

TIME MANAGEMENT for the AGRICULTURE INSTRUCTOR

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TIME MANAGEMENT FOR THE AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTOR

The agricultural instructor is and always has been a very busy individual because of the number of people served and the ever-changing levels of agricultural technology. The nature of the profession also lends itself well to involvement in a variety of activities. Often times the result is an overworked, frustrated individual with discontented family members or an agricultural program that does not meet the needs and expectations of the community. To conquer these problems and to be an effective and efficient individual, the factors involved in time management must be employed.

Agricultural instructors, like others, should learn to work smarter, not harder, with the end result being more time for themselves, their families, and their friends, or time to undertake the dreams they have been putting off because they "haven't had the time." ¹ Nationally-known management consultant Christopher Hegarty says the average person is wasting 85% of his time on low octane work that counts little toward achieving his life's goals. ²

The individual in the agricultural world of work soon recognizes the tremendous amount of work to be accomplished and the limited amount of time in which to do it. One may easily be tempted to accuse the work of being responsible for our frustrations. However, a close examination of our responsibilities and our associated activities reveals the causative factor to be poor planning or mismanagement of time.

¹ Alan Lakein, How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1973), p. 17.

² Syl Marking, "How to Make Your Time Work Harder" Management Monthly, 2:7, Sept., 1978.

TIME

Theodore Roosevelt is credited for saying "Nine-tenths of wisdom consists in being wise in time." Each of us must recognize the limited resource, time, which we have before us and how we may make the wisest use of that time. If we squander time and let it slip by unproductively, we can say, along with Horace Mann, "Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."

Voltaire, the famous French author, philosopher, and apostle of free thought, in his novel entitled Zadig, A Mystery of Fate asks the following question: ³

What of all the things in the world, is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended, the most neglected and the most regretted, without which nothing can be done, which devours all that is little, and enlivens all that is great?

The answer:

Time.

Nothing is longer, since it is the measure of eternity.

Nothing is shorter, since it is insufficient for the accomplishment of your projects.

Nothing is more slow to him that expects; nothing more rapid to him that enjoys.

In greatness it extends to infinity, in smallness it is infinitely divisible.

All men neglect it; all regret the loss of it; nothing can be done without it.

It consigns to oblivion whatever is unworthy of being transmitted to posterity, and it immortalizes such actions as are truly great.

³ Herbert V. Prochnow and Herbert V. Prochnow, Jr., The Public Speaker's Treasure Chest (3rd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 296.

Truly, time is man's most precious asset.

Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but to master your time is to master your life and make the most of it. ⁴ As teachers of agriculture, we must discover the ways and means by which we can master our time and then do it.

A common lament heard among agricultural instructors when approached with additional duty or activity is "I don't have time." However, there is no such thing as lack of time. We all have plenty of time to do everything we really want to do. If you find yourself too busy to get things done, you need only remember that there are plenty of people who are even busier than you are who manage to get more done than you do. They don't have more time than you have. They just use their time to better advantage. ⁵ Jean de la Bryere, a French moralist said "those who make the worst use of their time are the first to complain of its shortness."

As we stated earlier, we desire to be effective and efficient individuals. To be effective, we must concern ourselves with the best uses of our time, which may or may not include doing the particular job in question. To be efficient, we must concern ourselves with the best ways of doing an assigned task. Sound time management involves thinking in terms of effectiveness first and efficiency second.

GOALS AND GOAL SETTING

Time management cannot be discussed without looking at the role and value of setting goals. Definite goals or objectives are necessary if one is to be a wise user of time. Management consultant, Thomas H. Lawrence, says

⁴ Lakein, p. 11.

⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

that happiness is wanting what you get; success is getting what you want. ⁶ It is a generally accepted fact that success depends on having a goal for your life. Goal-setting is as natural as breathing yet few people know how to achieve their goals. Teachers of agriculture should certainly hold an advantage here. Most have stressed the importance of goal-setting to the people they work with. Unfortunately, a very few "practice what they preach."

There is a big gap between knowing and doing. Goethe, an 18th century German critic of life, said, "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." Most of us know how to set goals and benefit from them, but how many of us ever sit down and do it? If you have, are your goals still pertinent or should they be revised? The establishment and use of goals will make you more efficient users of time. Deciding what you want and where you want to go sets into motion the most powerful thrust in your life that will help you get the things you want to have. But it takes work to make these things happen. ⁷

A. G. Mueller, University of Illinois farm management specialist has stated: ⁸

Most guys don't plan. They manage on the need and crisis principle. They do this job when it needs doing, do that job when it needs doing and manage from one crisis to another.

This statement was made about farmers in general, but as a group of agricultural instructors we, too, fit this description.

⁶ Milo Hamilton, "Manage Your Life to Reach Your True Goals," Management Monthly, 2:12, May, 1978.

⁷ Lakein, p. 31.

⁸ Syl Marking, "Tighten the Screws of Time Management," Management Monthly, 2:6, Oct., 1978.

Elmer Wheeler, a philosopher and motivational speaker, stated, "Many men and women fail in life, not for lack of ability or brains, or even courage, but simply because they have never organized their energies around a central goal." ⁹ They are "spinning their wheels."

Individuals who fail to have goals in life fail to accomplish their hopes and their dreams. Their energies are used to take them in a direction that may or may not be closer to their desires. They are guilty of wheel spinning and are best described by the former New York Yankee baseball player Yogi Berra. He said, "If you don't know where you're going you're liable to wind up somewhere else."

How many agricultural instructors are spinning their wheels? How many agricultural instructors have not only established goals of a personal and family nature, but have also set goals for the programs they work with? How many agricultural instructors are only passengers of their occupational boat as it drifts across the sea of life rather than observant captains who chart their course?

Many teachers of agriculture, just as many individuals in all walks of life, are wheel-spinners. Irwin Cochran, a business management consultant, has said, "A wheel-spinner's temper is usually short; he's late getting things finished; he won't trust anyone else to do the job; and you'll hear him complaining "The day is too short . . . to get everything done." ¹⁰ A sure symptom of poor time use is the mad scramble of activity that results from a poor job of goal-setting, planning, and delegating. ¹¹ The old maxim of the

⁹ Jack Ensign Addington, All About Goals and How to Achieve Them, (Marina del Rey: Book Graphics, 1977), p.5.

