

The University of Virginia's Honor Code

Pierre-Hugues Verdier
University of Virginia School of Law

Mila Versteeg
University of Virginia School of Law

Andrew T. Hayashi
University of Virginia School of Law

I truly do believe that time is the only commodity that matters. So this is a very pragmatic talk. And it is inspirational in the sense that will inspire you by giving you some concrete things you might do to be able to get more things done in your finite time. So I'm gonna talk specifically about how to set goals, how to avoid wasting time. How to deal with the boss, originally this talk was how to deal with your adviser but I try to broaden it so it's not quite so academically focused. And how to delegate to people. Some specific skills and tools that I might recommend to help you get more out of the day. And to deal with the real problems in our life, which are stress and procrastination. I mean, if you can lick that last one, you're probably in good shape. And really, you don't need to take any notes. So I'll presume if I seen your laptops open, you're actually just doing IM, or email, or something. If you're listening to music, please at least wear headphones I would always say. But all of this will be posted on my website. And just to make it really easy, if you wanna know when to look up, any slides that have a red star on them are the points that I think you should really make sure that you got that one, all right? And conversely, if it doesn't have a red star, well, All right, so the first thing that I want to say is that Americans are very, very bad at dealing with time as a commodity. We're really good at dealing with money as a commodity. We're as a culture very interested in money and how much somebody earns is a status thing and so on and so forth. But we don't really have time elevated to that. People waste their time, and it just always fascinates me.

And one of the things that I noticed is that very few people equate time and money and they're very, very equitable. So the first thing I started doing when I was a teacher was asking my graduate students, well, how much is your time worth an hour? Or if you work at a company, how much is your time worth to the company? What most people don't realize is that if you have a salary, let's say you make \$50,000 a year, it probably costs that company twice that in order to have you as an employee because there's heating and lighting and other staff members and so forth. So if you get paid \$50,000 a year, you are costing that company, they have to raise \$100,000 in revenue. And if you divide that by your hourly rate you begin to get some sense of what you are worth an hour. And when you have

to make tradeoffs of should I do something like write software or should I just buy it or should I outsource this? Having in your head what you cost your organization an hour is really kind of a staggering thing to change your behavior. Because you start realizing that, wow, if I free up three hours of my time, and I'm thinking of that in terms of dollars, that's a big savings. So start thinking about your time and your money almost as if they are the same thing. Of course Ben Franklin knew that a long time ago. So you gotta manage it and you gotta manage it just like you manage your money. Now I realize not all Americans manage their money. That's what makes the credit card industry possible. And apparently mortgages too, so. But most people do at least understand. They don't look at you funny if you say, well, can I see your monetary budget for your household. In fact, if I say your household budget, you presume that I'm talking about money when in fact the household budget I really wanna talk about is probably your household time budget. The Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon, students would come in and during the orientation I would say, This is a masters program, everybody's paying full tuition, and it was roughly \$30,000 a year.

And the first thing I would say is if you're gonna come into my office and say, I don't think this is worth \$60,000 a year, I will throw you out of the office. I'm not even gonna have that discussion. And, of course, they would say, God, this posh guy's a real jerk and they were right. But what I then followed on with was, because the money is not important, you can go and earn more money later. And what you'll never do is get the two years of your life back. So if you want to come into my office and talk about the money, I'll throw you out. But if you want to come into my office and say, I'm not sure this is a good place for me spend two years, I will talk to you, all day and all night, because that means we're talking about the right thing, which is your time, cuz you can't ever get it back. A lot of the advice I'm gonna give you, particularly for undergraduates, how many people in this room are undergraduates, by show of hands? Okay, good, still young. A lot of this, put into Hans and Franz on Saturday Night Live, if you're old enough, hear me now, but believe me later, right? A lot of this is gonna make sense later. And one of the nice things is I gave the volunteer to put this up on the web. I understand that people can actually watch videos on the web now. So this is- So a lot of this will only make sense later. And when I talk about your boss, if you're a student, think about that as your academic adviser, if you're a PhD student, think of that as your PhD adviser. And if you're watching this and you're a young child, think of this as your parent because that's sort of the person who is in some sense your boss. And the talk goes very fast and, as I said, I'm very big on specific techniques. I'm not really big on platitudes. I mean, platitudes are nice, but they don't really help me get something done tomorrow. The other thing is that one good thief is worth ten good scholars and, in fact, you can replace the word scholars in that sentence with almost anything, all right? So almost everything in this talk is to some degree inspired, which is a fancy way of saying lifted, from these two books.

And I found those books very useful, but it's much better to get them into distilled form. So what I basically done is collected the nuggets for your bath. I like to talk about The Time Famine. I think it's a nice phrase. Does anybody here feel like they have too much time? Okay, nobody, excellent. And I like the world famine because it's a little like thinking about

Africa. You can air-lift all the food you want in to solve the crisis this week, but the problem is systemic, and you really need systemic solutions. So a time management solution says, I'm gonna fix things for you in the next 24 hours is laughable, just like saying, I'm gonna cure hunger in Africa in the next year. You need to think long term and you need to change fundamental underlying processes because the problem is systemic. We just have too many things to do and not enough time to do them. The other thing to remember is that it's not just about time management. That sounds like a kind of a lukewarm, talk on time management, that's kind of milk toast. But how about if the talk is how about not having ulcers, right? That catches my attention, so a lot of this is life advice. This is how to change the way you're doing a lot of the things and how you allocate your time so that you will lead a happier, more wonderful life. And I loved in the introduction that you talked about fun because if I brought fun to academia, well it's about damn time. If you're not gonna have fun, why do it, right? That's what I wanna know. I mean, life really is too short, if you're not gonna enjoy it. People who say, well, I've got a job that I don't really like, and I'm like, well, you could change. But that would be a lot of work. You're right, you should keep going to work everyday, doing a job you don't like.

