

# ON PURPOSE

## ARE YOU TIME RICH?

By Barbara Hoese, Carol Miller and Barbara Williamson

Recently we spent some time in roundtable dialogue with managers in corporate America. We asked them, “What, if you were better at it, would make you more effective at what you do?” Over and over again we heard, “time management.” The answer, however, came with a big BUT. “I don’t need traditional ‘scheduling my calendar’ time management stuff, BUT what I do need is a different approach. An approach that would comprehend that my *plate* has become a *platter* and it is overflowing. And don’t tell me to prioritize, because the priorities change on a daily basis!” What we heard them describe is that they felt as if they were *time poor* and wanted to be *time rich*.

The solution provided by time management courses often focuses on managing time with the clock. Time rich people, however, don’t focus on managing time with the clock because the clock is one of the culprits that keep us in our do...do...do... cycle and makes us feel time poor. Just get it done, just get it done...the clock ticks. And get it done in the next ten minutes, so you can get to the next thing on your to-do list. Tick tock, tick tock. The ticking reminds us to be efficient with our time. Tick tock, tick, tock—time’s a’ wasting.

It sounds absurd, but being time rich has little to do with the clock! Don’t get us wrong; clocks are a good thing. They help us to catch trains and planes

and even to catch up with friends at a meeting place. But in the last fifty years, the clock has given us a very mathematical approach to time. Think about it...we can now measure time in a nanosecond. Is that meaningful? And in this ever ongoing division of time, we have left behind the more holistic, biological, rhythmic approach to time that comes with sunrises, sunsets and the changing of the seasons.



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### TO INFINITY AND BEYOND...

We’re all given the same twenty-four hours each day, seven days a week. What, then, do those time rich people know and what do they do differently?

Firstly, time rich people realize that time is *finite* and that to-do lists are and always will be *infinite*. Like Buzz Lightyear's famous saying, our to-do list goes "To infinity and beyond." Even as we check something off, something else gets added. If we finish the laundry today, there will be laundry again tomorrow. We are bombarded with a constant stream of information that tells us what we should add to our to-do list through television, radio, newspapers, books and the Internet. We should be exercising for thirty minutes every day, we should fertilize our lawn, we should write up a memo for the project, we should buy and use that new eco-friendly dishwasher, we need to prepare an elegant meal for a family gathering, we should play a musical instrument, spend quality time with our children, look into a better investment for our money, volunteer for community service, be MADD about drunk drivers, save the whales, support your political candidate... Do you feel time compressed? Are you exhausted yet?

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***“When we become caught up in our to-do lists, we forget that we once upon a time dreamed about who we wanted to BE.”***

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How many of us admit that we live our lives racing to complete our to-do lists, but would be horrified to think that our ultimate goal was to be “done?” Do we really want to be racing through life simply to be done with it? As the old joke goes, no one ever said on their deathbed that they wished they had spent more time at work. Or getting groceries, picking up the dry cleaning, etc.

But there is a list that is *finite*. And that is our to-BE list. Our to-BE list is created by answering the question, “Who do I want to be?” We clarify our *being* by first naming our unique purpose, passion, values and talents. The combination of that unique *being* and the contribution we want to make to the world is the genesis of our to-BE list.

When we become caught up in our to-do lists, we forget that we once upon a time dreamed about who we wanted to BE. We can't take time to look at

why we do what we do until we've checked everything off! Yet somewhere in there—in racing through our to-do lists—is the hope that we may eventually get to what's truly important.

And this is where we begin to feel that sense of being time rich or time poor. Do you see time as a resource to get your to-do list done? Or is time a resource for you to become who you want to be?

Much more powerful than a clock, our to-BE list creates a lens or filter for our to-do list. Being clear about who we want to be and what we want to contribute (our purpose or reason for being) can help narrow our to-do list. But our to-do lists won't get shorter by just thinking about this idea, we must actually use our to-BE lists to filter our doings every day or we will stay trapped in our infinity of to-do's.

If everyone focused on first creating their to-BE list and said “yes” to requests that fit with who they want to be, then there are plenty of people and more than enough energy in the world to save the whales, get MADD about Drunk Drivers and support political candidates. The key to having enough time and energy is to say “yes” to what we want to BE and “no” to things trying to get on our to-do list that don't fit with our to-BE list. Saying “yes” and saying “no” is what gives us back the passion, power and energy to live the lives we dream of. [See article in this issue on “The Practice of Saying No”]

### **FILL 'ER UP...**

“Time is money” goes the old adage. To stretch our time resource people often try to “buy” time—and we do exchange time for money and money for time. Time rich people see yet another link between time and a resource available to us: energy.

