

Doing More Generates More Time

Shôn Ellerton, January 14, 2020

'You have too much time on your hands' is a phrase I find disagreeable. My reply is to suggest doing even more!



Time is a man-made construct. It can be stretched, it can be manipulated, it can be used up wastefully or maybe not exist at all. Well, I don't know about you, but it feels like that to me much of the time.

On returning to work on a Monday morning, no doubt, someone will start off the conversation.

'How was your weekend?'

'Yeah, good. Never seems long enough though.'

The funny thing is that those weekends which never seem long enough are precisely those weekends which you didn't do much at all. It's those weekends which you find it hard to recall what the heck you were doing on Saturday morning, less than 48 hours ago.

Yet, the weekends which you had action-packed and jammed full of exciting things like going to parties, taking the kids somewhere nice, or doing some sightseeing are those weekends which felt like value, time well-spent, and perhaps enough to find it a little less painful to go back to work on Monday morning. You also have a story to tell and share as a bonus.

Doing more creates time. Not in a scientific way, but in a perceived and productive sort of a way.

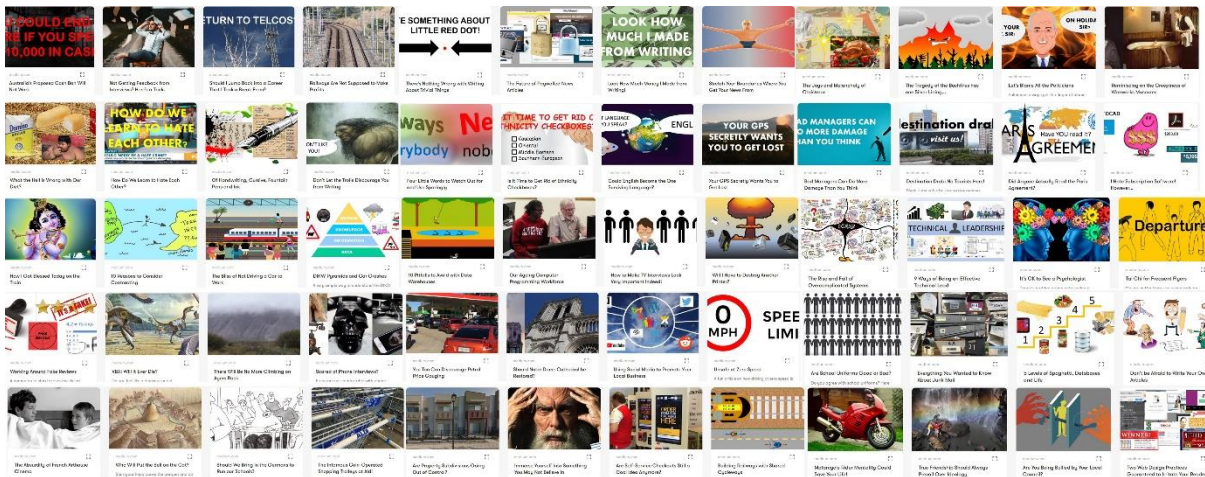
There's nothing wrong with taking a lazy day or two now and again. I'm sure most of us do from time to time but it's those lazy days that you often perceive as being in fast-forward motion where time suddenly accelerates and, before you know it, you went from breakfast to dinner in a time warp unable to recount the events between.

Sitting on a train going to work is a prime example. Watching out the window while the train stops and starts at various stations along the route on its way to work seems like an eternity but when you're reading a book, writing an article or watching something on the smartphone, time just zooms on by. The redeeming feature here, of course, is that you're given a reminder to stop what you're doing and to get off the train, whereas one can happily browse through endless social media posts only to find that hours have slipped away haphazardly should nothing stop you.

Paradoxically, I find that doing more actually creates more time. Sure, there are practical limitations to this. It's unlikely one will find time to undertake more than one full-time job, but this is more of a physical limitation rather than a perceived or productive one.

Many question how I find time to do what I want to do. After all, I have my duties including having a fulltime job, tending the garden, helping with the cooking, fixing things around the house and looking after myself. Then there's all the other things I like to do including spending time with my wife and son, socialising with friends, doing a bit of photography, listening to music or playing it on the piano, watch movies, play a few classic video games, and go for walks to the beach or do a little hiking weather permitting.

In addition, I do *lots* of writing and reading. I do not write for money but rather for the satisfaction of exercising my creativity and publishing something which *could* be of some value to someone. And lastly, I read lots of books. I probably overdid it on the non-fiction books last year as I strongly believe that fiction is as important, if not more important, than non-fiction in gaining some valuable insight to one's general knowledge. After all, it is the power of fiction and gossip which sets us apart from the other animals. Below are some of the books I managed to read last year and below that, a mosaic of some of the titles of articles I wrote over the last year or two.



Maybe I find the idea of being in a state of total relaxation or to do something which requires endless hours doing essentially not much at all, tedious and boring. An example that springs to mind is fishing, an activity I will never understand that provides pleasure to so many.

I tend to have an active mind most of the time which makes sleeping a little difficult at the best of time. On average, the best I can usually muster is a measly six hours of sleep, perhaps an additional one or two hours on a weekend day. Dropping off to sleep usually requires reading a good number of pages out of the book I'm reading, and even after dropping off, I sleep lightly.

Perhaps the way we are brought up conditions us to act or behave differently with respect to how we use our time or to relax. I spent a lot of time my father helping him on his vast collection of projects on the go, sometimes reluctantly I might add. I really don't know if he slept properly at all. I do know that *every* hour of his life was filled with something and, no way, could he (or anyone else working with him) ever relax. He seemed to create time out of nothing. Looking back on his achievements, I used to struggle to understand how he had time to do them all. He did have many of us help him to realise his achievements which had the unfortunate result of stressing everyone else. However, the outcome is favourable insofar that I now know how to generate time just by doing more, the difference being that I don't stress anyone out by forcibly getting them involved.

So, to finish off, if there's one expression which I find disagreeable is this.

'You have too much time on your hands'

My answer will be

'Do *more* and make more time!'