Thank you, good night, right? So the overall goal is fun. My middle child, Logan, is my favorite example. I don't think he knows how to not have fun. Now, granted, a lot of the things he does are not fun for his mother and me. But he's loving every second of it. And he doesn't know how to do any that isn't ballistic and full of life. And he's going to keep that quality, I think. He's my little Tigger. And I always remember Logan when I think about the goal is to make sure that you lead your life. I want to maximize use of time, but really that's the means not the end. The end is maximizing fun. People who do intense studies, and log people in video tape and so on and so forth, say that the typical office worker wastes almost two hours a day, all right? Their desk is messy. They can't find things, missed appointments, unprepared for meetings. They can't concentrate. Does anybody in here, by show of hands, ever have any sense that one of these things is part of their life? Okay, I think we've got everybody. So this is a universal thing, and you shouldn't feel guilty if some of these things are plaguing you because they plague all of us. They plague me for sure. And the other thing I wanna tell you is that it sounds a little cliché and trite but being successful does not make you manage your time well. Managing your time well makes you successful. If I have been successful in my career, I assure you it's not because I'm smarter than all the other faculty. I mean, I'm looking around and looking at some of my former colleagues and I see Jim Cahoon up there. I am not smarter than Jim Cahoon, okay? I constantly look around the faculty in places like the University of Virginia or Carnegie Mellon and I go damn, these are smart people, and I snuck in. . But what I like to think I'm good at is the meta skills because if you're gonna have to run with people who are faster than you, you have to find the right ways to optimize what skills you do have.

So let's talk first about goals, priorities, and planning. Any time anything crosses your life, you've gotta ask, this thing I'm thinking about doing, why am I doing it? Almost no one that I know starts with the core principle of, there's this thing on my to-do list, why is it there? Cuz you start asking, well, why is it? I mean, again, my kids are great at this. That's all I ever hear at home is, why, why, why, right? And sooner or later, they're just gonna stop saying why,

and they're just gonna say, okay, I'll do it, right? So ask why am I doing this? What is the goal? Why will I succeed at doing it? And here's my favorite, what will happen if I don't do it? If I just say I'm just not. The best thing in the world is when I have something on my to-do list and I just go, nope. . No one has ever come and taken me to jail. I talked my way out of a speeding ticket last week, it was really cool. It's like the closest I'm ever gonna be to attractive and blonde. I told the guy why we had just moved and so on and so forth, and he looked at me and said, well, for a guy who's only got a couple of months to live, you sure look good. And I just pulled up my shirt to show the scar and I said yeah, I look good on the outside, but the tumors are on the inside. He just ran back to his cruiser. So that's one positive law enforcement experience for me. So the police have never come because I crossed something off my to-do list. And that's a very powerful thing because you just got all that time back. The other thing to keep in mind when you're doing goal setting is a lot of people focus on doing things right. I think it's very dangerous to focus on doing things right. I think it's much more important to do the right things. If you do the right things adequately, that's much more important than doing the wrong things beautifully, all right? Doesn't matter how well you polish the underside of the banister, okay? And keep that in mind. Lou Holtz had a great list, Lou Holtz's 100 things to do in his life.

And he would sort of once a week look at it and say if I'm not working on those 100 things, why was I working on the others? And I just think that's an incredible way to frame things. There's something called the 80 20 rule. Sometimes, you'll hear about the 90 10 rule, but the key thing to understand is that a very small number of things in your life or on your to-do list are gonna contribute the vast majority of the value. So, if you're a salesperson, 80% of the revenue is gonna come from 20% of your clients. And you better figure out who those 20% are, and spend all of your time sucking up to them. Because that's where the revenue comes. So you've got to really be willing to say, this stuff is what's going to be the value in this other stuff isn't, and you've got to have the courage of your convictions to say, and therefore I'm going to shove the other stuff off of the boat. The other thing to remember is that experience comes with time, and it's really, really valuable, and there are no shortcuts to getting it. So, good judgement comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgement. So if things aren't going well, that probably means you're learning a lot, and it'll go better later. This is by the way why we pay so much in American society, for people who are typically older but have done lots of things in their past, because we're paying for their experience, because we know that experience is one of the things you can't fake. And do not lose sight of the power of inspiration. So Randy's in an hour long talk, and we've already got our first Disney reference. Walt Disney has many great quotes. The one I love is, if you can dream it, you can do it. And a lot of my cynical friends say yada, yada, yada, which I say, shut up. All right, inspiration is important. I'll tell you this much. If you, I don't know if it was right, but I'll tell you this much. If you refuse to allow yourself to dream it, I know you won't do it. So the power of dreams, are that they give us a way to take the first step towards an accomplishment.

