

# HOW TO GET CONTROL OF YOUR TIME AND YOUR LIFE

By Alan Lakein, Cally Curtis, Inc., 1985

Numbers are page references.

## A. Control your time, control your life. (14)

1. Greater control of your time and your life is **greater FREEDOM**. (17)

## B. Making decisions (23-24)

1. Are you aware of the reasons **why** you make certain decisions?
2. Answers: **Habit, demands of others**, escapism, spur of the moment, default, **conscious decision**.

## C. CONTROL starts with PLANNING. (25)

1. It's as easy as **ABC (priority system)** . (28)
2. "A" has the **highest value**, "B" has **medium value**, and "C" has the **lowest value**.

## D. What do you REALLY want from LIFE? (30)

1. **LIFETIME GOALS** Exercise (31)
  - a. What are my **lifetime goals**?
  - b. How would I like to spend the next **3 years**?
  - c. What would I like to do within the next **6 months**?
2. **Goals conflicts** are resolved by **SETTING PRIORITIES**. (34)
3. How to **SET lifetime goals**: A1, A2, A3, B1...C4. (35)
4. Since the Lifetime Goals Statement is not static, it should be **revised periodically**--it's good to reevaluate it on your **birthday**.

## E. Get started RIGHT NOW. (37)

1. Don't confuse **goals** with **activities**. (39)
2. Spend some time **listing activities** that could lead to your A1. (39)
3. Eliminate low priority tasks. (40)
4. Good **time management** (42)
  - a. List possible **long-term goals**.
  - b. Set **priorities** for now and identify A-goals.
  - c. List possible **activities** for A-goals.
  - d. Set **priorities** and identify A-activities for now.
  - e. **Schedule** the A-activities.
  - f. Do them **as scheduled**.

## F. How scheduling helps (43)

1. **Planning is best** in morning or evening, the **evening** having the advantage of **perspective**. (45)
2. There is **ALWAYS enough time for the IMPORTANT THINGS**...busy people can get things done because "they think in terms of '**making**' time by **careful scheduling**." (48)

### 3. Prime time

- a. **Internal prime time**: when you **work best** (morning, afternoon, or evening)
- b. **External prime time**: best time to attend to **other people**--those you have to deal with in your job, your social life, and at home. (48)
- c. Try to save all of your **internal prime time** for **prime projects**. (50)
- d. Always reserve at least an **hour a day** to **uncommitted time**. (51)

G. How to **FIND TIME** you never knew you had.

1. Answer is not to spend more hours on the project but to **work more effectively** within the time allotted. (52)
2. **Homemaker's special problem**...especially hard to find any **leisure time** for **herself**. (55)
3. Making the most of your **transition time**...commuting time, coffee breaks, lunch, waiting time. (56)
4. **Sleep time**: pose a question to your **subconscious** just before you fall asleep--your subconscious has 4-8 hours to work on it. (59)
5. **Repeal Parkinson's Law**: if your work is **done**, you should be able to **do what you want at work or go home**. (60)

H. Making the most of **PRIORITIES** (63)

1. **ONLY a DAILY "TO DO" LIST will do**. (64)
2. Cannot be effective in your head..and make **DAILY**. (65)
3. **Priorities MUST be SET**. (65)

I. **TASKS** better left **undone**. (69)

1. **80/20 RULE**: If all items are arranged in order of value, **80%** of the **value** would come from **only 20%** of the **items**, while the remaining 20% of the value would come from 80% of the items. (71)
2. Many **C's** can be turned into what are called **CZ's**...those C's that can be **deferred indefinitely** without harm: rearranging your magazines, having the car washed. (73)
3. **C-drawer**: where the **unimportant items** can be dumped out of the way. (75)
4. **File folders** to **organize** what you **collect**: recipes, projects to do, letters to save, trips to take, books to read. (76)
5. Coping with **information overload**: how much time/month do you spend on **reading newspapers and magazines** as opposed to books? Do you want it that way? Consciously **decide** on such. (81)
6. **Read books** like **newspapers** if that is how you will cope with it (read only parts significant to you). (82)
7. Speedreading: better to **read smarter than faster**. (83)

J. **Accommodating YOURSELF and OTHER PEOPLE** (84)

1. Learn to say **"NO"**...to organizations, individuals, activities. (85)
2. **Time-sharing** with **children** (87)
  - a. Sitting next to parents in round-robin fashion at the dinner table.
  - b. **15 minutes/child** with one individuals **parent** each night. (87)

K. How to create **quiet time** for yourself (89)

1. 30 minutes to mother **herself** at home (with a 4-year old). (91)

L. Ask **Lakein's Question: WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF MY TIME RIGHT NOW?** (96)

M. Using the **Swiss Cheese Method** (100)

1. Goal is to **select your A1** and **DO IT NOW** (103)
2. Poke some holes in an overwhelming A1 by poking some holes into it--these are "**instant tasks**...getting out a **report**, getting things in order, etc. (104)
3. Try **stimulus changes** to keep involved. (119)
  
4. Sometimes it pays to **slow down**. (125)
5. Three ways to **overcome your distaste** for the **A1** (127)
  - a. Deal with the **unpleasantness directly**.
  - b. Recognize the **greater unpleasantness** that results from **delay**.
  - c. Create **enthusiasm** that **counterbalances** the unpleasantness.
6. Don't let **fear** get in your way. (128)

