



MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

One Hour – we’ve all been astonished by how quickly 3,600 seconds can go – make the most of them by:-

Remembering to pause – those moments are crucial for a making sense of the world. Pauses and taking some time out can be directly linked to creativity.

Embrace distraction – a change of activity can help overcome a mental block – make a call, dance, go for a walk. According to Solnit, “a new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along.”

Experiment with work patterns – set a timer for 25 minutes and concentrate on your work until the bell rings. No opening emails, searching the internet or making phone calls. When the bell goes take a five minute break then start again. (Pomodoro Technique – named after a tomato shaped egg timer)

Focus on the now – use Mindfulness techniques (Emotional Wellbeing Section)

One Day – not every day is a red letter day, here are ways to improve a grey one.

Step outside of time – Become fully absorbed in an activity (state of flow) so that time seems to disappear. Remove distractions and commit to doing something just for yourself.

Create a ‘done’ list – set a time to celebrate what you’ve done each day. It doesn’t need to be a list of achievements; it could be things you saw or heard that brought you joy.

Sleep more peacefully – park worries in a „bag“ under your bed where they remain until you decide to get them out again. (See also Sleep section in Physical Wellbeing)

One Week – A week may be a long time in politics, but short if you’ve a deadline to meet. Whether time feels stretched or compressed, try to ensure a balance of work, rest and play.

Establish your priorities – don’t split your time – multitasking is probably a myth – try to give your priorities the level of attention they deserve.

Stay curious – it’s easy to get caught in habits. Routine is useful, but it also stops us fully experiencing the world. Take a new route, set yourself a challenge, meet someone new. All sorts of unknown things may come out of it.

Enjoy the company of others – as technology increasingly replaces direct human engagement it is important to make face to face contact and enjoy rich conversation.

Spend time alone – we are both social and independent beings. We all need time apart. Feeling comfortable on our own probably directly relates to knowing we can easily reconnect with others.

One Year – the tax year, annual leave, school holidays, bank holidays... rather than let administrative patterns shape your year, imagine better ways to mark passing time.

Observe your own rituals – they can console, celebrate and inspire, (see Spirituality Section in Positive Self-identity)

Tune into seasonal rhythms – eat seasonally, notice when birds migrate, build your appreciation of the natural world. Many indigenous cultures were much less concerned with the past and future than Europeans.

Start now – we dream of making our ideas happen, then another year passes and we find all sorts of reasons why we can’t start yet. “The fear of beginning is bigger than the actuality of doing. The only way to start is to start.” (Avatar, 12 Rules of Creativity) Adapted from Make the Most of Your Time-Guardian



Mapping your life

For a period of a week or two record your daily activities. At the end of each day write down how you spent your time e.g. from half an hour emailing to two hours watching TV. This does not need to be a precise minute by minute account of your day but should provide you with an overall sense of what your days look like.

At the end of the week create a table listing each of your activities, the amount of time you devoted to each one, and how much meaning and pleasure each one provided. You can use a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 indicating no meaning or pleasure and 5 signifying very high meaning or pleasure. Next to the amount of time, indicate whether you would like to spend more or less of your time on the activity. If you would like to spend more time, write „+“ next to it. If you’d like to spend a lot more time put „+ +“. If you’d like to spend less time on the activity, put „-“, next to it; for a lot less time write „- -“. If you are satisfied with the amount of time you are spending on a particular activity, or it is not possible to change the amount of time you devote to it at the moment, write „=“ next to it.

Here is an example of a weekly map:

Activity	Meaning	Pleasure	Time/week
Spending time with the family	5	4	14 hours ++
Meetings at work	4	2	11 hours =
Watching TV	2	3	8.5 hours -

(Adapted from *Happier* by Tal Ben-Shahar, (2008) McGraw Professional)

Make the most of my time.....

List 3 things you either plan to do more of or less of!

1.
2.
3.