And Walt was also not just a dreamer, Walt worked really hard. Disneyland, this amazes me cuz I know a little bit about how hard it is to theme park attractions together. And they did the whole original Disneyland park, in 366 days. That's from the first shovel full of dirt, to

the first paid admission. Think about how long it takes to do something, say a state university. By comparison. So, it's just fascinating. When someone once asked Walt Disney, how did you get it done in 366 days? He just dead panned, we used every one of them. So again, there are no short cuts, there's a lot of hard work in anything you want to accomplish. Planning is very important. One of the time management cliches is failing to plan is planning to fail. And planning has to be done at multiple levels. I have a plan every morning when I wake up, and I say what do I need to get done today? What do I need to get done this week? What do I need to get done each semester? That's sort of a time cuz I'm an academic, and that doesn't mean you are locked into it. People say yeah, but things are so fluid. I'm gonna have to change the plan, and I am like yes, you are gonna have to change the plan. But you can't change it unless you have it. And the excuse of I'm not gonna make a plan because things might change, is just this paralysis of I don't have any marching orders. So have a plan, acknowledge it, you're gonna change it but have it so that you have the basis to start with. To do lists. How many people here right now if I said can you produce it, could show me their to do list? Okay, not bad, not bad. The key thing with to-do-list, is you have to break things down into small steps. I literally wants in my to-do-list when I was a junior faculty member at the University of Virginia, I put get tenure. That was naive. And I looked at that for a while and I said, that's really hard. I don't think I can do that.

And my children, Dylan, and Logan, and Chloe, particularly Dylan, is at the age where he can clean his own damn room, thank you very much, but he doesn't like to. And Chris is smiling, cuz I used to do this story on him, but now I've got my own kids to pick on. But Dylan will come to me and say, I can't pick up my room, it's too much stuff. He's not even a teenager and he's already got that move. And I say well, can you make your bed? Yeah, I can do that. Okay, can you put all the clothes in the hamper? Yeah, I can do that. You do three or four things and then it's like well, Dylan, you just cleaned your room. I cleaned my room. And he feels good. He is empowered. And everybody's happy. And of course, I've had to spend twice as much time managing him as I could have done it by myself. But that's okay. That's what being a boss is about, is growing your people no matter how small or large they might be at the time. The last thing about to-do-lists or getting yourself going, is if you've got a bunch of things to do, do the ugliest thing first. There's an old saying, if you have to eat a frog, don't spend a lot of time looking at it first. And if you have to eat three of them, don't start with the small one. All right this is the most important slide in the entire talk. So if you wanna leave after this slide, I will not be offended cuz it's all downhill from here. And this is blatantly stolen, this is Stephen Covey's great contribution to the world, he talks about it in the Seven Habits book. Imagine your to do list, most people sort their to-do-list either, the order that I got it, throw it on the bottom, or they sort it in due date lists, which is more sophisticated and more helpful, but still very, very wrong. So looking at the four quadrant to-do list, if you've got a quadrant where things are important and due soon, important and not due soon, not important and due soon, and not important and not due soon. Which of these four quadrants do you think, upper left, upper right, lower left, lower right.

, which one do you think you should work on immediately? Upper left. Upper left. You are such a great crowd. And which one do you think you should probably do last? Lower right. Lower right. And that's easy. That's obviously number one. That's obviously number four.

But this is where everybody in my experience gets it wrong. What we do now is we say, I do the number ones and then I move on to the stuff that's due soon and not important. When you write it in this quadrant list, it's really stunning cuz I've actually seen people do this. And they say, okay, this is due soon, and I know it's not important, so I'm gonna get right to work on it. And the most crucial thing I can teach you about time management, is when you're done picking off the important and due soon, that's when you go here. You go to it's not due soon and it's important, and there will be a moment in your life where you say, hey this thing that's due soon but not important, I won't do it. Cuz it's not important, it says so right here on the chart. And magically, you have time to work on the thing that is not due soon but as important, so that next week, it never got a chance to get here. Because you killed it in the crib. My wife won't like that metaphor. But you kill the or you solve the problem of something that's due next week when you're not under time stress cuz it's not due tomorrow, and suddenly you become one of those Zen like people. And we just always seem to have all the time in the world, cuz they've figured this out. All right? Paperwork. The first thing you need to know, is that having cluttered paperwork leads to thrashing. You end up with all these things on your desk, and you can't find anything. And the moment you turn to your desk, your desk is saying to you, I own you. I have more things than you can do. And they are many colors, and laid out. So what I find, is that it's really crucial to keep your desk clear, and we'll talk about where all the paper goes in a second.

And you have one thing on your desk, because then it's like now it's Thunderdome, me and the one piece of paper, right? And so I usually win that one. One of the mantras of time management is touch each piece of paper once. You get the piece of paper, you look at it, you work at it, and I think that's extremely true for email. How many people here, well, I'm gonna take it for granted that everybody here has an email inbox. How many people right now have more than 20 items in their email inbox? . I am in the right room. Your inbox is not your to-do list, and my wife has learned that I need to get my inbox clear. Now sometimes this really means just filing this away, and putting something on my to-do list. But remember the to-do list is sorted by importance, but does anybody here have an email program where you can press the sort by importance button? It's amazing how people who build software that really it's a huge part of our life and getting work done haven't a clue. Now, that's not a slam on any particular company. I think they all have missed the boat and I just find it fascinating, because everybody I know, or most people I know, have this inbox that, all right, I gotta ask, how do you have more than 100 things in their email box? I'm just not gonna keep going, this is too depressing. So, you really wanna get the thing in your inbox, look at it and say, I'm either gonna read it right now, or I'm gonna file it and put an entry in my to-do list. And that's just a crucial thing, cuz otherwise every time you go to read your email you're just swamped, and it's just as bad as the cluttered paper. You're all trying to figure out how that heading goes with that picture. A filing system is absolutely essential, and I know this because I married the most wonderful woman in the world, but she's not a good filer. But she is now, because,- After we got married, and we moved in together, and we resolved all the other typical couple things, I said, we have to have a place where our papers go and it's in alphabetical order, and she said, that sounds a little compulsive.

