstein for not figuring out a practical way to slow down Time! Allow time for everything, slow down, and do things slowly.

Time is a merciless tyrant, but it is also a consistent and predictable tyrant. Its vices are well-known and that's why they are manageable.

Once you let go and surrender to the supremacy of Time, you will be able to overcome the misery caused by Time's tyranny. And you will actually start enjoying Time's beautiful cosmic rhythm! You will start appreciating the wonder of sunrises and sunsets and the cycle of seasons. Your life will go on "cruise control" and you won't need to bother with the brake and accelerator pedals. You will be eternally happy.

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