

Shadows & Light:
Theory, Research, & Practice
in Transpersonal Psychology

Volume 2: Talks & Reflections

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*Shadows & Light: Theory, Research, and Practice in Transpersonal Psychology
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Chapter 5

Taming the Tyranny of Time

Tina R. Fields

One winter, I backpacked into a remote canyon with my students and fellow faculty of the Audubon Expedition Institute. It was snowing. As it grew dark, we sat closely together and ate the modest supper we had cooked on backpacking stoves. We had no fire. It was so cold, dark, and wet that there was nothing else to do; after cleaning up everybody just wanted to go to bed. As we laid out our sleeping bags, I turned to my colleague and wondered, "What time do you suppose it is?" When he saw the face of his watch, he groaned. "You don't want to know." "Tell me," I replied. And he said, "It's 6:30." We laughed, a bit horrified. Only 6:30 pm, and here we were, people between our early 20s and mid-40s, all going to bed. "We have no life," we only half-joked. This was in January. I slept an average of 11 to 13 hours per night that month, and the next month too. And even though we were living outdoors 24/7, often in snow and other "bad" weather, I've rarely been healthier or saner.

Living outdoors, fully exposed to the temporal cycles of the planet for that long was a very interesting, unusual, and eye-opening experience for a modern, middle-class North American. Yet this is, of course, an experience that most humans have had for millennia, and that other animals and plants have every day.

The stress of ever-increasing pressure to rush that characterizes industrial growth societies is having detrimental effects on the health of individuals, communities, and the planet. This chapter illustrates the need for change and introduces alternative cultural modes of perceiving and interacting with time. Its final section offers simple, practical

exercises based on these models, as viewed through the lenses of transpersonal psychology and ecopsychology, for experiencing time as sacred rather than as a tyranny.

Hurry Sickness

“Clock time” is a relatively new concept, and therefore involves a considerable mental adjustment. For most of our tenure as a species, humans have related to the temporal world in terms of seasons, not nanoseconds. Everyday transportation is now mind-bogglingly faster than foot travel. And, of course, the increasing speed of communication brings attendant demands for a swift response. Whereas 100 years ago a correspondent might wait six months or more for a response to a written letter, now some e-mailers become anxious and even angry at a delay of 15 minutes. Such a rapid shift in demand load begs the question of whether we humans are hardwired to successfully deal with this ever-increasing speed of life.

The English word “haste” has the same etymological root as the word “violence” (Merriam-Webster, 2016; Dictionary.com, 2016). The truth of this connection can be witnessed playing out every day—for example, in road rage. A thwarted desire for speed invokes internal emotional violence, which sometimes then gets expressed externally to tragic ends. Consider the internal experience of a leisurely drive to view the turning autumn leaves for pleasure versus the desire to get home fast during rush hour traffic. Frustrated commuters are certainly not focused on seasonal length changes. Their internal clocks are set to much faster measures, such as the interval jokingly referred to by a Los Angeles professor as the “honkosecond”: the brief time elapsed between the moment a traffic light turns green and the car behind you honks their horn (Levine, 1997, p. 152).

More and more studies show how performance actually suffers when people try to take on too much in any given timespan. For example, Loh and Kanai (2014) reported, “Individuals who engage in heavier media-multitasking are found to perform worse on cognitive control tasks and exhibit more socio-emotional difficulties” (Abstract, para. 1).

With the possible exception of a few very advanced yogis, people cannot actually multitask at all. Rather than conducting multiple tasks simultaneously, what actually occurs is repeated task switching. And it takes time for the brain to switch focal direction.

Ironically, the attempt to swiftly multitask rather than focusing on repeated performance of one task at a time results in slower brain response and therefore slower achievement of those tasks (Meyer et al., 1997). Better to focus on one thing at a time and do it at a pace compatible with animal life. According to a summary of current psychological research on multitasking, recent studies suggest that “...even brief mental blocks created by shifting between tasks can cost as much as 40 percent of someone's productive time” (APA, 2006, para. 2).