¹⁰ Bob Coffman, "How to Save Minutes and Gain Hours of Harvest Time", Management Monthly, 2:8, July, 1978.

¹¹ Edwin C. Bliss, Getting Things Done, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), p. 188.

Pennsylvania Dutch, "The hurrieder I go, the behinder I get," pretty well sums up the situation.

Business management consultant Irwin Cochran suggests ten ways to remedy wheel-spinning:¹²

1. Don't waste time on time wasters.
2. Put in time where it counts.
3. Eliminate the unnecessary.
4. Stop waiting for other people.
5. Decide what is really important.
6. Establish a routine.
7. Do the unpleasant thing first.
8. Delegate work to others.
9. Make decisions fast, but not hasty.
10. Quit when you are finished.

If people, including agricultural instructors, would adopt these suggestions, some fantastic accomplishments could be seen. Hopes, dreams, and desires would materialize. Life would be under control following a well charted course.

Thomas Huxley used to tell of a visit he once made to Dublin to address an educational meeting. His train was late in arriving and he jumped into a cab and said to the cabman, "Drive fast." After traveling some distance Mr. Huxley realized that he had not given the driver any address. He called out to him, "Where are you driving?" "I don't know where I'm driving," the man said, "but I'm driving fast."¹³

So it is with many things that we do today. We are driving fast but we do not know where we are going and we fail to arrive. These words from Goethe are to the point:

I respect the man who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of all mischief in the world arises from the fact that men do not

¹² Coffman, p. 8.

¹³ Barton Morgan, Glenn E. Holmes, Clarence E. Bundy, Methods in Adult Education (Danville: The Interstate, 1963), pp. 21 - 22.

sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower and spend no more labor on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut.

The secret of success is to have definite objectives and to drive toward them with consistency. As a wise man once said, "To know the end is almost to know the way and to feel a strong impulse to reach the end is finally to find a way."¹⁴

Setting and achieving goals are the most important activities in anyone's life. The successful goal-achiever finds health, wealth, and happiness.¹⁵ To be successful in achieving goals, we must mentally keep moving toward our target. Every need we have in our personal life and in our profession is an opportunity to set a goal and let the subconscious mind achieve it for us through us.

Goals should be specific, attainable, and authentic. The problem many people have with goals is they make them too vague and they don't know when they are attained, if ever. Working towards something specific allows you to know when accomplishment is attained. If you truly believe the goal is realistic and can envision yourself attaining it, it is authentic.

According to Webster, a goal is the end which a person intends to reach or attain. This would lead one to believe that a goal can be stated apart from the activities directed toward goal realization.¹⁶ However, this is not the case. The goals one establishes for himself must be consistent with his value systems. One's values determines, to a large extent, the kinds of activities performed and, therefore, the kinds of goals one is likely to attain.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁵ Addington, p. 26.

¹⁶ Rodger E. Palmer, "Uniqueness of the Management Instructor's Position," The Visitor, 62:2, July, 1975.

VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

The goals one selects for himself should include activities that yield the greatest feeling of satisfaction. Alan Lakein, the renowned time-management consultant, cites the Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 rule, which says, "If all the items are arranged in order of value, 80 percent of the value would come from only 20 percent of the items, while the remaining 20 percent of the value would come from 80 percent of the items." This means that in every list of ten activities leading to our goal, doing two of them will yield most (80%) of the value. These then should be the activities that are concentrated upon and done right away.

Some examples from everyday life illustrate the 80/20 rule quite well: ¹⁷

80% of sales come from 20% of customers.

80% of production is in 20% of the product line.

80% of sick leave is taken by 20% of employees.

80% of file usage is in 20% of files.

80% of dinners repeat 20% of recipes.

80% of dirt is on 20% of floor areas that is highly used.

80% of dollars is spent on 20% of the expensive meat and grocery items.

80% of the washing is done on the 20% of the wardrobe that is well-used items.

80% of TV time is spent on 20% of programs most popular with the family.

80% of reading time is spent on 20% of the pages in the newspaper.

80% of telephone calls come from 20% of all callers.

You must constantly remind yourself not to be dwelling upon the low-value activities that get you no where in a hurry, but rather focus on the 20% of the activities where the high value is. Activity does not necessarily indicate accomplishment. Be sure the activity is a step in the direction of your goal.

The number of goals each of you can have is unlimited as long as there is no conflict between them. The only constraints you have are those you place there yourself. What you have accomplished and what you desire to

¹⁷ Lakein, p. 71.

accomplish is limited only by your lack of imagination and belief in yourself. That which you can conceive of, believe in, and confidently expect for yourself must necessarily become your experience.¹⁸

A goal can almost never be reached until you've developed belief in the possibility of your attaining it. You need to desire to accomplish something accompanied by the belief that you can do it. Belief in goals can be obtained by using your imagination and visualizing yourself already possessing your desired goal.

Goals, or ideas, become expectations and what you expect you are likely to find. Aristotle once said, "What you expect, that you shall find." And so it is. If you expect failure or defeat, you very likely will experience it. If you expect progress or success, that will likely be yours. What you are is a reflection of your expectations. Expectations control your life, but it is up to you to control your expectations. You perform in a way consistent with the way you see yourself.

ATTITUDES

To avoid the negative, your thoughts and expectations should be positive, look upon your problems as opportunities and upon your obstacles as challenges. Learn to ignore your limitations.¹⁹ Build on strengths, don't try to correct weaknesses. To shift your thinking from problems to challenges means to get out from under the world and to get on top of it. This new perspective allows you to see the issue differently. You no longer are problem conscious but rather solution conscious.

¹⁸ Addington, p. 20.

¹⁹ Bob Conklin, Personal Dynamics Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota; 1978.

The agriculture instructor needs to have a positive mental attitude. Zig Ziglar, salesman and motivational speaker, has said that it's your attitude, and not your aptitude, which ultimately determines your altitude in life. A negative thought atmosphere cancels out any progress that one may think he is making toward attaining his goal. Changing the thought atmosphere is something you can do something about. A negative attitude lowers your self-esteem and, as such, severely limits your accomplishments. Attitude is critical and is shaped by whom you take yourself to be.