Psychiatrists and psychologists says **FEAR** is the root of all **AVOIDANCE**. (128)
  
7. Real **price of DELAY**: drawbacks of **pressure** (138)
8. Learn the **stress of benefits: REWARD yourself**. (140-141)
  
9. How to get back after you've **escaped** (143)
  - a. Seven **common mistakes**: indulging yourself, socializing, reading, doing it yourself, overdoing it, running away, daydreaming. (144)
  - b. **Emotional escapes**: feeling guilty, getting angry, worrying. (145)
  - c. How to **cut off escape routes**: take away the temptation (like a dieter not buying candy to not have it in the house). (147)
  - d. **TV**: the **greatest escape**...liberate yourself, get rid of it. (148)
  - e. **Procrastinate positively**: sit in a chair and do literally nothing for 15-20 minutes. (148)
  
10. How to do better **next time: WILL-POWER** (149)
  - a. Do **many things** each day though you don't want to. (149)
  - b. **Wean** yourself from **TV**, even a little at a time. (151)
  - c. Think in terms of **extending your capabilities gradually**, rather than stretching yourself to the breaking points...**gradual self-discipline**. (153)
  
11. **Do your BEST and consider it a SUCCESS** (155)
  - a. People who hope (and **strived**) for **success** were **happier** and more **accomplished more** than those who feared and expected failure. (155)
  - b. **Wiser** through **experience** (157)
  - c. **WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME RIGHT NOW?** (157)

## TIME OF YOUR LIFE

VCR tape based on the book How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life by alan Lakein, Cally Curtis, Inc., 1985.

### A. Introduction

1. Time is life. to waste your time is to waste your life. **To master your time is to master your life.**
2. **Time management** for the **168 hours/week** you have.
3. Not efficient time use but **effective time use.**

### B. Important components of this **time management system**

#### 1. LIST GOALS. SET PRIORITIES.

- a. What are my **long-term goals**?
- b. What are my goals for the next **6 months**?
  - 1) Make this list twice.
  - 2) The first time, let your imagination run wild--you're going through for **quantity** at this point.
  - 3) On the second time around, pick priorities--you're looking for **quality**.
  - 4) A=important, B=medium, C=low value.
  - 5) Go back and take all A's and mark A1, A2, etc.
  - 6) You **can't do a goal**, but you do list **activities to achieve goals**.
- c. What do I really want out of my job (or life)?

#### 2. MAKE A DAILY "TO DO" LIST

- a. Always do at the **same time** (morning or the last thing before leaving work is best).
- b. See what tasks you can **delegate**.
- c. **80%** of the **potential** is in **20%** of the prospects (customers).
- d. Use one sheet of paper using your own **format**--don't get too organized.

#### 3. START WITH THE A'S, NOT WITH C'S.

- a. **Upgrade** and downgrade constantly.
- b. Don't do the c's **first**, but the **a's**.
- c. **C's** are **easy and fast**.
- d. Sometimes **later never comes** (to accomplish A's)

#### 4. WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF MY TIME RIGHT NOW? (Lakein's Question)

- a. If they never **ask** about it, it's a **C**.
- b. If they **write** a follow-up note, it's a **B**.
- c. If they **phone** about it, it's an **A**.
- d. If they come **in person**, it's a **crisis**.

- his A.
- e. What you think is an A is not the same as the **boss**; you will have to **compromise** and do
  - f. Establish a "**C**" **drawer**.

## 5. AFTER SORTING, HANDLE EACH PIECE OF PAPER ONLY ONCE.

- a. Throw out **junk mail**.
- b. At least move it ahead to the **next person**.
- c. Try to say something in **2 paragraphs**; be brief--go for **key ideas only**.
- d. If you really want to consider looking at junk mail, save up for one week before **reviewing** it.
- e. Write **answers** on incoming mail.
- f. Cut down **paper work**...you can probably throw out at least **20%** of it.
- g. Have a separate pile for **peripheral materials**.
- h. Check by **phone** and settle things right away.
- i. **Read smarter**, not faster: **Read books** like newspapers--only read the **chapter** if its heading interests you.
- j. **Cancel subscriptions** that are useless.
- k. Get **off mailing lists**.
- l. **Quit organizations** that send you too much mail (note: or don't help fulfill your goals).

## 6. DO IT NOW!

- a. **Overwhelming A**: Take the "**Swiss cheese**" method which are **tasks** toward that **goal**.
  - 1) "**Instant tasks**"
  - 2) Take lots of **little bites**--and then it won't seem so bad.
  - 3) **Procrastination** is criminal.
- b. **Consider the price of delay**.
- c. Learn to **say "No"**
  - 1) You should not be doing someone else's job.
  - 2) Don't overburden yourself.
- d. When a call interrupts you, think "that's my job" (not somebody else's).

## C. Summary

1. **Time** is your **most valuable resource**. Treat it that way.
2. **Work smarter, not harder**.
3. **Life your life, don't just spend it.**
4. **Working less hard, doing more**, and ultimately earning more.
5. **Time is life...live your life, don't spend it.**

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