This is especially obvious in the aged, who need more time to conduct each task. Fitch (1985) notes, “When older people are allowed more time to perform, they are generally able to do as well as younger people” (p 104). However, they often will not be granted the time needed. They rarely get the opportunity “to slow down without being considered a nuisance” (Fitch 1985, p. 104). This phenomenon is, of course, not limited to the elderly, either in concern or effect. In fact, it is possible that the stress of constantly rushing too much to meet societal demands of speed can lead to premature signs of mental aging. As one early study showed, “When things move too quickly, one's performance—and just as important, one's motivation—drops precipitously” (Kastenbaum, 1971, as cited in Fitch, 1985, p. 104). As I will soon show, mood and even physical health suffer when trying to meet a continuously overwhelming task burden in a “timely manner.”

As the uncertain global economic climate has brought a new norm of pushing to do more work with fewer personnel, time pressure has become a major stressor. Most U.S. citizens, blue- and white-collar workers alike, have less leisure time now than 40 years ago (Schor, 1991). A tense, manic quality has come to characterize daily life due to what social scientists have termed a “time-compression” effect (Goodhew & Loy, 2002). Symptoms range from workaholism to burnout, chronic sleep deprivation, depression, anger, latchkey children, and little time for soul-restoring interaction with family, friends, or nature.

A survey conducted by the National Recreation and Parks Association found that 38% of U.S. citizens reported "always" feeling rushed (Mowen, Graefe, Barrett, & Godbey 1992), up from 22% in 1971 (Goodhew & Loy, 2002). And this time pressure keeps people from engaging in the activities that could serve as an antidote. "Don't have enough free time" was found to be the greatest barrier to participation in outdoor recreation (Hornback, 1992, p. 19). In Japan, the strong workplace ethic has made taking vacations rare and speed a virtue, sometimes to the extent that basic bodily needs are ignored. Witness the modern Japanese saying "hayameshi, hayaguso, geinouchi," which means, loosely translated, "to eat fast and defecate fast is an art" (Levine 1997, p. 172). Even though mistakes are an inherent part of trying to go too swiftly, many people perceive their inability to keep up with the increasing number of demands—which appear faster and faster—as a personal failing, thereby leading to low self-esteem and less enjoyment of life.

Chronic time urgency not only leads to loss of emotional resilience and short-term cognitive abilities; it can also carry notable detrimental long-term physical effects. *Hurry sickness* is becoming an accepted medical concept, recognized as a possible cause of such widespread killers as heart disease (Ulmer & Schwarzburd, 1996; Dossey, 1982).

Recognizing it therefore becomes important. After examining several scales for Type A and coronary-prone behaviors, Levine (1997, pp. 20–22) identified ten behavioral areas that appear as symptoms of time urgency:

1. Concern with, and awareness of, clock time. Frequently consults watch (vs. the other extreme, forgetting the time or the day of the week).
2. Speech patterns. Frustration with those who take a while to get to the point. Frequent interruptions. Fast speech.
3. Eating habits. Being the first person finished eating at the table. Rarely takes time to eat three meals a day in a relaxed manner.

4. Walking speed. Fellow walkers ask the person to slow down or to stay with them.
5. Driving. Excessively annoyed in slow traffic. May honk or make rude gestures at slower drivers to speed them up.
6. Schedules. Addicted to setting and/or maintaining schedules for each activity. Punctuality may become a fetish.
7. Compulsive list-making.
8. Nervous energy. Becomes irritable if must sit for an hour without doing something.
9. Waiting. Gets more annoyed than most people if have to wait in line for more than a couple of minutes. May walk out of restaurants, banks, stores.
10. Alerts. Friends and family warn to take it easier, slow down, become less tense.

Trying to do two things at once is also frequently noted in coronary-prone personalities (Friedman & Rosenman, 1959), so I'd add that as an eleventh area.

Nearly everyone in industrial growth societies exhibits time urgency in some ways, of course. Further, some of these behaviors may simply be personal or intercultural characteristics. But a person exhibiting strong concern with time and speed in most of these areas, or being particularly extreme in even a few areas, according to Levine (1997) would probably be classified as a "time-urgent personality" (p. 21). When such thoughts and behaviors become extreme and habitual, they can progress into dangerous territory. In their 1996 work on treating time pathologies, Ulmer and Schwarzburd identified three symptoms that warrant a diagnosis of hurry sickness, which Levine (1997) paraphrased:

1. Deterioration of the personality, marked primarily by loss of interest in aspects of life except for those connected with achievement of goals and by a preoccupation with numbers, with a growing tendency to evaluate life in terms of quantity rather than quality.