And I said, okay, honey. So I went out to Ikea and I got this big nice, way too expensive, big wooden, fake mahogany thing, with big drawers. So, she liked it, cuz it looked kind of nice, and having a place in our house where any piece of paper went, and was in alphabetical order did wonderful things for our marriage, because there was never any of this, honey, where did you put, blah, blah, blah, right? And there was never being mad at somebody because they had put something in someone else's place. There was an expected place for it, and when you're looking for important receipts, or whatever it is, this is actually important, and we have found that this has been a wonderful thing for us. I think file systems among groups of people, whether it's a marriage, or an office, are crucial, but even if it's just you, having a place where you know you put something, really beats all hell out of running around for an hour, going, where is it? I know it's blue. And I was earing something when I read it. I mean, this is- This is not a filing system. This is madness. A lot of people ask me, so Randy, what does your desk look like? So, as my wife would say, this is how Randy's desk looks like when he's photographing it for a talk. The important thing is that I'm a computer geek, so I have the desk off to the right, and then I have the computer station off to the left. I like to have my desk in front of a window whenever I can do that. This is an old photograph. These have now been replaced by LCD monitors, but I left the old picture because the crucial thing is it doesn't matter if they're fancy high-tech, the key thing is screen space. Lots of people have studied this. How many people in this room have more than one monitor on their computer desktop? Okay, not bad. So we're getting there, it's starting to happen. What I've found is that I could go back from three to two, but I just can't go back to one.

There's just too many things, and as somebody said, it's the difference between working on a desk, like at home, and trying to get work done on the little tray on an airplane. In principle, the little tray on the airplane is big enough for everything you need to do. It's just that in practice, it's pretty small. So multiple monitors I think are very important, and I'll show you in a second what I have on each one of those. And I believe in this multiple monitor thing, we believed in it for a long time. That's my research group. Our laboratory a long time ago, at Carnegie Mellon. That's Caitlin Kelleher who's now Dr. Kelleher, thank you, and she's at Washington University in St. Louis, doing wonderful things. But we had everybody with three monitors, and the cost on this is absolutely trivial. If you figure the cost of adding a second monitor to an employee's yearly cost to the company, it's not even 1% anymore. So why would you not do it? So, one of my walkways for all of you is you should all go to your boss and say, I need a second monitor. I just can't work without it. Randy told me to tell you that. Cuz it will increase your productivity, and the computers can all drive two monitors, so why not? So what do I have on my three monitors? On the left is my to-do list. All sorts of stuff in there. We're all idiosyncratic, my system is that I just put a number zero through nine, and I use an editor that can quickly sort on that number in the first column, but the key thing is it's sorted by priority. In the middle is my mail program. Note the empty inbox. And I try very hard, I sleep better if I go to sleep with the inbox empty. When my inbox does creep up I get really testy. So my wife will actually say to me, I think you need to clear the inbox. On the third one is a calendar. That's a, this is from a couple of years ago, but that's kind of like what my days would be. I used to be very heavily

booked. And I don't care which software you use, I don't care which calendar you use, I don't care if it's paper or computer, whatever works for you.

But you should have some system whereby you know where you're supposed to be next Tuesday at 2 o'clock. Because even if you can live your life without that you're using up a lot of your brain to remember all that. And I don't know about you, but I don't have enough brain to spare, to use it on things I can have paper or computers do for me. So back to the overview. On the desk itself, let's zoom in a little bit. Look, I have the one, and one thing I'm working on at the time. I have a speakerphone. This is crucial. How many people here have a speakerphone on their desks? Okay, not bad, but a lot more people don't. Speakerphones are essentially free, and I spend a lot of time on hold, and that's because I live in American society, where I get to listen to messages of the form, your call is extremely important to us. Watch while my actions are cognitively dissonant from my words. It's like the worst abusive relationship in the world. I mean, imagine a guy picks you up on the first date and he smacks you in the mouth and says, I love you, honey, that's pretty much how modern customer service works on the telephone. But the great thing about a speakerphone is you hit the speakerphone, and you dial, and then you just do something else, and if it takes seven minutes, it takes seven minutes. And hey, I just look at this as someone's piping music into my office. That's very nice of them. I also found that having a timer on the phone is handy, so that when somebody finally picks up in Bangalore, I can- I can say things like, I'm so glad to be talking with you. By the way, if you're keeping records on this sort of thing, I've been on hold for seven and a half minutes. But you don't say it angry, you just say it as, I assume you're logging this kind of stuff, and you're not angry, so they don't get angry back at you, but they feel really guilty. And that's good, you want guilty, right? So speakerphone is really great.

I find the a speakerphone is probably the best material possession you can buy To counter stress. If I were teaching a yoga and meditation class, I'd say, we'll do all the yoga and meditation, I think that's wonderful stuff. But everybody also has to have a speakerphone. What else do we have besides a speakerphone? Let's talk about telephones for a second. I think that the telephone is a great time-waster, and I think it's very important to keep your business calls short. So I recommend standing during phone calls. Great for exercise. And if you tell yourself I'm not gonna sit down until the call is over, you'll be amazed how much brisker you are. Start by announcing goals for the call. Hello, Sue, this is Randy, I'm calling you cuz I have three things that I wanted to get done. Boom, boom, boom, cuz then you've given her an agenda. And when you're done with the three things, you can say that's great, those are the three things I had. It was great to talk to you. I don't have to talk to you again, bye, boom, we're off the phone. Whatever you do, do not put your feet up. I mean, if you put the feet up, it's just all over. And the other handy trick is have something on your desk that you actually are kind of interested in going to do next. So the phone call instead of being, wow, I can get off the phone and go do some work. Or I could keep chit chatting. And usually the person you've called, they'd like to chit chat too, right? So this is where the time waster in the office goes. And if you're a grad student well if you're a grad student, you already know about time wasting. So having something you really want to do next is a great way to get you off the phone quicker. So you gotta train yourself. Getting off the phone is

hard for a lot of people. I don't suffer from an abundance of politeness. So my sister, who's known me for a long time, is laughing a knowing laugh. So when I wanna get off the phone, I wanna get off the phone.

