

What are you chasing and why?

Take time now to answer this question

The C.E.O. of a multi-million dollar corporation died in his Chicago office at age 57. When his huge, solid-oak desk was later cleaned out, a hand fishing line, with hook, sinker and bobber attached, was found at the bottom of one of the drawers. He had used it as a child, while growing up on his parents' farm in Illinois. But he hadn't gone fishing in years; why was the fishing outfit in his office? We can only speculate.

After high school, he earned a scholarship to one of the Ivy League universities. He graduated, found a job, got married, bought a home in the suburbs, and worked hard. Then the children came along, and soon he was working even harder to provide himself and his wife with some of the finer things, as well as to send his youngsters off to college. As the years passed, there were promotions and increased involvement: clubs, civic organizations, professional associations, and a briefcase full of work, which he brought home every evening. Crises, at home and at work, were faced and overcome, and after thirty years of arduous work he earned the top job in his company.

As chief executive officer, he was responsible to stockholders, customers, and hundreds of employees. Sales, finance, marketing, research and development, service—these became his life blood. And by then, the children were out of school, married and raising families of their own.



It all happened so quickly—without any planning. First school, then work, then a family, a few promotions and there he was: king of the ant hill.

But one day, toward the end of it all, he was at home on a Saturday afternoon, getting something from the attic for his wife, and he found that old fishing line. It was covered with dust, the paint was peeling off the bobber, and the line nearly disintegrated in his hands, but it instantly brought back memories of his parents' farm: the quiet, cool creek, the grassy banks, the moss-covered rocks, the frogs plopping into the water, and the shade of the huge willow. He could recall the thrill of seeing the bobber disappear, the tug of a feisty bluegill, and a whole stringer full by sundown, and he wanted to go back.

Suddenly, while standing in the attic on a Saturday afternoon, he realized that nothing in his entire life had been quite so real, so elemental, so satisfying, as fishing from the banks of that creek. Chewing on a sprig of



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grass, feeling the sun on his shoulders, and watching the sun go down—that was really living, and yet he hadn't taken the time to go back. He had been too caught up in the chase to visit the old creek, fish for bluegills, and ponder—what he was chasing, and WHY.

The telephone rang, he shoved the fishing outfit in his pocket and climbed down from the attic. But he wanted to think about the creek again; he felt maybe he should go back and at least see if it was still there. So he took the outfit to work with him on Monday morning, but he was so busy he had to put it in a bottom drawer. And there it remained, forgotten, until his

death a few days later. That's when the fishing outfit was discovered again and sent to his wife. Of all the things sent home to her, the old fishing outfit was the one that puzzled her. "Why had he taken it to work?" she asked herself. She didn't know, but it caused her to remember her husband as a young boy and wonder why he had followed the path he did.

Here's what you can do: *Don't wait to go fishing, or hiking, or sailing. Do it soon. Go back to the creek, the mountain, or the seashore you remember so vividly, and take time to ponder what it is YOU are chasing and why.*

Meet Stuart Jenkins

He's standing on top of a box!

Have you ever wondered about the word "discipline"? What images does it conjure up in your mind? Doing what you have to do? Towing the mark? Keeping your nose to the grindstone? Putting restrictions on your behavior and actions? Setting limits? If these are some of the negative connotations you would assign to the word "discipline," then you'll really enjoy hearing the story of Stuart Jenkins, and you may find it quite an eye-opener.

"Mrs. Jenkins," the grade school teacher announced to Stuart's mother, "*your son will never graduate from high school, let alone attend college. It's because of his dyslexia, you see, he's learning disabled.*" Stuart sat in the slow class in the one-room schoolhouse in a little town in Nebraska where everyone knew everyone. The worst part was not that the town labeled him "dumb" and "stupid." The worst part was that Stuart *believed* the labels. Until, that is, the day that everything changed.

When Stuart reached junior high age, he was given the opportunity to attend private school away from home, and it was there that the earlier labels that had been placed on him were gradually displaced. Not only did he become the school's track star and champion runner, but the confidence he gained helped him distinguish himself academically as well. Contrary to the earlier predictions, he not only graduated high school, but he became student body president and went on to graduate college with a 3.2 grade point average. And all because of his very unique concept of the word "discipline."

Stuart's love of running prompted him to set a long-range goal—to qualify for the Olympic



trials by running the Boston Marathon in two hours, nineteen minutes, and four seconds. Beginning at age 15, every single day for eight years, Stuart ran in preparation for that great race. He did not miss one day in eight years! Would you say that was discipline? In fact, by the time Stuart reached Boston, his daily log indicated he had run exactly 26,000 miles in preparation for that one 26-mile race! That's 1,000 miles of preparation for every mile in the race! Here are his own words about what happened as he ran in the Boston Marathon:

“Everything was going great until I got to the 17-mile mark—Heartbreak Hill, as it’s affectionately called. It was as if somebody had turned on Bunsen burners under both my heels and I had 4-inch blisters on them. My shoes were full of blood. There was more pain than I could ever remember in my life. I had to ask myself, am I willing to take one more step on these feet? Then the answer came: Stuart you are within six miles of reaching the goal you set eight years ago. The goal you have pursued for 26,000 miles! And the power of the goal was much greater than the power of the pain. I kept going, climbing the next hill. As I reached the crest of the hill I looked out and saw a huge digital clock. It read: TWO HOURS, EIGHTEEN MINUTES, 46 SECONDS. That meant only one thing. I had just eighteen seconds to get from there to the finish line! Then I heard a voice on the loudspeaker: Ladies and gentlemen, here comes Stuart Jenkins. He’s the last runner who has a chance to qualify for the Olympic trials. Let’s bring him on in. Twenty thousand people jumped to their feet

and began cheering wildly. But my entire focus was on that digital clock! Tick. Tick. Tick. I’m not a sprinter, but I believe I actually sprinted for the finish line, and in just fourteen seconds I was there, qualifying for the Olympics—by just FOUR SECONDS!”

Now ask yourself, what day should Stuart Jenkins have skipped in his training? What day should he have allowed himself not to pursue his goal? What mile in those 26,000 miles of preparation should he not have run? So what does the word “discipline” mean? It means freedom! It’s not putting yourself *in* a box, it’s putting yourself **on top of the box**, giving yourself a structure that can support you. The box is not a trap, a confinement, or a prison cell. It’s a platform, a solid step that affords you a higher vantage point from which to view your possibilities. Eight years of running every single day—that was discipline for Stuart Jenkins. But that discipline is what gives you freedom—freedom from mediocrity!

Here’s what you can do: Think of discipline as the path to freedom—freedom from limitations!

Merchant of death

How do you want to be remembered?

Imagine waking up one morning, stumbling into the kitchen, and sitting down with a fresh cup of coffee as you begin reading the daily newspaper. As you flip through the pages of events, your eyes fall on the obituary column. *What’s this? Your own name? Impossible! How can this be?* You know you’re still alive — what’s going on here? Is this a joke? And what’s this they’re saying about you? You were a *what? A tyrant responsible for the death of thousands of innocent people? The “Merchant of Death” who amassed a fortune discovering new ways to mutilate and maim people with his war devices?*

But that is *exactly* what happened to a young man named Alfred in the year 1888. Actually, it was his brother, Ludwig, who had just died. But the French newspaper got the story mixed up. They thought it was Alfred who had met his demise. And thinking that the deceased was Alfred, they painted that horrifying, albeit accurate, description of his life.

If you had read such a description about yourself in the newspaper, what would you have thought? What would you have done?

Alfred was totally repulsed by his image as the “Merchant of Death” and he became obsessed with finding a way to change that image from one of death and weapons of war, to one of peace. He must do something—and it must be something so impacting, so memorable, so meaningful, that from that day forward, when anyone, anywhere, mentioned his name, it would conjure up nothing, absolutely nothing, but an image of *peace!*

Did he succeed in accomplishing his purpose? You be the judge. Oh, here’s his full name... Alfred Nobel... and yes, what’s the *only thing* that name could make you think of?

So how will you be remembered? What will be said about you when you’re gone? What will you leave in your wake? And what are you doing today, and everyday, to make sure it’s something you’d be proud of?

Here’s what you can do: Decide now how you want to be remembered by your family, friends, and business associates. Write out your own obituary. Make it funny if you can—why not leave them laughing?

You can't save it, so spend it wisely

Looking for ways to save time? Well, forget it. You can't "save" time. But you *can* spend it wisely. First, accept this premise: THERE IS NOT NOW AND THERE NEVER WILL BE ENOUGH TIME FOR ALL THE WORTHWHILE AND IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE.

Think of all the places you'd love to see, the books you'd like to read, the people you'd enjoy being with, the activities you're fond of and the thousands of other things you could do. *There's not enough time!* Once you accept that premise, you're on your way to better time and activity management. Begin by separating your HIPO's — "high-payoff" activities, from your LOPO's — "low-payoff" activities.

HIPO's are directly related to your goal. They can't be delegated to anyone else. They tend to be risky and might be difficult or unpleasant, but they give you a high return on the time invested.

LOPO's, on the other hand, are activities not related to your goal. They're often comfortable, may be routine or trivial, and offer you only a small return for your investment of time. Since you can't do *everything*, the logical solution is to begin eliminating tasks from your list of LOPO's. Then decide which activity to do first by categorizing them this way:

- A. Urgent and Important (do these first)
- B. Important, but not Urgent
- C. Urgent, but not Important
- D. Not Important and not Urgent

Then see how many of the "D's" you can eliminate entirely. Efficiency, as everyone knows, is doing things right. Effectiveness, however, is doing the IMPORTANT things right! Ask yourself many times during the day: "Self, is what you're doing right now the most EFFECTIVE way to use your time?"



Here's what you can do:

Take time to work, to think, and to play—those are the keys to success, to the source of power, to the secret of youth. Take time to read every day—it's the foundation of wisdom. Take time to dream—to hitch your wagon to a star. Take time to love and be loved—what a privilege! Take time to be friendly, to look around and be of service to others—life is too short to be selfish. And finally, take time to laugh—for laughter is the music of your soul.



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