2. Racing-mind syndrome, characterized by rapid, shifting thoughts that gradually erode the ability to focus and concentrate and create disruption of sleep.
3. Loss of ability to accumulate pleasant memories, mainly due to either a preoccupation with future events or rumination about past events, with little attention to the present. Focusing on the present is often limited to crises or problems; therefore memories accumulated tend to be of unpleasant situations. (p. 22)

A recent Yale University study showed that every stressful life event actually causes the brain's gray matter to physically decrease. The area most affected is in the medial prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that regulates not only blood pressure and glucose levels but also emotions, desires, impulses, and self-control (Ansell, Rando, Tuit, Guarnaccia, & Sinha, 2012). So once begun, a road rage, racing-mind, or anxiety/addiction pattern may be harder to overcome. Yale neurobiologist Rajita Sinha states that the 2012 study by Ansell et al. illustrates the need to "find ways to deal with the emotional fallout" of such stress (as cited in an interview with Hathaway, 2012, para. 6)

Medical concern about the negative effects brought on by hurry is not a phenomenon limited to the modern industrial growth society. Describing the three basic foundations of human illness in her people's cosmology, Comanche healer Sanapia named this as the first cause: "Things in rapid and erratic motion, or rapid and erratic motion itself are intrinsically dangerous to the human body" (Jones, 1972/1984, p.97).

The increasing speed of life in the industrial growth society clearly poses a problem that needs to be addressed. People don't always have the power to change the situation they find themselves in, but they do have the power to change the attitude from which they meet such challenges. This issue is being addressed in the context of transpersonal psychology and falls under the aegis of a much larger discussion about the role that consciousness—specifically consciousness about time—plays in issues of health and sanity.

Physician Larry Dossey (1982) presents remarkable clinical data showing that by changing their view of time, people have been able to

positively affect the course of disease. In the next sections of this chapter, I will offer alternate cultural views of time and practical ideas to experiment with in everyday life, stemming from the perspectives of transpersonal psychology and ecopsychology.

Other Modes of Time

Linear Time

Please take a moment to consider how you generally think about time and how it works. In Western industrial growth society cultures, the story of human lives is told as a linear progression along a series of events beginning with birth, then growing up, having experiences, and incrementally aging. Extending this timeline, each person is also placed in a genealogical family lineage along centuries, with ancestors coming before and descendants coming after. Time passes in more or less equal chunks measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, and so on. Like kilometers on a map, intervals on the clock are equal and constant and, with a few exceptions, calendar intervals are too. Because of this, we can place our location in time similar to the way we orient in spatial dimensions. Conceptions of time can even fuse with spatial distance: When asked how far away a place is, the response might be, “around three hours.” All of the sequences can basically be predicted in detail, and we are taught to perceive time as moving in a line, measured by the calendar and clock. This is known as *linear time* or the *terminal model of time* (Wallace 2005) since in this view time’s arrow is seen in spatial terms, shooting ever onward toward the future until everything ends.

You may be surprised to discover that this is not the only way that people think about time. Time perception is based not only on physics but also on anthropology and psychology. Following are two additional mental models of time besides linear time: *cyclical time* and *eternal time*.

Cyclical Time

The concept of cyclical time or circular time basically pays primary attention to cycles. In this mode, like a wheel, the world goes through a given span, and its momentum eventually slows down, decays, and dies. But the pattern doesn't stop there; the wheel then arises again to repeat the pattern in a new and changed way. Examples of calendars based on this cyclical model include the Mayan calendar (Wallace, 2005) and the Hindu concept of Yugas. These cover enormous cycles of time that are calculated to play out over hundreds, thousands, or even millions of years. The pattern is really more of a spiral than a proper circle, because what comes around again does not necessarily involve the same beings or events; only the pattern repeats.