I'm done, and what I say is, I'd love to keep talking with you, but I have some students waiting. Now I'm a professor, somewhere there must be students waiting. Right? I mean, it's gotta be, sometimes you get in a situation like with a telemarketer. Right, and that's awkward, because a lot of people are so polite. I have no trouble with telemarketers. I'll just go there with them. If you are a telemarketer and you call my house, you have made a mistake. Right, yeah, I can't talk right now, but why don't you give me your home phone number and I will call you back around dinner time. Seinfeld did a great bit on that. Or if you wanna be a little bit more over the line, I'd love to talk with you about that, but first I have some things I'd like to sell you. And the funny part is they never realize you're yanking with them That's. But if you have to hang up on a telemarketer, what you do is you hang up while you're talking. Well, I think that's really interesting and I would love to keep you know, I mean talk about self effacing, hanging up on yourself. And they won't figure it out and if they do and they call back, just don't answer right. So ten years from now, all anybody will remember from this talk is hang up on yourself. The other thing is group your phone calls. Call people right before lunch or right before the end of the day, because then they have something they would rather do than keep chitty-chatting with you. So I find that calling someone at 11:50 is a great way to have a ten minute phone call. Because frankly, you may think you are interesting, but you are not more interesting than lunch. I have become very obsessive about phones and using time productively. So I just think that everybody should have something like this. I don't care about fashion. So I don't have Bluetooth, and I have this big ugly thing. Hi, I'm Julie from Time Life, right. But the thing this allows me to do, because you know I am sort of living a limit case right now.

I got to get stuff done and I really don't have a lot of time. So, I get an hour a day where I exercise on my bike. And this is me on my bike. And if you look carefully, you can see I'm wearing that headset, I've got my cellphone. And for an hour a day, I ride my bike around the neighborhood. This is time that I'm spending on the phone getting work done, and it's not a moment being taken away from my wife or my children. And it turns out that I can talk and ride a bike at the same time. Amazing the skill sets I have. So it works better in cold weather climates, in warm weather climates. I have just found that having a headset frees me up, even if it's just around the house. You wear a headset, you can fold laundry. It's an absolute twofer. I just think telephones should have headsets. And some day we will all have the Borg implant and it will be a nonissue. What else is on my desk? I have sort of one of those address stampers, cuz I got tired of writing my address. I have a box of Kleenex. And your box at work, if you're a faculty member. You have to have a box of Kleenex. Jim is laughing, right. You know, at least if you teach the way I do, There will be crying students in your office. And what I found to diffuse a lot of that is that I would have CS352 or whatever written on the side of the Kleenex box. And I would turn it as I handed it to them. And they would take the Kleenex and they would be like, I said, yeah, it's for the class. You're not alone. So having Kleenex is very important. And thank you cards. I'll now ask the embarrassment question. And I don't mean to pick on you, but it just points things out so

well. By show of hands, who here has written a thank you note that is not a quid pro quo. I don't mean, you gave me a gift, I wrote you a thank you note. And I mean a physical thank you note with a pen and ink and paper, not email. Cuz email's better than nothing, but it's that much better than nothing. Okay? How many people here have written a thank you note in the last week? Not bad, I do better here than at most places, cuz it is UVA.

Chivalry is not dead, but that's not. How many people in the last month? How many people in the last year? The fact that there are non trivial number of hands not up for the year, means that anybody who's in this audience has parents are going, ooh, that was my kid. Thank you notes are really important. They're a very tangible way to tell someone how much you appreciated things. I have thank you notes with me and that's cuz I'm actually writing some later today to some people who've done some nice things for me recently. And you say, well god, you have time for that? I'm like, yes, I have time for that, cuz it's important. Even in my current status, I will make time to write thank you notes to people. And even if you're a crafty, weaselly bastard, you should still write thank you notes. Because it makes you so rare, that when someone gets a thank you note, they will remember you. Right, it seems like the only place that thank you notes are really taken seriously anymore is when people are interviewing for jobs. They now sometimes write thank you notes to the recruiters. Which I guess shows a sign of desperation on the part of the recent graduates. But thank you notes are a wonderful thing. And I would encourage all of you to go out and buy a stack at your local dime store, and have them on your desk. So that when the moment seizes you, it's right there. And I leave my thank-you notes out on the desk, readily accessible. And as I've said before, gratitude is something that can go beyond cards. When I got tenure here, I took my whole research team down to Disney World on my nickel for a week. And I believe in large gestures, but it's also a lot of fun. I wanted to go too, right? I didn't send them without proper chaperoning after all. What else? I have a paper recycling bin. And this is very good, because it helps save the planet, but it also helps save my butt. So when I have a piece of paper that I would be throwing away, I put it in that bin, and that takes, I don't know, a couple of weeks to get filled up and then actually sent somewhere else.

