THE GIFT OF TIME

Introduction

“Yesterday’s the past, tomorrow’s the future, but today is a gift. That’s why it’s called the present.”

Bil Keane

As long as we are on this planet, we each have one universal unit that we can measure our moments by. And that measurement is time. No matter where we live or who we are, sixty seconds is equal to a minute, sixty minutes is equal to an hour, and 365 days is equal to a year. It doesn’t matter what our social standing is or what time zone we are in. It doesn’t matter whether we are male or female. It doesn’t matter if we are a student or an elder.

The way time is measured is the same for all of us.

However, that measurement is quantifiable. That is truly what is equal for every member of the human race. Qualitatively, time is very different to each individual. It’s not how much time we have, but how we spend it. That’s why time is essentially the equivalent of money. It is the currency of our lives, and how we choose to spend it doesn’t necessarily determine how long we live, but it certainly determines the quality of how we live.

Make no mistake, civilizations in different parts of the world are going to varying measurements of quality as well. The quality of life in the Americas is going to be unlike the quality of life in Europe, for example. The same goes for other parts of the world. This short book isn’t diving into that debate, primarily because it is not designed to dwell on that aspect of time but more so because it is designed to call from my own experience living in North America. I can’t speak to specifics of how time is spent qualitatively in some parts of the world - both culturally and geographically - so I won’t.

What I will do in this short book is offer up my own experiences about my relationship with time over the forty years of my life. My experiences won’t be the same as yours, but I’m certain that much of this book will resonate with you in some way, shape, or form. Perhaps you’re stuck in a situation where time is slipping away and you are afraid you won’t be able to do what you really want to do with what time you have left. Maybe you have more interests than you can count and don’t know where to focus your time and energy to get the results you ultimately desire. It’s highly likely that you’d like to figure out how to move in the right direction, spending your time in the best way possible rather than moving rapidly with no real direction and frittering away your time in a casual way. This book covers all of the above and more.

Before you turn the page and start accepting the gift of time that this book will present to you, I’d like to thank you for spending your time reading what I’ve written. I know all too well how valuable time is and how you should use it to move forward with
the tasks you want to accomplish. I’m incredibly grateful that reading my words is one of those tasks.
Ever feel trapped by time? As if you are a slave to it as it runs non-stop, sending you to places that you really don’t want to go? I have. And I’m certain that I’m not alone on that front. Being ruled by time isn’t going to get you to where you want to go or transform your life into the one you want to lead.
Getting In My Own Way

“I must govern the clock, not be governed by it.”

Golda Meir

In the eleventh grade I was given an assignment that I recall almost to the moment even today, over 25 years later.

We had just received our school photos and were asked to cut out one of the wallet sized ones we had received. Then the teacher (whose name I can’t remember— I did say I recalled almost everything about this event) handed us all large index cards. We were told to glue these wallet sized photos to the top left corner of the index card. Once the glue had dried, we were asked to write out what we would like to accomplish during the rest of the year and where we saw ourselves in the years down the road. I furiously scribbled down my thoughts on this. It was an appealing assignment in that I was able to really put out there what I wanted to accomplish in my life. One thing stood out in particular: I wanted to perform for a living. In fact, one of my goals was to appear as a cast member on Saturday Night Live. Lofty goal, but back in grade 11 it didn’t seem impossible.

I was very active in theatre in high school. I was also a bit of a class clown, having mimicked Dana Carvey’s George H.W. Bush impression to near-perfection. Not only that, I was able to do other impressions like Bobcat Goldthwait – which wreaked havoc on my vocal chords. I did every high school musical since grade 10 and by the time I left school, I won the school’s drama award.

But what did I do after school in order to further my goal? Well, first off, I didn’t prepare too much before I left school. I hadn’t given much thought to colleges to apply to and my grades weren’t exactly high enough to get into one of the top schools out there.

The thing was, I wasn’t stupid. I was just lazy. I took for granted that I was able to accomplish tasks quickly and do well with them even though I left them almost always to the last minute. This process backfired on me when it came time to apply for university. I crammed for exams and didn’t do well. I delayed working on big assignments and paid the price for it as my grades suffered. I wanted to go to university and become an actor, but I wasn’t willing to put any time and effort needed to make that as frictionless a process as possible. I was getting in my own way.