Although cyclical time is a very old view and not the model of time consulted on smartphones every day, all contemporary people still experience it in the recurring bodily rhythms of hunger and sleep, and in the cycle of the earth's days and seasons. The sun and moon rise and set each day; the moon waxes to full and fades away to black; spring follows winter and then is followed in turn by summer and fall. These are cyclical events on which agricultural peoples base their livelihood. Even though the currently used Gregorian calendar lays this pattern out in a line, with January at the beginning and December at the end, we still think of these time changes as a cycle of events, and we don't typically question whether this periodicity will continue, whether Christmas will indeed come again this year.

The farther away from the equator, the more dramatic the seasonal changes. Particularly in such regions, seasonal cycles correspond with changing psychological states such as extreme depression that arises in autumn and peaks in winter due to the long, dark days (a.k.a. seasonal affective disorder) and recovers in spring. Another example is suicide rates reaching their highest, surprisingly, around midsummer (Roenneberg, 2012).

Eternal Time

The third model is *eternal*, *fixed*, or *steady-state* time. I prefer the term eternal since fixed can imply stagnation, whereas this model of time also

describes a kind of flow. Eternal time holds the idea that everything that ever was and ever will be is in this moment, and all whens are essentially the same at the core. This concept is often a little more difficult for Westerners to grasp because it is so alien to the way we are raised to think about time. Contemporary Christians touch on the idea of eternal time through the religion's conception of the afterlife in a semi-eternal Heaven or Hell, but still the concept of linear, terminal time holds sway in everyday experience during this embodied lifetime.

A fine example of eternal time can be found in the Australian Aboriginal peoples' view, in which the traditional patterns of interactions between people, animals, and spirits continue without end (Wallace, 2005). "What happened in the past is happening now, and will go on unchanged forever" (Roberts & Mountford, 1971, p. 11). Life takes place in *dreamtime*, a sacred landscape created by ancestors of mythic dimensions long ago, and which is still accessible today. Before European contact, Aboriginal people believed that their children's spirits originate in many different places, then enter their chosen mothers' bodies to begin life as human beings (Roberts & Mountford, 1978). So people are who they are from time immemorial, and everything around—lizards, rocks, waterholes, and even the grass between the trees—is intimately linked with each person's lineage (Roberts & Mountford, 1971) and, I would argue, their identity. Dreamtime contains not only sleeping-state experiences but also everything we envision, intuit, and conceive. As Jamake Highwater (1982) views it, "The aboriginal *dreamtime* is "the solution to the Western question asked by the late Hannah Arendt: 'Where are we when we think?'" (p. 89).

To offer a second example, Benjamin Whorf (1956) observed that the Hopi language contains no reference to time as it is conceived of in the English language. Durations of time cannot be counted because that aspect of the world is not based on concrete conceptions that one might point to. Neither past nor future exist per se. Instead, everything in the realm of imagined possibility already exists, just in varying stages of manifestation.

Eternal time sits in the ever-changing, yet perpetual, the "perennial reality of the now" (Joseph Epes Brown, as quoted in

Highwater, 1982, p. 118). This is a very old view of time, and one particularly useful to shamanistic cultures. An eternal now combined with a shamanistic worldview means the spirits, gods, and ancestors are always potentially present (e.g., Jones, 1972/1984, pp. 40–41). To use a Western metaphor, the past and future can be just as accessible in temporal terms as the next-door neighbors are in spatial terms. This makes it possible for a skilled practitioner to speak with the dead and future generations (e.g., Eliade, 1974, pp. 355, 487), and for us to influence not only the future through our actions but also the past (Eliade, 1974, p. 171). It seems to me that the eternal view of time holds potential for transpersonal work in healing intergenerational trauma.

Linear Time's Movable Terminus

Linear/terminal time is just one among many ways of viewing time and how humans move through it. Interestingly, there is also more than one way to conceive of linear time.