And so what I've really done here is I've created sort of the Windows Macintosh trash can, you can pull stuff back out of, it works in the real world too. And about once a month, I go ferreting through there to find the receipt that I didn't think I'd ever need again, that I suddenly need. And it's extremely handy. I suspect that if I were giving this talk in ten years, I would say I just put it in the auto scanner. Right, because I find it almost inconceivable that ten years from now, first off that a lot of the stuff would be paper in my hands anyway. But if it were paper, that I would have any notion of doing anything other than putting it on the desk where it goes . And it's already scanned, cuz it touched the desk, right? This kind of stuff is not really hard to do, so I think that's what's gonna happen. And of course I have a phone book. Notepad, I can't live without Post-it Notes, right? I mean, And the view out the window of the dog. Cuz the dog reminds me that I should be out playing with him. When we got married, I married into a family, I got a wife and two beautiful dogs. There's the other one. Could you help me with a debate I've had with my wife? By show of hands, how many people would semantically say the dog is on the couch? Nobody, thank you, thank you. Cuz

the dog was not allowed on the couch. And my wife came in one day. And anyway, thank you for agreeing with me. It makes me feel very good. So the dog is wonderful. The dogs have long gone on, but they are still in our hearts and our memories, and I think of them every day. And they're still a part of my life. I've presented to you how I do my office, how I do things, it's not the only way. One of the best assistants I've ever met was a woman named Tina Cobb, and she has a really different system, she's a spreader. Right, if you think about it, there's a method to her madness.

Everything here is exactly one arm's radius from where she sits, it's like a two-armed octopus. And she got so much stuff done, and I never presume to tell somebody else how to change their system if their system is working. Tina was much more efficient than I was, so I would just say look, do what works for you. And everybody has to find a system for themselves. But you've really got to think about what makes me more efficient. Now let's talk about office logistics. In most office settings, people come into each other's offices and proceed to suck the life out of each other. If you have a big cushy chair in your office, you might as well just slather butter all over yourself and send yourself naked into the woods for the wild animals to attack you. I say, make your office comfortable for you and optionally comfortable for others. So no comfy chairs. I used to have folding chairs in my office folded up against the wall. So people wanna come into me and talk with me, they can stand. And I would stand up, because then the meeting's gonna be really fast, cuz we wanna sit down. But then if it looks like it's something that we should have a little bit more time on, I very graciously go over and open the folding chair, I'm such a gentleman. Some people do a different tack on this, they have the chair already there. But they cut two inches off the front leg, so the whole time you're in their office, you're sort of scooting yourself up. I'm not advocating that, but I thought it was damn clever the first time I saw it. Scheduling yourself. Verbs are important, you do not find time for important things, you make it. And you make time by electing not to do something else. There's a term from economics that everybody should hold near and dear to their heart, and that term is opportunity cost. The bad thing about doing something that isn't very valuable is not isn't a bad thing to have done it. The problem is that once you spend an hour doing it, that's an hour you can never again spend in any other way, and that's important.

Now, how do you keep these unimportant things from sucking into your life? You learn to say no. It's great, my youngest child Chloe is at an age where this is her new word, about two weeks ago she learned it. And it's like now everything's no, no, no, no, no, no, no! She should be giving this talk. Right, and I asked her and she said, no! So she's home playing, all right? But we all hate to say no, because people ask us for help and we wanna be gracious. So let me teach you some gentle noes. The first one is, I'm really strapped, but I wanna help you, I don't want you to be in the bind. So if nobody else steps forward, I will do this for you, all right? Or I'll be your deep fall back, but you have to keep searching for somebody else. Now you will find out about the person's character at that moment. Because if they say great, I've got my sucker, and they stop looking, then they have abused the relationship. But if they say that's great, my stress level is down at zero, because now I know it's not gonna be a disaster. But I'm gonna keep looking for someone for whom it's less of an imposition. That's a person that will get lots of this sort of support, okay? When I was in graduate

school, we did a moving party with four people, a lot of moving parties, carry heavy objects. We had 4 people, we should've had 12, it was a long day. And after that, I adopted a new policy. I said from now on, when somebody says, will you help me move? I'll say, how much stuff you got? And they would tell me, and I'd say hm, that sounds like about eight people. If you give me the names of seven other people that'll be there, I'll be there. And I never again was at a moving party that went for 14 hours in January in Pittsburgh. Everybody has good and bad times. A big thing about time management is, find your creative time and defend it ruthlessly. Spend it alone, maybe at home if you have to, but defend it ruthlessly.

The other thing is, find your dead time, schedule meetings, phone calls, exercise, mundane stuff. But do stuff during that where you don't need to be at your best. And we all have these times, and the times are not at all intuitive. I discovered that my most productive time was between 10 PM and midnight, which is really weird. But for me it's just this burst of energy right before the end. Let's talk about interruptions. An interruption, there are people who measure this kind of stuff, who have stopwatches and clipboards. And what they say is that an interruption takes typically six to nine minutes. But then there's a four to five minute recovery to get your head back into to what you're doing. And if you do something like software creation, you may never get your head back there, the cost can be infinity. But if you do the math on that, five interruptions blows a whole hour. So you've got to find ways to reduce both the frequency and the length of these interruptions. One of my favorites is turning phone calls into email. If you phone my office at Carnegie Mellon, it says hi, this is Randy, please send me email. Again, I presume everybody here has email. How many people here when that new message comes in, does your computer go ding or make some other noise? Do we still have people doing that? What the heck is wrong with you people? And I love the fact that computer scientists just know nothing about anything. So for years by default, all these packages out of the box would go ding every time you get a new piece of email. So we had taken a technology explicitly designed to reduce interruption, and we'd turn them onto interruptions. So you've just gotta turn that off. The whole point of email is you go to it when you're ready, not you're sitting around like Pavlov's dog saying, maybe I'll get another email. In the same way, you try to not interrupt other people. I save stuff up, so I have boxes for Tina or for my research group meeting.