DECISIONS AND CHOICES

You can do whatever you choose to do. The greatest power you have is the power of choice. You can choose your thoughts and actions. The whole trend and quality of anyone's life is determined in the long run by the choices that are made.²⁰ Whether you realize it or not, you are now experiencing your past choices. Your tomorrow depends upon today's choices. Choosing is the most important activity of your mind. When you learn to make clear choices easily and confidently, you begin to take control of your life.

Where you are today on the ladder of life is dependent most of all on decisions you made and nobody else.²¹ We all make our own choices, as we must. Others can advise you and help your decision-making process along, but no one can make choices for you. No one can motivate you, but many can and do create a climate in which you can motivate yourself. Being sensitive to the needs of the people you are in contact with may provide you with all the motivation you need. Achieving the type of life you desire boils down to motivation and goals. They go hand in hand - you set your goals

²⁰ Norman Vincent Peale, PMA Rally, Chicago, 1977.

²¹ Robert Schuller, PMA, Chicago, 1977.

and they in themselves will keep you motivated.²² Your day to day choices are very important because your choices shape your goals. Every choice is actually a goal.

Your goals, once established, should be written down. Making a list of goals you wish to accomplish is like planting the seed. The goals become planted in your mind and all of life works together to help them grow.²³ Lists are important for several reasons:

1. They help you solidify your ideas so that you will not try to go in two directions at once.
2. They strengthen your desires and clarify your choices so that you are able to give concise orders to the subconscious mind.
3. They are a great way to measure your success and see how the principle of goal-setting works for those who can believe in their goals, mentally accept them as already realized, and confidently expect them to come to pass. They give you a yardstick by which to measure your accomplishments.

A list of established goals should be accompanied by a list of associated activities to reach those goals. You cannot do a goal. Long-term planning and goal-setting must therefore be complemented by short-term planning. You do an activity. Activities are steps along the way to a goal.²⁴

PLANNING

Each of you can differentiate between short-range and long-range goals. Your day-to-day activities usually are of the short-range nature. These desired daily activities should be listed on a sheet of paper at the start of each day. This list then becomes the "to do" list. Agricultural instructors accomplishing

²² Hamilton, p. 12.

²³ Addington, p. 57.

²⁴ Lakein, p. 37.

the most and those accomplishing the least both may know about "to do" lists, but the difference between them is that those accomplishing the most use a "to do" list every single day to make the best use of their time; those frustrated individuals accomplishing the least know about this tool but don't use it effectively.

The making of the "to do" list is evidence of thoughtful planning. Many people have difficulty planning because they regard it only as "thinking." It is much better to think of planning as "writing" than as "thinking."²⁵ Daily planning of your time in writing increases the likelihood of accomplishing your goals. No matter how busy you are, you should always take the time to plan. The less time you feel you have to spare, the more important it is to plan your time carefully.

To get the most out of your time, you need to budget the hours of each day. Set priorities on how your time will be spent, and set deadlines. Most people work better under a little pressure, and a self-imposed deadline can provide the pressure you need to keep at your task until it is completed.²⁶

The best way to find out where your time is going right now is to have some kind of time log. A review of the time log would quickly disclose activities that are not moving you closer to your goal and that are consuming great amounts of time. This is necessary for good time management. Nobody can manage time but you can manage those activities that take up time.

In all planning, make a list of what you desire to accomplish and then set priorities. All the items on a list are not of equal value. Therefore, these listed items must be ranked. The activities that will give you the most out of your

²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁶ Bliss, p. 42.

time should be done first. One rarely can expect to reach the bottom of a "to do" list. It's not completing the list that counts, but making the best use of your time.²⁷

Goals help the busy person accomplish more with less effort and to be more highly productive. The use of goal lists and the establishment of priorities can open the way for more leisure time or anything else the individual deems important. Setting goals gives direction to life. If you don't have goals, you have no direction. You're going to drift and get nowhere.²⁸

Goals, whether short-range or long-range, do change as conditions, opportunities, and attitudes change. What we would like to accomplish today may not be our desires tomorrow or next year. Priorities can and should be adjusted as life goes on and external conditions change. It's well to remember that goals are written on paper and not carved on marble tablets. Once established, goals should periodically be reviewed, revised, and reevaluated, if necessary. This should be done at least once a year.

PROCRASTINATION

Everyone, especially agricultural instructors, is guilty of procrastination. It seems we become bogged down with a never ending list of things to do and activities to participate in. Numerous activities are continually postponed with no regard as to how they affect our goals. Procrastination is one of the major stumbling blocks in trying to achieve both short-range and long-range goals.²⁹

²⁷ Lakein, p. 66.

²⁸ Addington, p. 98.

²⁹ Lakein, p. 100.

Dale Carnegie, talking about procrastination has said, "one of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon --- instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today." Teachers of agriculture have many roses blooming outside their windows today. The challenge is to recognize them and then enjoy them.

Procrastination can become a way of life, a forerunner to indolence and apathy. We get where we want to postpone everything except eating. Then we become like the little boy so interested in playing that he postpones going to the bathroom till too late.³⁰ Procrastination wears many disguises - laziness, indifference, forgetfulness, overwork - but behind the mask is usually a single emotion: fear. It may be fear of pain or, more commonly, fear of embarrassment, rejection, or failure.³¹ To conquer procrastination, one must first conquer his fears.

ORGANIZATION

Effective time management also requires orderliness and organization. Clutter hinders concentration on a single task, because your eye is constantly diverted by other things.³² Of all the principles of time management, none is more basic than concentration. Since one can entertain only one thought at a time, clutter should be avoided. To avoid clutter, pile all your papers into a single pile and then divide them into categories:

1. Important and urgent.
2. Important but not urgent.
3. Urgent but not important

³⁰ Robert B. McCord, Jr., "Let's Do It," The Exchangite, 57:13, April 1978.

³¹ Bliss, p. 25.

³² Ibid., p. 24.

4. Busy work.
5. Wasted time.

Put the highest priority item from your first pile in the center of your desk and put everything else out of sight. Then progress through these categories, according to priority, to the extent time permits. Clearing the desk completely, or at least organizing it, before leaving the office each evening should be standard practice.³³

We often do the busy work items ahead of more important things because they are diversionary. They provide a feeling of activity and accomplishment. However, we should not confuse activity with accomplishment. Accomplishment occurs only when progress is made toward goals.

