

Decisions are easy

When your values are clear

Robert Cunningham had been a New York police detective for 30 years. For nearly the same length of time Phyllis Penzo had waited on tables six nights a week at Sal's Pizzeria in Yonkers where Cunningham often dines.

One day, after his usual meal of linguini and claim sauce, Cunningham said, "Hey, Phyllis, I've got a lottery ticket here. What do you say we split it and the winnings will be your tip?"

"You're on," Phyllis said.

A few weeks later Cunningham learned that his was the winning ticket! He immediately called Phyllis and told her they'd won six million dollars in the New York State Lotto competition, half of which was hers: \$142,857 per year, for the next 21 years. Suddenly both of them were rich!

Was Cunningham foolish to give Phyllis half the winnings? After all, they hadn't signed any contract. They didn't even shake hands on it! Reporters interviewing Cunningham pressed him to explain his remarkable integrity, and he did so without hesitation.

"If I say I'll do something, I do it," he said. "I hope money never changes that. I play it straight down the line. I've always been that way."

Cunningham and Penzo both went back to work. They loved what they did and being rich didn't change that. Reassuring, isn't it? Despite what the cynics say, honesty and integrity are still a vital part of the American conscience and values. And decision-making really is easy, when your values are clear!



Here's what you can do:

1. *Decide what's most important to you. Firmly establish your values and priorities. Then, when important decisions arise, you'll automatically know what to do.*
2. *Confusion, conflict and the inability to make decisions often are the result of an unclear position on topics such as money, possessions, politics, ethics, religion, work, leisure time, sex, child-raising, friendship, and racial issues. Ask yourself where you stand on these.*
3. *Clarify your values by writing a brief value statement about yourself: "I _____, stand for _____."*

This is a good exercise to do as a family, as a business, or an organization of any kind.



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Is E.T. in your life?

Is E.T. in your life? No, not the Extra Terrestrial from Steven Spielberg's classic movie, but the E.T. that stands for ENOUGH TIME. Is there enough time in your life?

Do you have enough time to go on a picnic with your family or loved ones, to read something besides the newspaper, to serve your clients the way they should be served, to exercise and stay fit, to enjoy your hobbies, to be involved in your church or community, to study and improve your job skills, to travel, and to phone home occasionally and chat with your parents or grandparents?

Like everyone else you've got exactly 10,080 minutes per week. The way you use those minutes determines whether or not you have enough time to do the things you really want to do. Begin by establishing priorities and saying NO to activities that are low on your list.

Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. Parkinson, a British historian, learned that between 1914 and 1928 his country's Navy reduced its fleet by 68 percent, while the number of Naval administrative officials *increased* by 78 percent! So, allow yourself LESS time for certain tasks. Box yourself in with due-dates. Otherwise, your tasks will expand unnecessarily.

Instead of sleeping away one-third of your life, as do most people who get eight hours of sleep per night, set your alarm clock fifteen minutes earlier each week for a month. At the end of that month you'll be rising one hour earlier than you usually do. You'll still enjoy seven hours of sleep per night and you'll gain nine extra weeks per year!

Watch television more efficiently by investing in a VCR. Watch your Monday night shows on Friday night, or enjoy late night T.V. while you eat breakfast. Rent current movies from video stores and save the time and expense of going to the theater.

Eat at restaurants more efficiently by getting "one-shot service." After you look at the menu, tell the waiter you would like to order everything right then — coffee, dressing, dessert, etc. Get the check WITH your meal instead of afterward, so you can "fuel-up and fly."



Fill up your car's gas tank at YOUR convenience rather than waiting until the tank is empty. That way, when you're in a hurry, you won't have to stop.

Forward, charge! Most people start their morning by backing their car out of a garage. Not only is there something wrong with this symbolically — starting in reverse — but it's inefficient. Backing your car up takes extra time, so do it at the end of each day when you're under slightly less pressure to beat the clock. Having backed your car in the previous evening, come morning you'll not only save time, but you'll be one of the select few who started the day right!

Maybe you're already doing all these things, and you're still looking for more imaginative ways to "beat the clock." If so, the next article was written for you.

Beat the clock

Creative ways to save time

Ready, set, go! Read these tips. They'll help you save time.

