

Resetting Your Time Perspective



Moderating Future Orientated

Much that is good about being future orientated becomes negative if you overuse it. Are you endlessly competitive? Have you willingly sacrificed your circle of friends and family to success in the future? Are you locked in to an ever more compressed time crunch that is squeezing the juice out of life? If so you are overinvested in the future. Here are some tips on balancing your time perspective

- First, you need to do *less* not more
- As a future, you should practice giving and graciously receiving the *gift of time*. Time is your most precious possession, so give it to others, especially those you care about, when they can most appreciate it.
- And, give some of that precious time to yourself as downtime, play time, fun time, exercise time, indulgence time.
- Try to reserve at least one weekend day as a workless day.
- Take time to say 'Hello, goodbye, ciao, good morning, lovely day and enjoy the holiday'. Listen to what people say in reply.
- When you do work find the *flow* within the activity, the pleasure of intrinsic motivation that transforms what you *have* to do into what you *want* to do.

Moderating Present-hedonistic

Your present energy is wonderfully contagious. Others love to be around you. However, unfocused energy disrupts discipline and organisation and is often wasted. Your adventurous nature leads you to venture everywhere and to take risks others avoid. You rush in where angels fear to tread. Then you die or go broke!

If ever moderation is a virtue, it is surely for hedonists. Turning down the volume helps you hear the lyrics. Developing the cerebral muscle you need to resist temptation grants you immunity from mindless actions. Learning that the house always wins may help you temper your attraction to gambling. If you live fast and die young, your corpse is unlikely to be good-looking despite what you may have heard.

As a successful hedonist, you are a role model for overextended futures and stagnant pasts. You demonstrate the virtues of emotions and curiosity. Tempering your hedonism with a dose of the holistic present will put you in touch not only with your feelings but your inner wisdom. Your focus on the here and now needs to be broadened to incorporate the there and then. Embrace periods of downtime as time to look within and create new fantasies. Being a leading actor is good, but becoming a director or scriptwriter is better. It puts you in charge of the whole show and allows you to design a happy ending!



Reconstructing Past Negative

A past-negative time perspective attributes global significance to the negative events in your life. You tend to blame yourself for everything. You do not identify the specific events that caused the pain but, rather, find failure and impossible hurdles everywhere. Your negative past focus makes you vulnerable to depressive ruminative cycles.

When your memory replays the familiar old slides of past negative experiences, make yourself take out those slides and insert new slides of recent positive experiences. Reweave your past from a more vibrant fabric of the present. Use techniques from CBT.

How to become more future-orientated

Wear a watch (even if it doesn't work); set a few reasonable goals write them down in your 'to be accomplished list'; write an important future date on the back of your hand; practice mental rehearsal and visualisation – build a series of visions for your future; complete a 'to do' list from most to least important, give yourself a reward for each task completed.

Practice delaying gratification. Put a bowl of some inviting chocolates, nuts or fruit or anything you really like. Now mentally frame it, saying 'Later for you.' Get an appointment book and calendar and make appointments for medical, dental and vision check-ups. Don't drink. Make flossing your teeth a daily ritual! Stop thinking of the world as divided into black or white. Think grey. Consider the many possibilities between the extremes.

How to become more present-hedonistic

Don't wear a watch. Plan for periods of spontaneity. Set aside a weekend day and make absolutely no plans for it. Decide what you will do when the day arrives. Practice relaxation exercises, (Meditation, Yoga in Handbook), get regular massages Go to a comedy club. Practice telling jokes. Drink alcohol in moderation. Buy a pet. Go for a hike and enjoy nature. Say yes to most invitations. Work at using time differently- fly kites, blow bubbles, be silly whenever you feel too serious or too grown up. Allow yourself to laugh out loud and to cry. Try a new restaurant, go to a karaoke bar and sing, even off-key!

How to become more past-positive

Look through photograph albums; attend a traditional cultural event; make a scrapbook of all past mementoes. Include everything you can find about yourself, family and friends; photos, letters and report cards. Write down your reflections of each stage of your life. Tape an oral history of your family; call an old friend; offer to help plan family re-unions; express your love and gratitude to those you care about; take a trip back to your home town; watch old movies; read historical novels and biographies and listen to golden oldies and classical music. Spend time with past-positive people; avoid negative ones. (Adapted from Zimbardo – the Time Paradox)