The most successful agricultural instructors are well-organized. They take the time for a quiet hour a day to plan. They keep well-organized records and updated resource files. They spend their time doing what they can do best or profit from the most. They read a lot and attend seminars, workshops, clinics and field days to keep current. Underlying it all is self-discipline.

DELEGATION

Time management is always a challenge. Effective use of delegation is an important part of good time management. Many of the activities agricultural instructors are involved with can very nicely be delegated or channeled to other capable individuals. Giving others jobs that neither you nor anyone else wants to do isn't delegating; it's assigning. The key to delegation is the word entrust. When you delegate, you entrust the entire matter to the other

³³ Ibid., p. 25.

person, along with sufficient authority to make necessary decisions.³⁴ Generally you should do a job yourself only when it can be done better by you, when others are busy, when it improves morale, or when you - for any reason - want all the credit. The truth is most people are afraid to delegate because they are afraid mistakes might be made.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

If you were to pause and think seriously about the "first things" in your life -- the three or four things that matter most -- what would they be?³⁵

Are these things receiving the care, emphasis, and time you really want to give them?

Why is it that so often our first things aren't first? For years we've been given methods, techniques, tools, and information on how to manage and control our time. We've been told that if we keep working harder, learn to do things better and faster, use some new device or tool, or file or organize in a particular way, then we'll be able to do it all. So we buy the new planner, go to the new class, read the new book. We learn it, apply it, try harder, and what happens? For most people, the result is increased frustration and guilt.

- ❖ I need more time!
- ❖ I want to enjoy my life more. I'm always running around. I never have time for myself.
- ❖ My friends and family want more of me -- but how do I give it to them?
- ❖ I'm always in crisis because I procrastinate, but I procrastinate because I'm always in crisis.

³⁴ Ibid., p 46.

³⁵ Stephen Covey, A. Roger Merrill, Rebecca R. Merrill, First Things First, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), pp. 11 - 21.

- ❖ I have no balance between my personal life and work. It seems like when I take time from one for the other, it just makes matters worse.
- ❖ There's too much stress!
- ❖ There's too much to do -- and it's all good. How do I choose?

Basing our happiness on our ability to control everything is futile. While we do control our choice of action, we cannot control the consequences of our choices. Universal laws or principles do. Thus, we are not in control of our lives; *principles* are. This idea provides key insight into the frustration people have had with the traditional "time management" approach to life.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ON THEIR DEATHBED WISH THEY'D SPENT MORE TIME AT THE OFFICE?

Putting first things first is an issue at the very heart of life. Almost all of us feel torn by the things we want to do, by the demands placed on us, by the many responsibilities we have. We all feel challenged by the day-to-day and moment-by-moment decisions we must make regarding the best use of our time.

Our struggle to put first things first can be characterized by the contrast between two powerful tools that direct us: the clock and the compass. The clock represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals, activities- what we do with, and how we *manage* our time. The compass represents our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction - what we feel is important and how we *lead* our lives.

The struggle comes when we sense a gap between the clock and the compass - when what we do doesn't contribute to what is most important in our lives.

For some of us, the pain of the gap is intense. We can't seem to walk our talk. We feel trapped, controlled by other people or situations. We're always responding to crises. We feel as though our lives are being lived for us.

For others of us, the pain is a vague discomfort. We just can't get what we feel we *should* do, what we *want* to do, and what we actually do all together. We're caught in dilemmas. We feel so guilty over what we're not doing, we can't enjoy what we do.

Some of us feel empty. We've defined happiness solely in terms of professional or financial achievement, and we find that our "success" did not bring us the satisfaction we thought it would. We've painstakingly climbed the "ladder of success" rung by rung - the diploma, the late nights, the promotions - only to discover as we reached the top rung that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall. Absorbed in the ascent, we've left a trail of shattered relationships or missed moments of deep, rich living in the wake of intense, overfocused effort. In our race up the rungs, we simply did not take the time to do what really mattered most.

Others of us feel disoriented or confused. We have no real sense of what "first things" are. We move from one activity to another on automatic. Life is mechanical. Once in a while, we wonder if there's any meaning in our doing.

Some of us know we're out of balance, but we don't have confidence in other alternatives. Or we feel the cost of change is too high. Or we're afraid to try. It's easier to just live with the imbalance.

We may be brought to an awareness of this gap in a dramatic way. A loved one dies. Suddenly a loved one is gone and we see the stark reality of what could have been, but wasn't, because we were too busy climbing the "ladder of success" to cherish and nurture a deeply satisfying relationship.

We may find our teenage son is on drugs. Pictures flood our minds - times we could have spent through the years doing things together, sharing, building the relationship . . . but didn't because we were too busy earning a living, making the right connections, or simply reading the newspaper.

Education is downsizing and our job's on the line. Or our doctor tells us we have just a few months to live. Or our marriage is threatened by divorce. Some crisis brings us to an awareness that what we're doing with our time and what we feel is deeply important don't match.

In the absence of such "wake-up calls," many of us never really confront the critical issues of life. Instead of looking for deep chronic causes, we look for quick-fix Band-Aids and aspirin to treat the acute pain. Fortified by temporary relief, we get busier and busier doing "good" things and never even stop to ask ourselves if what we're doing really matters most.

CONCLUSION

Time management is not easy to begin with, but its' benefits are fantastic. The greatest result of time management is freedom. Freedom to accomplish the things in life you want to. Freedom to become the kind of individual you want to be. And the time to do is NOW! Yesterday is gone and nothing we do now will ever change that fact. Tomorrow will be a new day and a new challenge. Now, today, is all you have to work with and it is only the present in which action can be performed. Today is the time to act! Today is the time to do what you choose to do!

One can evaluate his utilization of time by recalling what a wise man once said about the use of time:

This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. What I do today is important, because I am exchanging a day in my life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever leaving something in its place I have traded for it. I want it to be gain not loss; good not evil; success not failure, in order that I shall not forget the price I paid for it.