Contemporary Western society depicts time as moving forward. To navigate it, we draw timelines, looking forward to coming events and to making progress. The future is before us, anticipated, and the past behind us, irretrievable. But such widespread cultural groups as the ancient Greeks (Bortone, 2010, p. 117), the Aymara (Núñez & Sweetser 2006), the Malagasy (Dahl, 1995) and pre-colonial peoples in Kenya (Mbiti, 1970) conceptualize the flow of time in quite a different way. They view the past as being before us, and the future as being behind us. Can you imagine why they might see it that way? It makes perfect sense. People can clearly see what's already happened (as the old saw goes, "Hindsight is 20–20"), but we cannot see what fate might be coming in future. Therefore, the past is in front where our eyes are, and the future is the unknown behind our backs. In these conceptions, time's arrow flies in the opposite direction. So even with linear/terminal time, there is more than one model.

Event-based Linear Time

Many people experience time not as an incremental, evenly spaced "tick-tick-tick" clock sequence but as measured by life events. When telling

stories with the family, for example, people often figure out when something happened by dating it through event reckoning. Looking at photos, one might muse, “Those crazy shoes were only popular right after X graduated from high school, so this must have been [season/year].” The stage of life a person was in at the time that something personally important happened is often much more important to them than the numbered calendric year in which it occurred. So it’s easier to determine sequence by recalling the experiences rather than trying to list everything that happened, say, in 2013. This mode of perception is known as *event time* (Levine, 1997), as compared with *clock time*. Both clock and event time are inherent in linear time.

Time on the clock often differs significantly from the psychological experience of time. The duration of an event seems to flex according to our relationship with it. Factors include how interesting and enjoyable the activity is, and the age of the experiencer. The older one gets, the faster time seems to sweep by. This may be due to the relative percent of time the event takes when compared with the person’s already-lived lifespan. Time’s inner relativity is especially illuminated by how time at the dentist seems to take forever when compared with a picnic at the lake with a beloved.

Cultural Expectations

Cultural expectations abound about the duration of inner cycles. How long should a person take for grieving after a family member’s death? At what point does it become necessary to hide that grief due to others’ subtle messages that it’s time to be done? How long should a person sleep?

New studies show that the chronobiological clock will change over a person’s lifespan. Young children are early waking chronotypes, as their bleary-eyed parents will attest. According to Roenneberg (2012), a shift occurs during puberty and adolescence that turns humans into night owls (p. 101). Teenagers who sleep in aren’t necessarily lazy; they have a sleep–wake phase delay that causes them to actually get tired later and need more sleep in the morning (American Academy of

Pediatrics, 2014). At around age 20 another turning point occurs, after which people both go to bed and wake earlier for the rest of their lives. This shift in chronotype is now a noted biological marker for the end of adolescence (Roenneberg, 2012, pp. 101–102).

In his excellent chronicles of *temporal misadventures* while traveling in different cultures, social psychologist Robert Levine (1997) observed how modes of relating with time tie in with societal approval. *Monochronic* or *M-time* (Hall, 1959) people like to focus on activities one at a time in a sequence from start to finish. M-time is stringently structured linear time that pays attention to the clock and the calendar. It is favored by countries with industrialized economies because its use enhances ability for individual achievement: “time is money.” Contrast this with *polychronic* or *P-time* (Hall, 1959), a cultural mode of relating to time that centers more on people’s life events, interactions and connections. P-time dominant people prefer to attend to multiple events or tasks by doing one project until inspiration strikes for another, then returning to the first again, simultaneously progressing a bit on each. They prioritize emotional connection over keeping up with planned schedules. In a P-time-dominant country like Brazil or Burundi, for example, one might make an appointment for noon but not get there until 10 pm, if at all, and this is accepted if something more relationally important came up (Levine, 1997, pp. 96, 194–195).

That drives many North Americans crazy. It’s not surprising, given our inherited cultural lens. If time is money, then it is a measurable commodity that should not be wasted by pointless acts like waiting for someone to show up. But contrast this view with that of Jean Traore from Burkina Faso in eastern Africa, an exchange student for whom the concept of wasting time is incomprehensible: “There’s no such thing as wasting time where I live....How can you waste time? If you’re not doing one thing, you’re doing something else” (as quoted in conversation with Levine, 1997, p. 91). Levine concluded that to a responsible person there, “what is truly wasteful—sinful, to some—is to not make sufficient time for the people in your life” (p. 91).

The Commodification of Time

Internalized Time Oppression: Example from Labor History

The length of the work day caused many of the most significant strikes during the early days of the labor movement in Europe and the United States. Employers supported shorter days as well, convinced that fatigue from overwork was counterproductive.