So what happened to me after high school? Well, the good news is I went and worked for a college radio station on a couple of government grants. So I did get to perform, albeit in audio only. But once those grants ran out, I was stuck. I no longer had the luxury of time that I did in high school because I was on my own at this point. I moved out of my mother’s place and was living in a bachelor apartment in a trendy part of Hamil-
ton, Ontario called Hess Village. I have bills to pay and—gasp—responsibilities to deal with. Because I did not spend time in high school focusing on the task that I ultimately wanted to accomplish (work on becoming a performer), I found myself being ruled by time. Time wasn’t my friend anymore... it was my enemy. Because I had turned it against me.

There’s a reason that anything big you want to accomplish is difficult to accomplish. That’s because it’s hard work. It’s not just work—it’s hard work. I was too busy spending time partying and watching television and hanging out with my friends instead of looking further down the road. I’d been so used to simply going through the motions that by the time I had to put myself in a position of creating a future for myself, my window of time was almost up.

I took some time off after wrapping up my tenure at the radio station. I just needed time to think and not be responsible for anything other than menial work. So I went back to work at the fast food restaurant that I had spent much of my teenage years working at and I also got a second job working at one of those kiosks you would find in the middle of a shopping mall, selling windbreakers and tearaway pants. (Yep. This part of my life took place the mid-1990s.) The great thing about working at places like this was that it gave me time to think. Not just about today, but about the future. I started to think about where I wanted to go and if this was where I wanted to be years down the road.

You can probably guess that this is not where I wanted to be over the long haul. But I didn’t see a way out. Then my stepfather gave me an opportunity that I simply couldn’t refuse.

He strongly suggested that I apply to work at the new Costco that was opening up just outside of Hamilton in 1995. I took his advice and applied almost immediately. After going through a fairly involved interview process, I was offered one of two employment opportunities:

1. A higher-paying seasonal position working as a Front End Assistant with the possibility of permanent employment
2. A lower-paying Food Court Assistant with permanent employment happening immediately.

While the first option was intriguing, I took the second one. I figured that I already had plenty of experience working in fast food, so the learning curve would be lower. That meant there was a possibility of advancement in the new future—at least in my mind. But, more importantly, it was a permanent situation. I was at a point in my life where I needed that stability. I haven’t had anything consistent since high school, and Costco was offering me the very thing that I needed.

Looking back now, I realize that what Costco was offering me wasn’t just a job—it was time. Over my years of studying productivity, it’s clear to me that the opportunity I took advantage of back in 1995 was rewarding in more ways than were immediately apparent. That’s because it gave me the following criteria, which allowed me to escape time’s rule and improve my relationship with time once again:

1. Framework. Costco gave me stability, but more importantly it gave me a framework that I could rely on. Beyond the idea of shift work, which was easy to workaround in a
schedule, there were a clear set of criteria that allowed me to not only survive, but to thrive. The constraints that the framework provided insured that I didn’t go too far afield. In essence, the framework was freeing. That may seem counterintuitive. But by knowing what I could and could not do with in the framework, I was able to make better decisions and use my time better than I had in years.

2. Focus. Instead of thinking about what I’d left behind, Costco gave me something to look forward to every single day. They treat their employees very well, offer an incredibly generous compensation package, and provide a stable and friendly working environment. With all of that in mind, I was able to focus on doing the best job possible at work and then using my downtime at home to improve that aspect of my life. When I started working for Costco, I had nothing to focus on that was good– at least not in my own mind. But because Costco kept me busy and the rewards were great, my focus increased. They didn’t just affect my work life, it affected my personal life as well. I became healthier, more driven, and better equipped to handle all of the responsibilities that I had thrown my own way once I left high school.

3. Freedom. With a true framework to follow and increased focus, I received freedom. More freedom than I had ever received in my adult life. That freedom would lead me to a very successful career at Costco, and ultimately lead me to where I am today. I no longer felt that I had to go down a certain path; I had the freedom to choose the one that I wanted to go down.

However, while I had escaped being ruled by time after 10 years of working at Costco I found myself facing another roadblock in my relationship with time. All of that freedom that I ultimately had been given fueled my desire to make a change. And as with most change, it didn’t come easy.
There comes a point when you have to choose where to spend your time. Ideally, you want that choice to be one you can do after some critical thinking and not feel as if you have been forced into it. When your time is split, then so is your focus. And that means you’re losing time, which is the opposite of what you want.
I left Ontario in late 1998. I just finished a brief tenure as the food court supervisor for the Costco I had been working at for three years, and it was time for a change. I decided to apply for a lateral transfer to another warehouse that was opening in a suburb of Vancouver, BC. This wasn’t an easy decision to make as I’d never been further west than Western Ontario. But I had a sneaking suspicion that I was about to head back down a path of being ruled by time once again, and that was not a path I wanted to take.