SUMMARY

If you would really like to see some changes in your life or profession, try following this twelve-point checklist for goal setting:

1. Set aside a definite time for goal setting. (If you don't have time in your schedule, your need for self-assessment and setting goals is very great.)
2. Let all members of the family old enough to do so list wants they would like to achieve. This insures cooperation and understanding in the activities pursued.
3. Go for quantity at first in writing down your list.
4. Include goals under six headings: A. Intellectual fulfillment; B. Financial; C. Physical; D. Spiritual; E. Family; F. Social.
5. Keep the goals specific and measurable.
6. Aim high - include goals which are challenging and imaginative, yet realistic. The higher the goal the greater your motivation.
7. State goals positively. Example: To lose weight, state it, "I will lose weight until I'm down to 160 pounds." Not, "I'm going to quit eating so much to lose weight."
8. Include both short-range and long-range goals.
9. Set a specific deadline for attaining the goal.
10. Set priorities. One approach: After listing all wants, choose five you'd most like to achieve. Then discuss with your family.
11. Set up a measurement or feedback method which can indicate how you are doing.
12. Take action to move toward your goal of top priority.

List your monthly, weekly and daily objectives. Each day update your daily objectives to bring them in line with weekly, monthly and long-range goals. Arrange your objectives by priority with the most important first. Don't do anything else until the first objective is met. If some of the daily objective don't get done, push them over to the next day because they would have wasted your time today. By following your list closely, you'll get things done on time.

The time to daily update your action list is the first thing in the morning or the last thing in the evening the day before, whichever is best for you. List

your projects in order of how much you will benefit from getting them done. That way you are working toward a goal because some of the unimportant jobs won't get in the way of your important projects. If some of the projects don't get finished, don't worry. By your own value system it doesn't hurt if they're not finished because they mean less to you. They are lower priority items. Meanwhile, you're concentrating on the high priority projects.

If a job looks too big or difficult to handle, break it down into small, manageable pieces. Approach the project one step at a time. Break it into the various questions that must be answered. List those questions in order and proceed. This procedure will simplify your decision-making processes.

The establishment and listing of goals or objectives is fundamental to good time management. The essential points in this process are:

1. List possible long-range goals.
2. Set priorities for now and identify the highest ranking goals.
3. List possible activities for these highest ranking goals.
4. Set priorities and identify the highest ranking activities for now.
5. Schedule the highest ranking activities.
6. Do these activities as scheduled.

Try to handle each piece of paper you come into contact with only once. If you can't, every time you pick up a piece of paper do something to move ahead the project it represents. Action of some type should be made whenever a piece of paper is handled.

A good time manager, according to Thomas H. Lawrence, management consultant, possesses these characteristics: ³⁶

1. Seldom if ever takes work home with him.
2. Works fewer hours than those he supervises - he gives work away.
3. Delegates more work than he does himself.
4. Rarely extends deadlines.
5. Delegates detail work.
6. Spends most of his time planning.
7. Is results-oriented.

³⁶ Hamilton, p. 13.

This list can further be expanded upon. Lewis Timberlake, an Apostle of Optimism, lists these characteristics of very successful persons: ³⁷

1. They have a deep personal conviction, belief, desire.
2. They are dissatisfied with the status quo and show a willingness to learn.
3. They take an interest in other people.
4. They are consistent.
5. They help others get what they want.
6. They believe in themselves.

Set goals for all aspects of your life: financial, family, spiritual, social, intellectual, and physical. A goal facilitates living by overcoming roadblocks, making you enthusiastic, concentrating your efforts, aids in recognizing opportunities and easing the decision-making process. A goal gives direction to your life.

A benefit of good goal-setting is more effective time management. Other ways to manage the activities that take up time include:

1. When making important business calls, stand up. This will keep you sharper mentally and you'll spend less time talking because you're not as comfortable as if you were sitting.
2. Learn to put the phone off limits at certain times of the day.
3. Before making a call, outline what you're going to say and what you want to cover. This keeps you on your subject and tells you when to hang up.
4. When it is necessary to talk to a group of people about a common issue, consider using a conference call.
5. Keep a list of frequently called phone numbers by the telephone.
6. To communicate with others, ask questions and listen.
7. Make a list of things to be done and rank them in the order of priority.
8. Clean the clutter off your desk.
9. Meetings, when necessary, should have an agenda, start on time, stop on time.
10. Give yourself a deadline for each task and do your best to stick to it.
11. File newsletters, references, articles, etc. that will be used but if in doubt, throw it out.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

12. Learn to decline, tactfully but firmly, every request that does not contribute to the achievement of your goals.
13. Arrange your office and its' physical surroundings so that you can do the job at hand with a minimum of distraction or fatigue.
14. Carry an appointment calendar notebook and a few blank 3 x 5 cards for jotting down thoughts and ideas.
15. Periodically complete a time log to diagnose the use of your time.
16. Plan your weekends to be sure a change of pace is experienced.
17. Carry a cassette tape recorder in your car to dictate into as thoughts and ideas enter your mind while driving.

The biggest payoff of all in achieving greater control of your time and your life is greater freedom. Freedom to do the things you want to do. Freedom to accomplish the kind of life you desire. Freedom to be the kind of individual you inwardly seek to be. But before any of these freedoms become yours, you must choose to be an effective time manager.

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APPENDIX

LIFE GOALS

To set them, think deeply

Setting goals is difficult because it requires deep thinking about one's self. The best place to start is to evaluate how things are with yourself by answering the following questions in writing. These questions were drawn up by Dr. Herbert Klemme in cooperation with the Minneapolis Star and Tribune newspaper.

1. What are your goals in life? When were they set? How many have been achieved? Are the goals you have set in the past now realistic and pertinent?
2. List in order the five most important activities in your life. For example: marriage, children, work, friendships, recreation, hobbies, self-improvement, private time, community, church, etc. Next, estimate how many hours a week you spend on each of these five activities. Is some activity you consider important coming up short? What is happening to the rest of the hours of the week?
3. Are you taking on too much responsibility or too little? When you take on too much, you will always be short of time and feel guilty over neglected responsibilities. List the things you are responsible for and be prepared to revise the list. If you have taken on too much, think about what you can drop to make yourself more comfortable. If you are taking on less than you think you should, list what you think you should be doing.
4. How do you relate to your body? Is it a scapegoat or friend? What is your body trying to tell you? How has your health been in the last year, compared with previous years? Do you get physical check-ups regularly? If not, why not?
5. What is the nature of your personal relationships? How many are really involved, rather than superficial? You should have at least one or two deep relationships.