Labor historian Benjamin Hunnicutt (1996) describes a pivotal moment. In 1930, cornflake maven W.K. Kellogg offered all workers at his large Battle Creek plant a six-hour work day instead of eight, with only a minor cut in pay since he believed the shorter hours would mean more efficient work. This visionary program was a huge success for nearly two decades. Workers enjoyed the extra time (and reported using that time for such things as being better parents, doing creative work, enjoying time outdoors, and offering community service), absenteeism and accidents were significantly reduced, and since costs like insurance went down because of the reduced hours, the unit cost of production was so lowered that Kellogg could hire many more people and pay them all as much for six hours of work that he formerly paid for eight (pp. 15, 37, 70). But the workers themselves sabotaged this sweet deal. Following World War II, new management began counterattacking “the threat of leisure” (Hunnicutt, 1996, p. 6) by linking greater productivity to higher wages. And wanting the material advantages of the new consumer culture, workers demanded eight-hour days. The management, workers, and union alike began to dismiss leisure time as “wasted,” “lost,” or “silly,” and to sneer at those who wanted to keep the old six-hour standard as “lazy,” “weird,” or even “sissies” (Hunnicutt, 1996, p. 145). The last six-hour employee holdouts, mostly women, surrendered to the new regime in 1985 (Hunnicutt, 1996, p. 2).

This trend continues now. External pressures to perform are strong. Corporate employees vying for a higher position might send an email to the boss at 4 a.m. to show what diligent and valuable workers they are. Some people prefer a fast work tempo, finding it stimulating. But for others, such pressures to work more and ever faster can

eventually become a form of internalized oppression, leading to chronic or extreme time urgency even in the absence of stimuli.

The Question of Worth

Many people raised under the currently dominant industrial growth model of society have come to conceptualize time as something that needs to be filled by activity in order to gain meaning as valuable and relevant. Taking an ecopsychological perspective, one can see parallels with how wild land is conceptualized as relatively worthless in and of itself until it is developed for human use and potential economic development. The needs of existing vibrant communities of other-than-human beings and are often disregarded when considering use of place; similarly, the rich life of the human soul and what nurtures its thriving is often disregarded as secondary when considering how we should use our time.

In my observation, one root cause of the problem is focusing on our world not as a matrix of living relationships, but as an economic commodity. A person can sell the living body of an ancient tree for lumber or the hours of their own life for wages.

The conception of time as a commodity has direct effects on behaviors that affect not only the individual but also the health of the planet. An example is the common choice not to repair possessions even if the flaw is small, finding that act a waste of time when we can just go buy new ones quickly and cheaply. United States citizens are told that buying more improves the nation's economy. But this act ignores the true costs of these replacement items to both the planet (in terms of raw materials, carbon footprint for transport, packaging, etc.) and to the individual person's empowerment. Repairing or repurposing not only keeps things out of the landfill, it can confer a sense of pride in skill and more—a deeper relationship with each of our possessions as they gain the beloved patina of layered memory, sometimes even across generations.

The cultivation of inner spaciousness—that is, a sense of having enough time not only to complete the tasks of daily life but to feel vast, calm, and fully aware while performing these actions—is therefore not

only a path to personal happiness and awakening as described in Buddhism (e.g., Hanh, 1999) but also to pro-environmental behavior that supports the matrix of life on our planet.

Strategies and Interventions

This section contains a few suggested transpersonal and ecopsychological interventions for dealing with hurry sickness in the industrial growth society, mapped onto the three presented modes of time.

Interventions involving Linear Time

Time-urgency symptoms. Review the list of time-urgency symptoms and choose one that you notice in yourself and practice mitigating over time. Interventions can be simple. When eating, allow yourself to prepare and eat some meals slowly with an eye toward full enjoyment of every bite and appreciation for the food, its sources, and the company you are with. Alternatively, you can practice driving more calmly, deliberately leaving early in order to avoid the need to rush and leaving more space between yourself and the car in front of you, even when other cars nose their way in, focusing on the skill of smooth driving rather than speed.