And I put stuff in those boxes, and then once a week or however often, when the box gets full, I walk down the hall and I interrupt that person one time and I say here are the eight things I have for you. How do you cut things short? Cuz people will always wanna spend more time then you wanna spend. Well, you can say look, somebody interrupts you and says, got a few minutes? And say well, I'm in the middle of something right now. And that tells them I'm interrupting it, I'm gonna do it quickly, but I've gotta get back to that. Or you can say, I only have five minutes. The great thing about that is that later you have the privilege of extending that if you so choose. But when the five minutes are up, you say well, I said at the beginning I only had five minutes, and I really have to go now. So it's a very socially polite way to bound the amount of time on the interaction. If somebody's in your office and they don't get it, now I'm not saying that as a computer scientist I have an inordinate amount of opportunity to interact with people with no social skills. But if you have someone in your office who is just not getting it. What you do is you stand up, you

walk to the door, you compliment them. For some reason this is a crucial part of the process. You thank them and you shake their hand. And if they still don't leave, which is pretty much a guarantee that you're dealing with someone from my tribe. Then you're in the doorway, you just keep going. What I have found is the people don't like it when you look at your watch while you're talking with them. So what I do is I put a wall on the clock right behind them, so it's just off axis from their eyes and I can just kinda glance over a little bit when I need to see what time it is. It's a very nice way to get me information without being rude to them. Time journals, time is the commodity, you better find out where your time is going. So monitor yourself and update it throughout the day. You can't wait till the end of the day and say what was I doing at 10:30? Cuz our memories aren't that good.

So what you do and I really hope that technology within another five years or so will be so good that the time journals can be created automatically, or at least some facsimile of it. But until then, what we do is we monitor it ourselves. So this is what an empty time journal would look like. The details aren't important, but the key thing is that when you fill it in you've got a bunch of categories, and what I was doing. And you can do this very informally, but you get a lot of real data about where your time went. And it's always very different. Anybody who's done monetary budgeting, you look at it and you go wow, I didn't know I was spending that much on dry cleaning, or restaurants. It's always a fascinating surprise. And you always spend more than you think. But with time budgets, you find out that the time is just going wildly differently than you would have imagined. The best example of this I know is Turing Award winner Fred Brooke's time clocks. He's a brilliant computer scientist but he also has this great array of clocks in his office. And when you go in and talk to him, he says is this meeting about research or teaching or whatever? And then he flips the appropriate switch and at the end of the week he knows exactly where his time went. The man is a genius. When I meet with students, and this is I think just as appropriate for people in the work place, I say what's your schedule? You have a set of fixed meetings every time, every week, and what you have to do is you have to look at those and identify the open blocks where you're going to waste time. And I can tell you're gonna waste time just by looking at. So in this case, you got a class at a certain point and then you've got a gap until the next class. So I've identified those here. And the gaps between classes that, in this case, last an hour or an hour and a half, this is just prime time to be wasted. So what I always taught my students was, make up a fake class.

The fake class is go to one specific place in the library during that hour. And when you're sitting there with just you in the library and your books there's a pretty good chance you might actually study. So don't go and hang out with friends for an hour, just make that a fake class. Make your own little study hall. It's a simple trick but it's amazing how effective it is when somebody just explicitly does it. When you got your time journal data, what do you figure out from that? What am I doing doesn't need to be done? What can someone else do? I love every day sort of saying, what am I doing that I could delegate to somebody else? My sister is again laughing because she knows who that person was in our youth. What can I do more efficiently? And how am I wasting other people's time? When you get good at time management you realize that it's a collaborative thing. I want to make everybody more efficient. It's not a selfish thing. It's not me against you. It's how do we all collectively get

more done? As you push on the time journal stuff you start to find that you don't make yourself more efficient at work so that you can become some sort of uber worker person. You become more efficient at work so that you can leave at five and go home and be with the people that you love. People call this work life balance. For the junior faculty, you may have heard of it. In some sort of mythical sense, but it is possible. I found that I worked less, I worked fewer hours after I got married, and I got more done. And I was always fascinated, in graduate school, that the people who graduated fastest with their PhDs were the people who had a spouse and kids. And I said, how can that be, that's like a built-in boat anchor, all right? You've got all these other demands on your time. And I'm a single guy, and I've got all the time in the world. And that's the problem, I approach it like I've got all the time in the world, so my time isn't precious.