6. Are you willing to accept the love and support of others? (This is a very tricky one. Those who want to be self-sufficient often mistakenly live as if they should not need the love and support of those closest to them. Highly successful men often do this to themselves.)
7. Do you know when you need help? Do you know how to find it? Do you know how to use it? Will you allow yourself to use it?
8. How have you resolved your relationship with God (or whatever your word is for the supreme power)? This is a personal and internal matter and of the utmost importance.
9. To what have you closed your mind? This is certainly an important question. We often think others are closed-minded, but we have a hard time seeing it in ourselves. Ask yourself what you are most opinionated about.
10. Do you accord love a real role in your life - romantic love, love of family and love of your fellow man? Do you love and respect yourself? This may be the toughest question.
11. Have you had the courage to attempt to answer these questions? It takes a very special courage for serious self-examination.

GOAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

In order for your hopes, dreams and desires to be fulfilled, you must set goals for all aspects of your life. Everything you do physically and mentally, at home or on the job is inter-related. Goals facilitate living by overcoming roadblocks, making you enthusiastic, concentrating your efforts, aiding in the recognition of opportunities and easing the decision making process. Goals give direction to your life.

To accomplish your objectives in life, make goals and plans for each of the following aspects of your life.

Intellectual

My long range goals for my career and education (10 years from now):
Express hopes, dreams, ambitions.

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range goals for my career and education (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

Financial

My long range financial goals (10 years from now):

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range financial goals (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

I will retire at:

My financial worth at retirement will be:

Physical

My long range physical goals (10 years from now):

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range physical goals (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

Spiritual

My long range spiritual goals (10 years from now):

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range spiritual goals (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

Family

My long range family goals (10 years or more from now):

Express family roles, education of family, family activities, etc.

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range family goals (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

Social

My long range social goals (10 or more years from now):

Express desired participation in social activities, relationship to friends, expansion of friends, etc.

My plan for achieving these goals:

My short range social goals (1 - 3 years from now):

Specific action I will do each day to achieve these goals:

TIME MANAGEMENT QUIZ

To get an idea of how effectively you are managing your own time, give yourself the following quiz:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
___	___	1. Do I have - in writing - a clearly defined set of lifetime goals?
___	___	2. Do I have a similar set of goals for the next six months?
___	___	3. Have I done something today to move me closer to my life-time goals? My short-term goals?
___	___	4. Do I have a clear idea of what I want to accomplish at work during the coming week?
___	___	5. Do I try to do the most important tasks during my prime time?
___	___	6. Do I concentrate on objectives instead of procedures, judging myself by accomplishment instead of by amount of activity?
___	___	7. Do I set priorities according to importance, not urgency?
___	___	8. Do I make constructive use of commute time?
___	___	9. Do I delegate as much work as possible?
___	___	10. Do I delegate challenging jobs as well as routine ones?
___	___	11. Do I delegate authority along with responsibility?
___	___	12. Do I prevent subordinates from delegating upward those decisions and task that they find difficult or worrisome?
___	___	13. Do I effectively use the aid of subordinates to get better control of my time?
___	___	14. Have I taken steps to prevent unneeded information and publications from reaching my desk and intruding on my time?
___	___	15. When debating whether to file something, do I follow the principles "If in doubt, throw it out"?
___	___	16. In meetings, do I try to crystallize what the issues are and summarize the decisions made and responsibilities assigned?
___	___	17. Do I try to handle matters by phone or in person whenever I have a choice, using written communication only when it is clearly indicated?
___	___	18. Do I try to put work out of my mind when away from the office, except in clear emergencies?

- — 19. Do I force myself to make minor decisions quickly?
- — 20. Am I on guard against the recurring crisis, taking steps to make sure that it won't occur again?
- — 21. Do I always set deadlines for myself and others?
- — 22. Do I force myself to take time to plan?
- — 23. Have I discontinued any unprofitable routines or activities recently?
- — 24. Do I keep things in my pocket or briefcase that I can work on whenever I get spare moments: in lines, waiting rooms, trains, planes?
- — 25. Do I try to live in the present, thinking in terms of what needs to be done now instead of rehashing past errors or successes or worrying about the future?
- — 26. Do I make periodic use of a time log to determine whether I am slipping back into unproductive routines?
- — 27. Am I continually striving to establish habits that will make me more effective?
- — 28. Do I keep in mind the dollar value of my time?
- — 29. Do I apply the Pareto Principle whenever I am confronted with a number of different tasks that need to be done?
- — 30. Am I really in control of my time? Are my actions determined primarily by me, not by circumstances or by other people's priorities?

Give yourself this quiz every six months. If any of your answers are no, review the appropriate section and determine what you can do to correct the deficiency. The price of effective time use is eternal vigilance and the rewards are well worth it.

SELF-ANALYSIS TEST QUESTIONS

To aid those who wish to see themselves as they really are, the following list of questions has been prepared. Read the questions and state your answers aloud, so you can hear your own voice. This will make it easier for you to be truthful with yourself.

Do you complain often of "feeling bad," and if so, what is the cause?

Do you find fault with other people at the slightest provocation?

Do you frequently make mistakes in your work, and if so, why?

Are you sarcastic and offensive in your conversation?

Do you deliberately avoid the association of anyone, and if so, why?

Do you suffer frequently with indigestion? If so, what is the cause?

Does life seem futile and the future hopeless to you?

Do you like your occupation? If not, why?

Do you often feel self-pity, and if so, why?

Are you envious of those who excel you?

To which do you devote most time, thinking of success, or of failure?

Are you gaining or losing self-confidence as you grow older?

Do you learn something of value from all mistakes?

Are you permitting some relative or acquaintance to worry you? If so, why?

Are you sometimes "in the clouds" and at other times in the depths of despondency?

Who has the most inspiring influence upon you? What is the cause?

Do you tolerate negative or discouraging influences which you can avoid?

Are you careless of your personal appearance? If so, when and why?

Have you learned how to "drown your troubles" being too busy to be annoyed by them?

Would you call yourself a "spineless weakling" if you permitted others to do your thinking for you?

Do you neglect internal bathing until auto-intoxication makes you ill-tempered and irritable?

How many preventable disturbances annoy you, and why do you tolerate them?

Do you resort to liquor, narcotics, or cigarettes to "quiet your nerves?" If so, why do you not try will-power instead?

Does anyone "nag" you and if so for what reasons?

Do you have a definite major purpose, and if so, what is it, and what plan have you for achieving it?

Do you suffer from any of the Six Basic Fears? If so, which ones?