So I sold off most of my belongings, ordered a moving truck to ship some of my personal affects out west, and hopped on a plane to Vancouver. I had $680 dollars to my name. I stayed with a coworker who had also just moved out there for the first couple of weeks and I walked from Maple Ridge to Port Coquitlam on the occasions where he wasn’t heading into work so that I could start looking for a place to live on my own. I eventually found a place and used what money I had left to put down a deposit. Luckily, payday was just around the corner and I had worked for nearly three weeks straight at that point so it was a rather hefty cheque. Until that point, it was hard work to live where I was living and do what I was doing. But I knew it had to be done and for the first time since hitting the stage in high school, I was willing to do the hard work without being prompted or coerced by others. I was driven and it showed.

I’d been working at Costco for about three months and then got promoted to the last Costco warehouse I would ever work for, located just outside of where I live now in Victoria, BC. I was now a manager of two different departments—the deli and the food court—which were located at opposite ends of the building. I spent a lot of time walking back and forth in that warehouse. It was in this position that I first started to adopt some critical task and time management rituals. The genesis of The Strikethrough System and my idea of theming my days, weeks, and months were forged during this period. My interest in productivity became more of a passion during this period. And something else happened during this period that would change the course of my life forever.

My roommate Martin and I were quite the pair. We had a lot of fun together and had been working in the same building ever since I moved out west, as he transferred to this new warehouse along with me. We occasionally played pranks on our friends and coworkers, especially when they would pop by for a visit. One particular prank we pulled was to have head shots of each other on our bedside tables. As we gave friends the grand tour of our three bedroom apartment, we anxiously watched their facial expressions to see if they noticed Martin’s picture on my nightstand and my picture on his.

“If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you’ll never get it done.”

Bruce Lee
Martin had been spending some time with an improv group in Victoria and he suggested that I would be a good fit for them as well. He knew of my past as a performer in high school and I assume that’s likely the reason he asked me to go with him to a rehearsal one night.

I did, and that’s when the acting bug returned. That was both a great thing and a bad thing all at the same time. Why? Because soon afterward my job performance started to slip as I begin to explore the idea of becoming a performer once again, which is something I hadn’t thought much of since leaving high school. Over the next couple of years I formed a comedy troupe and began to perform improv and sketch all over the Pacific Northwest, occasionally making trips to other cities like Washington DC and San Francisco.

My focus was split because I had so many interests and not enough time to dedicate to any one of them fully. I was trying to do everything that I wanted to do and was doing nothing extraordinarily well as a result.

What happened next was predictable. As my job performance suffered at work, I was getting more and more reprimands. The comedy troupe was not nearly as polished as we needed to be in order to take things to the next level. Oh, and this time I just got married to my wife and we were expecting. Things at home weren’t going that well either, as I was trying to do all of my work-related stuff and my comedy related stuff all while trying to better my relationship with my wife.

I was split by time which meant I was going nowhere fast.

So I had to choose. And I decided to choose before too much was chosen for me.

I think it was the birth of my daughter that really put things into perspective for me. After she was born I reached out to someone else who had up and left their decent paying job to follow a path that they really wanted to go down, Jonathan Coulton. I was still working at Costco and still running the comedy troupe and now was a father. Needless to say I had a lot on my plate, and had served it to myself. I wrote Jonathan and email, asking him for advice. I wanted to know what he would do in my circumstances, although I had a feeling that I knew the answer.

I was surprised when he replied to my email, but I wasn’t surprised with the reply. Jonathan had suggested that I quit my job. I spent a lot of time thinking about doing just that, and that email felt almost like a permission slip to do so.

The thing is, I was much smarter then than I was back when I was in high school. I knew that if I had quit my job outright that time would soon come to rule my life once again. I was going to have not of that. But I also knew that if I didn’t make a change in my job, then my focus would continue to be split and that would not be good for anyone.

So I decided to quit my position at Costco and step down from full time manager to part time employee.

