

Time Is All We Have, So Please Use It Well

Last week I spoke with a client who was preparing to retire after 32 long years with his company. Joe was emotional as he talked about his transition, and as he shared further, the source for his feelings was revealed: his wife was recently diagnosed with Parkinson's. He was bemoaning how little time they had spent having fun together in his final decade of work. But he felt grateful that he soon would have time to enjoy whatever good days remained for them together.

That same day I spoke with an executive whose sister had an emergency procedure following discovery of a tumor on her brain. John, recently retired, shared how he was able to play point for the family to find the best surgical facility, to coordinate his sister's care, and to quarterback the family's support during this fragile period. He reflected on what a gift it was to have the capacity, in retirement, to focus on

this and to play this important role for his family. (John had been a Fortune 50 CEO, where his days, nights, weekends, and even vacations were consumed by meetings, travel, conference calls, and tremendous responsibility.)

Joe and John's stories remind us of how we spend our gift of time.

I recall vividly after 9/11 how instantly things changed in corporate America. It was like a switch flipped on work-life balance . . . and people began spending time on things other than work. Everyone left the office a little earlier. People took time to be with their children and families . . . and the East Coast workaholicism seemed to recede for a prolonged period. The commitment to company success didn't lessen. Instead, time got reallocated to include things that mattered personally.

Now it seems our progress and perspective have regressed.

Jeff Bezos shared his thoughts about work-life balance in this November 11, 2018 interview with *Business Insider's* Zoe Bernard: *"If I am happy at home, I come into the office with tremendous energy, and if I am happy at work, I come home with tremendous energy. You never want to be that guy—and we all have a coworker who's that person—who, as soon as they come into a meeting, they drain all the energy out of the room . . . You want to come into the office and give everyone a kick in their step."*

We are constantly receiving reminders about how precious our time is. We in Pittsburgh were profoundly affected by the recent shootings at Tree of Life Synagogue. Thousands are missing from the most recent California wildfire. The past month alone included shootings in hospitals, and accidents in helicopters, planes, trains, and cars. We have little control over these things. But we have tremendous influence on how/where we spend our time, what we prioritize, and the attention we give to things that matter most to us.

Time is all we have. It may be our friend or our enemy. How you spend your time is up to you. But be intentional, use your gift of time wisely, and have no regrets.



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My Next Season helps companies and individuals with important career transitions, from early career to "retirement," and ensures they happen well.

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