Have you a method by which you can shield yourself against the negative influence of others?

Do you make deliberate use of autosuggestion to make your mind positive?

Which do you value most, your material possessions, or your privilege of controlling your own thoughts?

Are you easily influenced by others, against your own judgment?

Has today added anything of value to your stock of knowledge or state of mind?

Do you face squarely the circumstances which make you unhappy, or sidestep the responsibility?

Do you analyze all mistakes and failures and try to profit by them or, do you take the attitude that this is not your duty?

Can you name three of your most damaging weaknesses? What are you doing to correct them?

Do you encourage other people to bring their worries to you for sympathy?

Do you choose, from your daily experiences, lessons or influences which aid in your personal advancement?

Does your presence have a negative influence on other people as a rule?

What habits of other people annoy you most?

Do you form your own opinions or permit yourself to be influenced by other people?

Have you learned how to create a mental state of mind with which you can shield yourself against all discouraging influences?

Does your occupation inspire you with faith and hope?

Are you conscious of possessing spiritual forces of sufficient power to enable you to keep your mind free from all forms of fear?

Does your religion help to keep your mind positive?

Do you feel it your duty to share other people's worries? If so, why?

If you believe that "birds of a feather flock together," what have you learned about yourself by studying the friends whom you attract?

What connection, if any, do you see between the people with whom you associate most closely, and any unhappiness you may experience?

Could it be possible that some person whom you consider to be a friend is, in reality your worst enemy, because of his negative influence on your mind?

By what rules do you judge who is helpful and who is damaging to you?

Are your intimate associates mentally superior or inferior to you?

How much time out of every 24 hours do you devote to:

- a. your occupation
- b. sleep
- c. play and relaxation
- d. acquiring useful knowledge
- e. plain waste?

Who among your acquaintances

- a. encourages you most
- b. cautions you most
- c. discourages you most?

What is your greatest worry? Why do you tolerate it?

When others offer you free, unsolicited advice, do you accept it without question, or analyze their motive?

What above all else, do you most desire? Do you intend to acquire it?

Are you willing to subordinate all other desires for this one? How much time daily do you devote to acquiring it?

Do you change your mind often? If so, why?

Do you usually finish everything you begin?

Are you easily impressed by other people's business or professional titles, college degrees, or wealth?

Are you easily influenced by what other people think or say of you?

Do you cater to people because of their social or financial status?

Whom do you believe to be the greatest person living? In what respect is this person superior to yourself?

How much time have you devoted to studying and answering these questions? (At least one day is necessary for the analysis and the answering of the entire list.)

If you have answered all these questions truthfully, you know more about yourself than the majority of people. Study the questions carefully, come back to them once each week for several months, and be astounded at the amount of additional knowledge of great value to yourself you will have gained by the simple method of answering the questions truthfully. If you are not certain concerning the answers to some of the questions, seek the counsel of those who know you well, especially those who have no motive in flattering you, and see yourself through their eyes. The experience will be astonishing.

LOG OF TIME USED AND JOB BREAKDOWN

By: _____	Job Title: _____	Date: _____
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	Job Activity	Interruptions
8:00 - 8:15		
8:15 - 8:30		
8:30 - 8:45		
8:45 - 9:00		
9:00 - 9:15		
9:15 - 9:30		
9:30 - 9:45		
9:45 - 10:00		
10:00 - 10:15		
10:15 - 10:30		
10:30 - 10:45		
10:45 - 11:00		
11:00 - 11:15		
11:15 - 11:30		
11:30 - 11:45		
11:45 - 12:00		
12:00 - 12:45		

LOG OF TIME USED AND JOB BREAKDOWN

By:	Job Title:	Date:
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	Job Activity	Interruptions
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12:45 - 1:00

1:00 - 1:15

1:15 - 1:30

1:30 - 1:45

1:45 - 2:00

2:00 - 2:15

2:15 - 2:30

2:30 - 2:45

2:45 - 3:00

3:00 - 3:15

3:15 - 3:30

3:30 - 3:45

3:45 - 4:00

4:00 - 4:15

4:15 - 4:30

4:30 - 4:45

Some sample activities: Telephone, personal interview, in seminar,
reading, writing, filing, typing, running errands,
search for information, (files, etc.), prepare reports

TIME CONTROL CHECKLIST

YES NO

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| — | — | 1. I regularly plan my day the night before. |
| — | — | 2. I never do personal business before livelihood business in the morning. |
| — | — | 3. I do not read newspapers, trade journals, or special interest matter the first hour in the morning. |
| — | — | 4. I warm up quickly in performing tasks. |
| — | — | 5. I regularly determine firm priorities. |
| — | — | 6. I avoid getting involved with too much detail. |
| — | — | 7. I avoid going down "blind alleys". |
| — | — | 8. I avoid engaging in diversionary activities. |
| — | — | 9. I allocate time for balanced effort on creative, preparatory, productive and overhead kinds of work. |
| — | — | 10. I regularly schedule my best hours for the most demanding effort. |
| — | — | 11. I anticipate possible crises and the best methods for handling them. |
| — | — | 12. I provide enough time in my schedule for emergencies to arise. |
| — | — | 13. I delegate a sufficient amount of my work to subordinates. |
| — | — | 14. I apply myself well in performing the necessary tasks I dislike as well as those I enjoy. |
| — | — | 15. I conduct business meetings within a certain time schedule. |

- ☐ ☐ 16. I consistently control the time spent with other visitors during business hours.
- ☐ ☐ 17. I maintain close control over acceptance of telephone calls as to number, length and the time of day.
- ☐ ☐ 18. I arrange travel schedules, engagements, and alternative contacts well in advance.
- ☐ ☐ 19. I carry alternative task tasks to perform when waiting on an appointment or while traveling.
- ☐ ☐ 20. I terminate meetings and interviews promptly at a pre-determined time, or when the business is completed.
- ☐ ☐ 21. I make use of sampling techniques to avoid over-involvement in non-productive situations.
- ☐ ☐ 22. I screen reading materials to weed out irrelevant matter.
- ☐ ☐ 23. I skim the surface of reading matter for the main ideas, before pausing to read selectively.
- ☐ ☐ 24. I determine a certain time and length for reading important materials and reports.
- ☐ ☐ 25. When performing a task, I set targets for completion of the various steps.