I have strategically thought about why to make such a drastic “self-demotion,” and in the end it was really more of an act of self-devotion. By stepping down from manager to hourly employee, I was removing a lot of responsibility from my life, which
would allow me to focus more on the thing I really wanted to do—perform. Sure, it meant a salary reduction, but it was a compromise I was willing to make. I knew that my lifestyle would have to adjust, but the rewards associated with following this new path would be worth it. I had been with Costco long enough to know that it would be even more beneficial to step down to part-time instead of full-time. As a part-time employee I would have more control of my hours and my scheduling than I would as a full-time employee. I was guaranteed 40 hours of work as a full-time employee, so I would have to ask to go home early if I wanted to work on my comedy or my writing or what have you. The likelihood of regularly being sent home early when I asked was marginal at best. But as a part-time employee they could schedule me no more than 25 hours a week without asking. I knew this, and I knew that this would give me some leverage. Instead of me asking permission to go home so I could work on the thing I really wanted to work on, they would have to ask permission for me to stay to help them. More often than not I had managed to organize my day and week in a way that would allow me to help them just as much as I will be helping myself, but knowing that I had more control over my time provided me with the comfort and the confidence I needed in order to work on my own stuff at a high performing level.

Being split by time is not fun. It is a form of being ruled by time, but unless you step back and really look at it, it doesn’t feel that way. At least not right away. Eventually, however, you feel bogged down, tired, and frustrated. The problem with being split by time and then realizing it is that the knee-jerk reaction is to stop one thing altogether without providing yourself with the way to really make it work without feeling stressed and constrained. If I had it outright quit my job at Costco there is no way that I would be writing this book right now. There is no way that I would have had the success I’ve had in this new chapter of my life. There is no way that my relationship with time would be the healthiest that it’s ever been.

If you are feeling that you’re being split by time, then before you react you should act upon the following three variables:

1. Analyze. Take a long look at what your current situation is and where you want to be. This will mean reviewing what has happened in the past (including past circumstances that you can find some form of connection with the current one) and preview what you’d like to see happen over the short and long term. Be realistic and prepare for the lowest common denominator. For example, I was ghost writing a lot as a blogger before I really took Productivityist to the next level in early 2014. In fact, I kept a ghost writing up until mid 2014 just to give myself enough of a financial buffer in case things didn’t go as I had envisioned. Finances will always be a big concern and will always be a reason that you don’t jump forward and follow that path it might be too risky. The key is to get all of this stuff out of your head and in front of you so that you can look back and look forward before you make a decision that will have a great impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

2. Strategize. Once you’ve decided what you’re going to spend your time on more than anything else, then you need to plan accordingly. There is no point in strategizing before analyzing because you will still have remnants of doubt and hyperbole rather than the knowledge you have cut off all
other options. You will be able to strategize because you will have as much information as possible in front of you, which will allow you to formulate a plan that you can adjust when needed. Don’t just develop strategies for today. Develop them for next week, next month, next year, and beyond. If you go forward without a plan in any specific direction, you’ll find yourself moving madly in all directions.

3. Catalyze. Now you need to have one specific trigger that will set all of this in motion. When I quit Costco, I knew the catalyst for change would be when I visited my warehouse manager to give notice. I did not go to my direct supervisor—I went straight to the top. The impact that created was far greater than simply writing a note and handing it off to someone with less authority. This wasn’t a slight to my supervisor—I did let him know shortly thereafter—but I wanted to make a statement not to the company but myself. I needed to know that this was a final decision. I needed to create a catalyst that would spur me forward because there was simply no turning back. I needed to show myself that I was focused, driven, and full of resolve. So when you finally are ready to make the move, make the first move a big one.

After over 11 years at Costco, I walked out those giant doors as an employee for the final time in early 2006. The company had given me so many great gifts over the years, including the ability to move across the country and set off a series of events in my life that would lead me to an amazing family, a fulfilling career, and so much more. It had also helped me repair my relationship with myself and helped me improve my relationship with time. But like any relationship, the one I have (and you have) with time will always need work. Hard work.
No one can control time. But we can control our relationship with it. Whether you are a CEO, a bootstrapping entrepreneur, a stay-at-home parent, or a student, if you have a healthy relationship with time then you can be guided by it rather than ruled by it.
“Until you value yourself, you won’t value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.”

M. Scott Peck

The above quote is by the author of The Road Less Traveled, which is a book I highly recommend. Up until I left Costco, I had walked along a well-worn path. The way the path got a little bit less worn because I started to add new elements to my life, like performing comedy. But there were still parts of that road that were easy. And I needed them to be.