We often forget that how we spend time is connected to our energy. It's as if we have an Energy Bank Account. The way we use our time either builds up a huge debt in our account (that feeling of being time poor) or builds up a huge credit (that feeling of being time rich). Think back to a time when you spent an entire day on activities that lacked significance to you (they were nowhere

to be found on your to-BE list). How did you feel at the end of the day? Lethargic, tired, unmotivated, worn out, maybe even a little depressed?

Now think of a day when you spent the majority of your time on a project you cared about, that you felt made a difference to people you care about. Were you physically tired at the end of the day? Maybe. But how was your emotional energy?

The managers in the roundtables we mentioned earlier were feeling worn out and time poor. They saw no hope for completing all they needed to do. Their platters were overflowing with activities that they cared little about and that depleted their energy. That's because how we use our time has both an effect and an affect. Time allows us to get things done (effect) and *how* we use our time releases our resource of energy (affect). We have found that many people cut back on their sleep to shift one more hour into their workday to accomplish more—or so they think. People take away the time they wish they could spend with loved ones just to ensure that they don't miss a deadline. But they are not sure who set the deadline to begin with. People don't realize that this constant shifting and juggling of time in their day has created a leak in their energy tank.

Many people think that they can spend ten to twelve hours at work every day and be effective throughout those hours, sometimes six days a week. During these hours, they work on many projects that lack personal value for them. If this pattern continues, as these people wake up in the morning they begin to feel a sense of resignation to the fact that they just have to keep doing and doing to keep their jobs. They feel time poor because they are not paying attention to their energy tank. Their energy is literally dwindling away. With one manager we were coaching, this time poor view was accentuated when we asked him if there was anything he did all day long that brought him joy. He said no.

## THE POWER OF AN HOUR

What if you begin to consider that part of your day's work *is* to use some of your time to refuel your

energy tank? Consider that, each day, some time needs to be focused on those things that put a spring in your step or that spark your hope for tomorrow.



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In our coaching we often ask people what would change for them if they could shift just one hour of how they spend their time. At first, it may seem an impossible request. They bemoan their circumstances and can't see any way to gain control of their time. Time rich people, however, have shared with us one of their secrets: they get enough sleep every night to re-energize themselves to accomplish what they need to each day. They understand that you can do *anything* you want, but not *everything* you want.

Our research supports their stories. In a recent survey we discovered that fifty-four percent (54%) of those that average eight hours of sleep feel a high level of energy most days, while only twenty percent (20%) of those who average six hours of sleep at night (5.5 to 6.5 hours) feel that same level of energy. When looking at how these same groups rate how much they accomplish each day, twice as many of those who get more sleep feel great about their daily accomplishments (50% vs. 25%).

Finally, of those who average six hours of sleep a night, only nine percent (9%) gain a sense of fulfillment from their work—and believe their work makes a difference to others. Nearly four times as many people (35%) who get eight hours of sleep a

night have that same sense of fulfillment and feeling that their work makes a difference.

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***“Because we have just twenty-four hours in a day, we can live with intention.”***

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What would it take for you to shift one hour to get more sleep or spend more time with those you love? What one shift could you make to refill your energy tank? Your to-BE list is a great place to start to figure out what some of those things might be.

Here are some you might want to consider:

- Take a fifteen minute break mid-afternoon and go for a walk, just enjoying the moment.
- Work from home one day a week and spend that commute time on a favorite hobby.
- Turn off the television and get lost in reading a story to your children.
- Take an hour to actually eat lunch today instead of working through lunch. Think about all the things you are grateful for in your life.
- Instead of your regular workout routine, get active by doing an activity you that enjoy—and that’s not on your to-do list.
- Work on that project that you believe will actually make a difference to your company first

thing tomorrow morning, instead of putting it off until...

- Rather than finding excuses to avoid it, take time to have that conversation that will strengthen or mend a relationship.

Using time to refuel your energy tank is what creates the shift from feeling time poor to feeling time rich. Feeling time rich means being in sync with your natural energy rhythms. We are time rich when we spend time on things that really matter to us because, not only will we feel the FULLness of time, we will re-FILL our energy tanks for whatever tomorrows holds.

As you refuel your energy tank, be thankful that you have the gift of finite time. The gift of twenty-four hours is that it can be used to focus our choices. It gives us the opportunity to do what is really important to us and permits others to do what is really important to them.

Because we have just twenty-four hours in a day, we can live with intention. We can choose to spend our time on activities that have meaning for us, are part of our to-BE list, refuel our energy and permit us to spend time with those whom we love. This shift is to be grateful for this day and this moment and to anticipate the purposeful possibilities that will unfold.