1. **Bigger is better.** Use a bigger spoon, perhaps a ladle, when eating cereal, soup or ice cream. You'll reduce the number of trips from bowl to mouth and you'll finish sooner. The same applies to ditch digging (bigger shovel) and water bailing (bigger bucket).
 2. **Fewer = more.** If you liked tip number one, you'll love this. Discard the spoon altogether. Lift the bowl with both hands and pour contents directly into mouth.
 3. **No seeds, bones, or pits.** Don't eat watermelon. Or fish. Or olives. Any food that requires you to remove seeds, bones or pits — either during or prior to ingestion — wastes your time. Also avoid foods that need to be cooked, cleaned, peeled or shelled. Remember, many foods are cooked due to habit or superstition, *not* necessity.
 4. **Shower power.** Stand on your tiptoes when showering and turn the water on full blast. The water will reach you faster. Also, a scalding hot shower will quickly melt the dirt off your body, thus eliminating the need to scrub or use soap.
 5. **Don't shave.** Men's faces and women's legs were meant to be hairy, so let it grow! Men who waste ten minutes shaving every day can save 60 hours a year. That's 2,400 hours in 40 years, or 100 days of your life! Women who shave their legs twice a week can save over 17 hours a year!
 6. **Dress with less.** Less variety that is. Fill your wardrobe with clothes of the same style and color. This drastically reduces shopping time and eliminates those early-morning "what shall I wear?" quandaries. Because *all* your shoes will match your purse, and *all* your ties will go with *all* your sportcoats, you can just throw open your closet and grab. Also avoid anything button-down or button-up. Zippers are faster. Pull-overs are faster yet.
 7. **Play smart.** Participate only in sports that don't waste your time. For example, baseball is a notorious time waster, requiring you to expend all your energy trying to get back to where you started. If that's really what you want to do, skydiving is far more efficient.
- Tennis is also a time waster because of all the ball chasing. Play racquetball instead and let the ball come to you!. And by all means, avoid football. The armament takes hours to put on! Better to stay in your street clothes and go bowling.
8. **Leave 'em up.** Stop laughing at your neighbor who leaves his Christmas lights up year-round. He's saving time! You should do the same. In fact, if you have an artificial Christmas tree, you can outdo him by leaving *it* up and decorated year-round too!
 9. **Get seated sooner.** Always fly first class so you won't waste time walking to the rear of the airplane. For the same reason, sit in the back of theaters, which will also give you the advantage of being able to leave quicker. (Don't be fooled by those doors labeled "exit" at the front of theaters. They lead to the rear of the building, where — upon emerging — you'll be disoriented and several-hundred yards farther from your car.)
 10. **Rapid birthdays.** Don't waste time lighting the candles on a birthday cake. Doesn't someone always blow them out?
 11. **No scales.** Instead of weighing yourself, be honest and save time. You already know you're overweight, right?
 12. **Play the fool of the pool.** Car pool with someone who reads voraciously. Then, while driving to and from work, ask him or her lots of questions. That way *you* won't have to waste *your* time reading.
 13. **Make 'em slide.** To reduce the amount of time you spend with unwanted drop-in visitors, get a solid-wood chair, cut two inches off the front legs and wax the seat. Nobody will stay in *that* chair very long. They'll just slide away!

Here's what you can do:

Don't dismiss the above ideas as totally foolish. Mostly foolish, yes, but not entirely. They can help you start thinking creatively about the silly ways in which you may be wasting precious time. Don't worry what others might say about your methods of saving time. If they work for you, that's all that matters. So go ahead — beat the clock!

Risus

The best medicine

Snickers, giggle and guffaw — the sounds of human mirth — all have a scientific name: *risus*. It means laughter, and it's perhaps the best medicine available for almost every ailment imaginable.

Medical studies indicate that after a hearty laugh, your pulse rate drops below normal. Your skeletal muscles relax, and your body is revitalized. This relaxation response lasts up to 45 minutes after your last "ha-ha." The more intense your laughter, the more tension you release, and the longer your body will remain relaxed. Thus, laughter reduces stress.

Perry W. Buffington, Ph.D. has researched this extensively and concluded that laughter is a form of both mental and physical exercise. He says that when you laugh, you exercise your lungs, you invigorate your circulatory system, and you increase your oxygen level. In other words, laughing can be likened to "internal jogging," and is therefore something you should do every day. Laugh often, laugh long, and enjoy the benefits.

On the tombs of ancient Egyptians — over 5,000 years old — are paintings of slapstick humor. Centuries ago, every royal European household included at least one court jester. More recently, humor has taken its place on the stage, in movie theaters, and on TV as one of the world's most popular forms of entertainment.

People have always sought laughter. We still do, and we'll pay handsomely those who can prompt our snickers, giggles and guffaws. Of course, that's because we *enjoy* laughing. But perhaps it's also because — subconsciously — we know that *risus* is the best medicine.

So when a friend asks if you want to hear a good joke, say "Sure!" Then laugh even if it isn't funny, or you've heard it before.



Here's what you can do:

1. *Whenever you enjoy a healthy belly-laugh, remain sensitive to your physical and psychological responses. Ask yourself how you feel. Gather your own evidence that RISUS is the best medicine.*
2. *Look for laughter stimulants — things that make you laugh. Listen to cassette recordings of comedians. Read humorous books. Start a humor file. After hearing a good joke, repeat it to yourself and remember it — write it down if you have to — so you can share it with others.*
3. *Set a goal to laugh heartily at least once every day, and twice on Mondays.*
4. *If you still feel you're not laughing enough, dig out your high school yearbook photo — that's GOT to be funny — or your wedding photo — which could even be funnier. And remember, no matter who you are, the size of your funeral will be determined by the weather. (Think about that last one for a minute.)*