As I mentioned earlier, fostering a solid relationship with time is hard work. During my last few years of regular employment for others, I made sure that I gave myself some low bandwidth tasks and responsibilities so that I could work on my relationship with time and make it healthier. I also made sure that I got the most out of every one of those experiences, whether it was working for a store that sold Apple computers or working for the local film festival. During my time at the authorized Apple dealership, I began to improve my proficiency with OS X. While I was at the film festival, I was able to spend a considerable amount of my day coming up with creative solutions to problems that were often necessitated due to a limited amount of funds available. But there were also times at both jobs where I was simply able to do simple work and leave some of the heavier lifting for when I got home so that I could focus on building up what was my new calling: exploring and specializing in personal productivity.

I discovered over the few years after leaving Costco that Comedy didn’t exactly pay the bills. So while I was at the Apple retail store, I begin to study productivity. Some of that already started at the tail end of my tenure at Costco as I had created a character that was somewhat modeled after Stephen Colbert, but preached productivity through satire rather than politics through satire. But, as I’ve explained in the last part of this book, because I didn’t give the satire enough focus I didn’t do it nearly as well as I could have. That said, I had gained enough notice from the right people in productivity circles as a result. That notice served me well, as I began to write for popular productivity websites and ultimately became the editor at WorkAwesome. Soon after that, I was assigned another blog to monitor and was again at a crossroads. My work on the Internet was now equal to the amount of work I had off the Internet. I had to make a choice. Should I stay working at the film festival and shift my focus away from my online work or should I dive in and embrace the world of personal productivity and online writing?

Just like I did in 1995, I chose the second option. And I haven’t looked back since.

Being your own boss – or having more control over your work hours – is a lot harder than what most people think. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve had people suggest that I have it easier because I work from home. If anything, I require more disci-
pline and willpower because of that. I have to set up even more frameworks than I had at Costco in order to make time move tasks forward in a meaningful way. I’ve had to make choices that forced me and my family to adjust our lifestyle time and time again. I’ve had to work harder then ever before.

Once you’ve decided to make a choice that puts you in the driver seat, you need to take time seriously. More seriously than ever before. Because you need to make sure that time is on your side and not fighting you along the way. You need to structure your time in a way that gives you the flexibility that you need to create. You need frameworks more than ever before. You need to focus more than ever before. Because you have put yourself in the position to have more freedom than ever before. There’s a reason why I plan my next year in October. It Isn’t always because I want to. It’s because I have to. In order for me to figure out what I need to do, ought to do, and want to do in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead, I need to be pro active. Proactivity allows you to deal with the items you have on your plate that are important but not urgent. Reactivity put you in an un-enviable position because you are forced to deal with items of urgency and the items of importance stay on the backburner even longer.

In order to really take full advantage of the time you have on this planet, you need to be proactive. Whether you are working for yourself or someone else, if you are not proactive then you are chasing the action instead of directing it. And that means that you are not letting time guide you. You’re letting time rule you.

Fostering your relationship with time is a very delicate balance. I’m not a fan of the word balance in the greater sense of productivity terms, either. The idea of work life balance is a bit of a fallacy. In order to focus on the “modes” of your life (be they work related or personal) is that you need to shift so that you can be fully present in that mode. That’s why I am a big believer in working by context (as discussed in David Allen’s phenomenal work Getting Things Done) rather than by project.

I have written at length about different strategies and tactics that you can take when developing your approach to task and time management. At some point I will deliver many of them in a book that is much more in depth and longer than this one. But in the interest of providing you with some simple steps that you can take to help time guide you as you navigate your way through life, here are two things that you can do starting today that will vastly improve your relationship with time for years to come:

1. Qualitatively track your time. Time tracking is nothing new. We all keep track of how many moments and hours we spend on certain activities. But we don’t always qualitatively track those moments. Instead we decide that the number of things we’ve done equates to productivity. That’s simply not the case. Two of the easiest ways that you can qualitatively track your time include journaling and regularly reviewing. Whether you spend time journaling in the morning to visualize how you want your day to go or only in the evening as you recall your successes and acknowledge your failures, by chronicling your thoughts in a qualitative manner you are going to find that you spend more time moving forward with the important tasks on your agenda rather than as many of the tasks on your agenda
as you can hit in a day. Journaling also helps you when looking back at the week gone by. David Allen suggests reviewing your lists weekly and I echo his sentiments. If you don’t review, then you can’t possibly plan ahead with the confidence that everything that needs to be done will get done and that everything that you want to get done will get the attention it deserves.