P- or M-time dominance. Experiment with which mode works better for you. If you are happier and more effective while focusing deeply on a single task for a long time, try to set up a schedule with large chunks of uninterrupted time to engage in each task in sequence. Conversely, if you prefer to do one thing for a short while and then switch to another for a time, whether another task, social interaction, or a yoga break, give yourself permission to do that. The only mode that is proven not to work is trying to do two or more things simultaneously, or multitasking.

Pay attention. Vietnamese teacher Thich Nhat Hanh (1999) recommends turning the chore of doing the dishes into a form of meditation. No matter the duration, one thing at a time done well, and

with fully attentive presence, can lead to peace of mind. It might even shift your perception of how much time has gone by.

Manage expectations. Henry David Thoreau observed back in 1842, “Nothing can be more useful to a man than determination not to be hurried” (p. 342). One practical way to work toward this is by managing people’s expectations about your response time. Email is a particularly egregious time suck, in my experience, and a stressor to boot as it forces frequent task-switching. To keep email from taking over your work life, first turn off the alarm so you can choose when to focus on it. Then simply place a tag line at the bottom of the automatic response that states something like, “In an effort to maintain an efficient and sustainable work life, I will read and respond to emails [however infrequently you can successfully get away with it; I suggest something like once per weekday in the late afternoon or three times per week]. Thank you for your patience.” This manages expectations of you. If correspondents know when they can expect a response to their query or request, they will usually relax and accept it even though it is not as fast as they had hoped. And you will have gained hours of your life back to focus more deeply on completing the tasks presented in earlier emails, and perhaps even taking a five-minute walk outdoors.

Appreciate down time. Campaigns are now being waged in both Japan and America to incite exhausted workers to take their earned vacation time, only half of which is actually being used (Levine, 1997, p. 145). Although often frowned upon in the industrial growth society as slacking off, taking time for other aspects of life like fun, relaxation, and regular time with family, friends and nature, as the Kellogg’s labor example shows, will actually make people more productive at their jobs in the long run, not to mention healthier and happier. Recognize down time as valuable for renewal, inspiration, calming the nervous system, and increasing mental capacity. Many truly creative breakthroughs have come when resting or even asleep, as in the example of Marie Curie’s dreams. They rarely come when the person is exhausted.

Focus on being vs. doing. When stressed with too many tasks and rushing to keep up, I find that I not only make more mistakes but also lose my ability to be gracious—and sometimes even my sense of

humor. Further, this unpleasantness is contagious. One strategy that has worked for me in situations of time urgency is to focus primarily on how I am being with others and the task in question that day, rather than whether I can get everything done. It is a mindfulness practice, showing loving-kindness to others through a more pleasant attitude and to myself by allowing myself to slow down.

Ecopsychological Interventions involving Cyclical Time

Sabbath or screen fast. The practice of Sabbath, or taking a weekly day of rest, can bring renewal to an overworked mind, soul, and body. Orthodox Judaism and other spiritual traditions recommend not engaging in any form of labor on the Sabbath, following the Biblical creation story that on the seventh day, God's work was finished (Genesis 2:2). This is not just a day off, though; it is a vital part of creation. Generally translated as *rest*, the Hebrew word for what was created on the seventh day is *menuha*. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel (1951/1998) explains, "Menuha is the same as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony.... the essence of good life" (pp. 22–23). So once per week, the Sabbath offers the soul and the community a refreshing experience of bathing in sanctified time: "The primary awareness is one of our being *within* the Sabbath rather than of the Sabbath being within us" (Heschel, 1951/1998, p. 21).

There are many secular ways to celebrate the Sabbath by choosing to undertake less or no usual work activity one day per week. One contemporary alternative Sabbath is a "screen fast" day or even half day: refrain from going online, watching TV, or engaging with any tech screens aside from voice conversations. It is funny how radical this may sound, considering that ten years ago, neither the iPhone nor Android even existed (Neal, 2014). Give yourself the gift of a regular cycle out of the frantic pace of ordinary life in order to enjoy and celebrate life in simple ways, renew the soul, and experience time as something sacred.