TAKE THIS TIME TEST

Listed below are a series of statements about various ways of approaching a job. Check the column which best agrees with your actions.

1. I keep a written log of how I spend major portions of my working day.				
2. I schedule my least interesting tasks at a time when my energy is at its peak.				
3. I review my job and delegate activities that someone else could do just as well.				
4. I have time to do what I want to do and what I should do in performing my job.				
5. I analyze my job to determine how I can combine or eliminate activities.				
6. Actions that lead to immediate reward take preference to those that might be more important over the long pull.				
7. I have more work than I think I can handle.				
8. I attack short-time tasks (answering phone calls, reading correspondence, etc.) before long-range projects.				
9. I review the sequence of my job activities and make necessary improvements.				
10. I arrange task priorities based on the importance of task goals.				

How to score the time test:

Give yourself four points for every checkmark placed in the "Almost Always" column and one point for each "Almost Never".

A score of 40, although extremely unlikely, indicates you are the "perfect" time manager. A score of 35 to 40 is so exceptional it's "unheard of". A score of 30 to 35 is excellent, 25 to 30 is average and 20 to 25 is below average. You are in bad shape if the score goes below 20!

DELEGATION: A Parable

Once upon a time there was a Little Red Hen who owned a wheat field. "Who will help me harvest the wheat?" she asked.

"Not I," said the pig. "I don't know how."

"Not I," said the cow. "I'm too clumsy."

"Not I," said the dog. "I'm busy with some other things."

So the Little Red Hen did it herself.

"Who will help me grind the wheat into the flour?" she asked.

"Not I," said the pig. "That is another vocation in which I'm untrained."

"Not I," said the cow. "You could do it much more efficiently."

"Not I," said the dog. "I'd love to, but I'm involved in some matters of greater urgency. Some other time, perhaps."

So she did it herself.

"Who will help me make some bread?" asked the Little Red Hen.

"Not I," said the pig. "Nobody ever taught me how."

"Not I," said the cow. "You're more experienced and could do it in half the time."

"Not I," said the dog. "I've made some other plans for the afternoon. But I'll help you the next time."

So she did it herself.

That evening, when guests arrived for her big dinner party, the Little Red Hen had nothing to serve them except bread. She had been so busy doing work that could have been done by others that she had forgotten to plan a main course, prepare a dessert, or even get out her silverware. The evening was a disaster, and she lived unhappily ever after.

MORAL: A good leader will find a way to involve others to the extent of their ability. To do the job yourself is the chicken way out.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING GOALS

From SEE YOU AT THE TOP by

Zig Zigler

Let's play a game. Just for a moment, suppose you were to receive a phone call from an old and respected friend who enthusiastically says, "Friend, I have good news for you. You can take a three-day trip to Acapulco with our group and it won't cost you a dime. We leave tomorrow at 8:00 AM and we have room for two more people. The boss is flying us down in his private jet and we will all stay at his villa right on the beach." Your first reaction might be, "That would be wonderful, but I have so much to do, I don't see how I could get ready and do the things I need to do before I could go anywhere."

Before you can answer, your good wife tells you she has an idea and suggests you tell your friend you will call back in a few minutes. The minute you hang up you and your wife start thinking and planning. First you ask, "What do I have to do?" Out come pen and paper and you commit to writing all the things you must get done. Next, you list them in order of their importance. Finally, you delegate some of the responsibilities to others. Then you call the friend back and say, "Hey, you know, I've been checking the schedule, and we can make the trip after all."

I'll guarantee that you would do more in the next 24 hours than you normally do in several days. Wouldn't you? Since you had to say yes to that question, let me ask you another one. Why don't you go to Acapulco tomorrow - every day? Why don't you list the things you need to do during the next three days. Then act as if you only had one day to do three days' work. That will force you to put your thinking cap on. You will use your mental capacity to think, plan and delegate before you start working. This will enable you to accomplish so much more, that you can literally go to Acapulco - or anywhere else you wish to go - in the tomorrow of your life. Reason: You will have changed from a "wandering generality" to a "meaningful specific." Your life will have direction.

People often complain about lack of time when the lack of direction is the real problem. Many "experts" say we should be arrested for murder when we kill time. Close examination, however, makes it obvious that killing time is not murder - it's suicide. Time can be an ally or an enemy. What it becomes depends entirely upon you, your goals and your determination to use every available minute.

Let me illustrate the importance of goals by looking at a scene of the deciding game of a basketball championship. The teams have taken their warm-up shots and are physically ready for the game. The adrenaline is flowing and it's obvious the players feel the excitement that goes with a championship game. They return to their dressing rooms and the coaches give them the last "shot in the arm" before action begins. "This is it, fellows. It's now or never. We win or lose it all tonight. Nobody remembers the best man at a wedding, and nobody remembers who came in second. The whole season is tonight."

The players respond. They're so charged up they almost tear the doors off the hinges as they rush back to the court. As they get to the court they stop short and, in complete confusion, which gives way to frustration and anger, they point out that the goals have been removed. They angrily demand to know how they can play a game without the goals. They know that without goals they would never know the score, never know whether they hit or missed, never know how they stacked up against competition and never know whether they were on or off the target. As a matter of fact, they wouldn't even attempt to play the basketball game without the goals. Those basketball goals are important, aren't they? What about you? Are you attempting to play the game of life without goals? IF YOU ARE, WHAT'S THE SCORE?

In order to reach your goals, you must understand the story of Houdini, who was a master locksmith as well as a fabulous magician. He boasted that he could escape from any jail cell in the world in less than an hour, provided he could go into the cell dressed in his street clothes. A small town in the British Isles built a new jail they were extremely proud of. They issued Houdini the challenge. Houdini loved the publicity and the money, so he accepted. When he arrived, excitement was at a fever pitch. He rode triumphantly into town and walked into the cell. Confidence oozed from him as the door closed. Houdini took off his coat and went to work. Secreted in his belt was a flexible, tough, and durable ten-inch piece of steel which he used to work on the lock. At the end of 30 minutes his confident expression had disappeared. At the end of an hour he was drenched in perspiration. After two hours, Houdini literally collapsed against the door - which opened. You see it had never been locked - except in his mind - which meant it was as firmly locked as if a thousand locksmiths had put their best locks on it. Many times, in the game of life you will discover as you set your goals and unlock your own mind, that the world will unlock its treasures and rewards to you.