2. Routinize the start and end of your day. Your brain has a lot of work to do every single day, and by adding routines to the beginning and end of your day you will help alleviate some of the strain that your brain deals with because of this. Even if you can’t take a normal waking time and bed time, at least make sure that the steps that follow getting up in the morning and precede going to bed at night are the same every day of the week. Over the last few months I have had to shift my daily schedule in order to accommodate coaching clients on the East Coast. As a self-described night owl, this has not been easy. But because I start my day the same way and ended the same way without fail, the process of adjusting my schedule has been a little less painful. It ultimately doesn’t matter what you do at the beginning of your day or the end of your day as long as you keep it the same day day in and day out.

These things may sound simple, but you are really starting to build habits here. Over the days and weeks that you work on them, you will adjust them. And that’s fine. The key is to start. They are simple enough to start and it doesn’t matter what time of the year you start doing them. These two things alone will make you more aware of time – and not just the time you have in any given day. Your awareness will increase regarding time as a whole. You will become more mindful and thoughtful about how you spend your time. You will begin to make the most of it, no matter where you are. You will be more intentional with your time because you were paying more attention to the time. Time won’t just represent seconds on a timepiece. Time will represent pieces of the life you want to live.

It took over 20 years for me to find my way and understand how Time can work for me and not against me. I know that I’m not alone in this either. But once I found my way I knew that I wanted to make sure that it didn’t get lost again.

You see, when you lose your way...you lose time. And that’s the last thing that any of us should want - or deserve - to lose.
As I sat here writing this book, I couldn’t help but look back at what I really wanted to do with my life back in the 11th grade. I wanted to perform. I wanted to be on stage. I wanted to make people laugh. I wanted to have a forum that would let me entertain people.

And guess what? I get to do that.

It took a long time for me to be able to say that and mean it. I get to speak in front of hundreds of people at events while on stage. I get to make people laugh in the way that I deliver my thoughts on productivity and workflow, which is really just a form of entertainment. I built a company that allows me to do all of this, so I have given myself a forum I can use to talk to thousands of people around the world.

It didn’t happen overnight – far from it. But it did happen.

I didn’t get here by hacking life. I got here by experiencing it. Along the way I came up with some methods and shortcuts that allowed me to travel down that path I wanted to go down with a little less friction. Over the last few years I’ve spent my time and energy learning how to adopt a task based mindset so that I can devote my attention to the importance first and foremost. The only reason that I can do that on a consistent basis is because I have a healthy relationship with time.

I hope that after reading this book and learning a little bit more about me and my story that you’ll take a step back and examine your relationship with time. Is it healthy? Could it be better? Should it be better? Many of us are concerned about our relationship with our bodies, which is justifiable. Many of us want to focus on improving all relationships with our family and friends. These are all important ideals.

But if you don’t spend time examining your relationship with time, then you want to be able to fully realize your own potential. You won’t be able to focus nearly as intensely on the things that you desire. You won’t be able to move forward with as much precision and energy as you’ll need.

In other words, you will lose time.

Over the years my self-worth has increased, primarily because I am now doing exactly what I want to do with my life. My self-worth is directly correlated with where I spend my time. And so is yours.

There’s a reason I chose the quote by Nelson Mandela to begin the final section of this book. He was a man who lived to 95 years old and spent 27 of those years in prison. He knew the value of time and knew that with what time he had he needed

“We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.”

Nelson Mandela
to focus on the right things, rather than try to focus on everything. And he made a huge impact as a result, one that will last for decades (and likely beyond).

Your time is your time. Never forget that. You ultimately get to decide what you will spend your time on and why. Whether you are a CEO of a large company, a Costco employee, a stay-at-home parent or a student, only you get to decide how you want to spend your time. And how you spend your time affects your relationship with time.

After reading this book and exploring some of the strategies and tactics I’ve offered along with several insights from personal experience, I hope you value this gift more than when you began reading.

Before I let you go, I want to offer another small gift. Write down this quote to help you make the most of the gift of time. While the first part of the quote will be familiar, the second part may be less so. Yet put those two parts together and you will have some great words to live by:

“There is no time like the present and there is no present like time.”

Thank you for reading...and for your time.
About The Author

Mike Vardy is a writer, speaker, productivity strategist, and founder of Productivityist. He has written several best-selling books, including The Front Nine: How to Start the Year You Want Anytime You Want and The Productivityist Workbook.

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