Let the body lead. Consider what would happen if we only ate when the body signaled hunger and slept when we felt tired. A Columbia University study showed that following the clock for eating times tended to lead to obesity (see Levine, 1997, p. 89). It can be both fascinating and

useful to discover and align with your own circadian, chronotypical, and other rhythms.

Cycles of nature. One strategy for addressing time pressure is to pay more attention to nature's cycles, which are much vaster and slower. Consciously aligning our own lives with larger planetary rhythms and forces can confer much-needed perspective. Seasonal holidays can remind us of our place in the vast cycle of life and death. Honoring the solstices (the time of year when the daylight is longest or shortest) and the equinoxes (when the length of day and night are equal) as modern Pagans do can enhance such awareness four times per year. Christmas and Hanukkah occur around the winter solstice, and Easter and Pesach parallel the spring equinox. At their heart, these are all ancient celebrations of, respectively, the birth of light at the darkest time of winter and the renewal of returning life and hope in spring—a lovely transpersonal focus to meditate on both without and within. To work with more frequent cycles, observe what phase the moon is in and feelings you may notice changing inside yourself as it waxes and wanes thirteen times per year. Pay attention to all of the changes the seasons bring: differences in length of day and night, cold and heat, moisture, your sleep cycle. Notice which flowers, birds, insects, and animals appear more at these varying times, and the changes they go through. You might opt to deeply observe a single tree or plant over the course of a full year.

A simple practice I do is to go outside for at least five minutes every morning when I first get up, and every evening just before retiring to bed. Five minutes is not long, but it is long enough to remind me about what is going on in the larger world of which I am an embedded part, a world beyond pure human construct. Stars! Changing weather! Birdsong! Neighbors! The practice helps me to both sleep and awaken with a vast, calm, mind and peaceful, appreciative heart. Attending to the more-than-human world offers a way to dwell in deeper awareness of cyclical time.

Transpersonal Interventions Involving Eternal Time

Contemplative practices. Mindfulness meditation is a proven and wonderful way to slow the self down, particularly the mind affected by too much busyness. Through training people to witness their own internal reactions, meditation can also ultimately alleviate some of the anxiety and behavioral patterns brought on by time pressure and hurry sickness. As Gandhi was reputed to have said about himself, if there is too much to accomplish to include an hour of meditation in our day, we actually need to meditate for two hours. But even fifteen minutes per day is better than nothing, especially if engaged in several times per day. Mindfulness meditation and other presencing practices that exhort us to “be here now” can afford us access to touch the “eternal now,” or the chance to at least expand the spaciousness of the moment experienced in the present. So can practices such as shamanic journeying that expand perception into timeless realms. Same with any activity from drawing to athletics to lovemaking that one can immerse in so deeply that the flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) is induced, wherein the doer becomes secondary to the process of doing and time seems to expand or stand still. As the yoga session ends, do not rush to get up before shavasana. Allow yourself to settle into your newly reset body.

Cultivate awareness of deep time. Consider time on a longer scale—deep time, as Joanna Macy (n.d.) puts it. For example, the Haudenosaunee people of North America exhort us to consider the impact our decisions might have on seven generations. However, I’ve heard some say that actually refers not to seven generations in the future as we often think, but to three generations in the future, us now, and three back in our ancestry (see Wheeler & Bijur, 2000, p. 28). What might our elders or our grandchildren yet to be born want to see us doing now? Now consider the possibility that causality is not only one-way or even linear.

Play with the time scales of other species. To add an ecopsychological component to this meditation, turn also to the elders of other species, all of us stemming from the same Big Bang beginning this galaxy’s existence. Consider yourself as a being composed of elements that are shared by all other beings on this planet. Your brain is, at the

core, the same as a lizard's; your circulatory system echoes the patterns of branching rivers and trees. What advice might elders like these offer regarding the problem of speed? How does time pass for a tree? For a rock? This thought meditation is another way to potentially touch the vastness of eternal time, and can be particularly useful for offering spaciousness perspective when feeling rushed.

Concluding Wish

The scope of this paper encompasses only a few aspects of relationship with time. However modest, may these thoughts open the door to your becoming a temporal millionaire, with the ability to swim in time's changing flows sleekly, like an otter, and the liberating feeling that you have enough time to fully enjoy this life.

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