*[Editor’s Note: This article is excerpted from Hoese, Miller and Williamson’s forthcoming book. More details will be available at The Inventure Group’s website, [www.inventuregroup.com](http://www.inventuregroup.com)]*

## **THE PRACTICE OF SAYING NO**

By Barbara Hoese, Carol Miller and Barbara Williamson

The first step to becoming time rich is to STOP. Not stop to look at what you’ve accomplished on your to-do list, or stop to check off another thing you have completed. But rather stop to check that what you have listed is the best, most important, right stuff for who you are now.

Stop now and do this. On a sheet of paper, list your to-do list for tomorrow. Come on, we know you have one. Pull out your day planner and write down the list.

Now, for each of the items on your list, ask yourself, “What is the link between doing this and who I want to BE?” Circle those items that you

can find a strong link to your to-BE list. Hold on to those, they are the source of energy for a time rich day. Look at the ones you didn't circle and ask:

- Where did this one come from?
- How did it get on my to-do list?
- Do I really need to do this?
- Of the billions of people in the world, who would actually enjoy doing this?
- If I say "no," will it open an opportunity for someone else to say "yes?"

We know this gets tricky when items are delegated to you at work. But if you can't see the importance of them, we suspect you don't enjoy doing them, probably consider them busy work and a waste of your time. You're right. No value to you equals wasted time.

It is time for you to have a conversation with the giver of that task so that you can get a clearer view of the request. One of two positive things will happen: either the delegator will get a clearer view and will agree that it does not need to be done, or you'll get a clearer view of why it's important and that will give you more energy to complete the task. In our coaching of managers in corporations, we are constantly amazed at the number of things that they see no value in doing, but they do it anyway and won't question why. This is a surefire step on the path to being time poor.

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***Ask yourself each morning, "What one thing, if I do it today, will have the greatest impact on my to-BE list?"***

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To be time rich you must be rigorous with this step. You must keep examining your to-do list and make sure it supports your to-BE list. Many people who take time management courses come away with the insight to focus on what's most important to them first. But then the bombardment of everyday demands begins to wear at the focused priorities they had previously set. To live by your priorities

(your to-BE list) takes daily and constant focus. This is not something you do in January and it's set for the year. This is something you must practice daily. One way to stay rigorous at this process is to ask yourself each morning, "What *one* thing, if I do it today, will have the greatest impact on my to-BE list?" Answer that question, and it will keep your to-BE lens in focus for the rest of the to-dos that will bombard you throughout the day.

Think of it as a counter attack to the bombardment of, "You need to do this... need to do this..." Your counter measure is to bombard yourself with, "I want to BE this... I want to BE this..."

***Barbara L. Hoese***

*As a principal and President of The Inventure Group, Barb works with both for profit and nonprofit organizations such as Xerox, Fairview Health Systems, General Mills, Medtronic and the Pastoral Leadership Institute to to develop leaders who express their full potential. As an executive and life coach, she helps people make powerful choices to lead and live fully. She holds a master's degree in Business Communication from the University of St. Thomas and continues her coaching training through the Coaches Training Institute.*

***Carol N. Miller***

*Carol's talent in coaching is discovering the heart of what matters—whether a sticky business problem, nurturing a life goal or strengthening personal relationships. Carol has led organizational development efforts at Xerox, DuPont University and SAP. In her work with these organizations, she developed programs in coaching, empowerment, work-life balance, diversity and leadership. She holds a master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Maryland and has studied coaching through several schools and workshops.*

***Barbara A. Williamson, Ph.D.***

*Barbara offers her talents to ignite passions, achieve goals and lead a happy and meaningful life. She has over twenty-five years experience working with individuals, teams and organizations nationally and internationally, including Xerox, Tupy in Brazil and Porsche Audi in the Netherlands. She has a doctorate in Management and Career Development from Georgia State University and a master's degree in Social Work and Counseling from the University of Georgia. Barbara draws inspiration for her work from the ocean near her home in sunny Jacksonville, Florida.*

## ADDING ENERGY TO YOUR DAILY TO-DO'S

When you align what's inside you (your natural gifts) with the work before you (your to-do list), everything is easier. That's because using your natural gifts feels effortless! Think about it. When do you lose track of time at work? How do you feel at the end of a work day when you have used your best talents? When we view those items on our to-do list as an opportunity to express our calling, we feel a greater sense of aliveness and make a contribution that matters.

Another tip for refilling your energy tank is to discover your natural gifts—your calling cards. The Inventure Group has designed a product to help you choose satisfying work by discovering your personal calling. Calling Cards™ is a self-guided exercise that, through five simple steps, will help you discover how to align your special gifts and passions to bring joy and energy to your work! This highly-interactive tool includes a deck of 52 cards, which reflect a variety of callings, complete

instructions to guide you through the exercise and a formal Calling Card on which to express your calling statement.



Calling Cards™ are \$14.95 and can be ordered on our website([www.inventuregroup.com](http://www.inventuregroup.com)), or by calling The Inventure Group at (952) 249-5222.

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