When you got a spouse and little kids, your spouse is likely to say things to you like, you better not be at that grad school more than 40 hours a week. So when you come in, you're not sitting around playing computer games, not that I ever did that. But when you come in, you're coming in and you're doing work. And I found like most people that once I got married and had kids, my whole view of time management really got, I mean, we were playing for real stakes now. Because now there are people whose lives are impacted if I'm spending too much time at work. The other thing about time management, it makes you really start to look through a crystalline lens and figure out what's important and what's not. I love this picture. I've blanked out her name, but this says, bla, bla, bla. This is a pregnant woman and it says she is worrying about the effect on her unborn child from the sound of jack hammers. So they're doing construction and the people here are laughing because they can see that this woman who is so concerned about the jack hammers affecting her unborn child is holding a lit cigarette. You gotta get really good at saying, I gotta focus my time and energy on the things that matter, and not worry about the things that don't. Now I'm not a medical doctor and I don't play one on TV. But I'm willing to bet that if I were the fetus, I'd be saying put the cigarette out mom, I can deal with the noise! All righty, so I wanna tell you a little story about effective versus efficient. I actually was gonna give this talk a couple of weeks ago, and I talked with Gabe about it. And we were gonna come up here cuz as a surprise to my wife, her favorite musical group in the whole world is The Police and has been for a long, long time. They're a wonderful group. And, so we said, hey we're gonna drive up to Charlottesville and see them. We managed to get some tickets. And I said, well honey as long as we're up there I promised Gabe a long time ago that I wanted to give my time management talk.

She said okay, because it's about a three hour drive. So it's very efficient to couple these two trips together. And about two days later she said, you know honey, I know how you are with talks, and before you give one for a couple of days you start to obsess. And as we talked through it, she said so we're gonna go up and this couples time away, we'd gotten a sitter to watch the kids. And this couples time away is gonna be eaten up by you obsessing over preparing this talk. And I thought about it and I said, okay. So obviously the right solution is we should keep our couples time our couples time. We'll go up we'll see the concert, we'll have our time together, and I'll just schedule a different day, and I'll go up on a one-day trip, and I'll do the talk. And she said, wow, that was easy. Right, once you frame

it in the right way, and you say, yeah, the cost here is that I have to do the drive a second time. But it turns out I'm doing the drive with my nephew Christopher, and we talk, and my mom always turns up. So the time wasn't even dead time, so there was no loss at all. But the key thing was, we said it's not about efficiency, it's about effectiveness and best overall outcome. And of course, one of the nice things was that we did get to go to the Police concert and I really wanna thank Gabe and Jimila, because we really went to the concert. And my wife was very happy. I'm the guy in the back saying, she's not paying any attention to me today. But it was wonderful and he is a charming gentlemen in person. He is absolutely charming. So let's talk about procrastination. There's an old saying, procrastination is the thief of time. Procrastination is hard and I have a little bit of an insight here for you. We don't usually procrastinate because we're lazy. Sometimes people rationalize their procrastination. They say, well gee, if I wait long enough maybe I won't have to do it. That's true. Sometimes you get lucky. But, and other people say, gee if I start on it now I'm just gonna spend all the time on it.

If I only give myself the last two days, I'll do it in two days, because that's the work expands to fill the time available. Parkinson's Law. That's marginally true, but I think the key balance here is to understand that doing things at the last minute, is really expensive. And it's just much more expensive than doing it just before the last minute. So if you're doing something and you can still mail it through the US mail, you have suddenly avoided the my God, I've gotta do the whole FedEx thing. I love FedEx. FedEx supports our whole universal habit of procrastination. But it also allows us to get stuff there, when it has to be there in a hurry. So that's a wonderful thing. But I think you have to realize that if you push things up the the deadline, that's where all the stress comes from. Because now you can't reach people. If somebody is out of the office for just one day, your whole plan is upset. So you really have to work hard on this kind of stuff. The other thing is that deadlines are really important. We are all essentially deadline driven. So if you have something that isn't due for a long time, make up a fake deadline and act like it's real. And that's wonderful, because those are the deadlines, when push comes to shove. You can slip them by a couple of days and it's all right. So they're less stressful. If you are procrastinating, you've gotta find some way to get back into your comfort zone. Identify why you're not enthusiastic. Whenever I procrastinate on something, there's always a deep psychological reason. Usually, it's I'm afraid of being embarrassed cuz I don't think I'll do it well, or I'm afraid I'm gonna fail at it. And sometimes, it involves asking somebody for something. And one of the most magical things I've learned in my life, is that sometimes you just have to ask and wonderful things happen. But you just have to step out and do that. I won the parent lottery. I have just wonderful parents.

And my dad unfortunately passed away not too long ago. But this is one of my favorite photographs, because my dad was such a smart guy. I could almost never surprise him or impress him, because he was just that good. But we were down on a family vacation at Disney World, and the monorails were going by and we're gonna board the monorail. And we noticed that in the front, up here in the cabin, I don't know if you can see it in this picture, but there is an engineer who drives the monorail, and there were actually guests up there with him, which is kind of unusual. My dad and I were talking about that and I knew cuz, I've done some consulting for Disney. My dad saying they probably have to be special

VIPs or something like that. Is aid there is a trick. There is a special way you get into that cabin, and he said really, what is it? I said I'll show you. Dylan, come with me, and Dylan who's at the back of his head you can see there. We woke up and I whispered to Dylan. Ask the man if we could ride in the front. And we got to the attendant and the attendant says, why yes you can and he opens the gate and my dad's just like. I said I told you there was a trick, I didn't say it was hard. And sometimes, all you have to do is ask and it's that easy. Let's talk about delegation. Nobody operates individually anymore, and you can accomplish a lot more when you have help. However, most people delegate very poorly. They treat delegation as dumping. I don't have time to do this, you take care of it. And then they micromanage, and it's just a disaster. The first thing if you're going to delegate something to a subordinate, is you grant them authority with responsibility. You don't tell somebody go take care of this, but if you need to spend any money, you've got to come back to me for approval, that's not empowering them, that's telling them you don't trust them. If I trust you enough to do the work, I trust you enough to give you the resources, and the time, and the budget, and whatever else you need to get it done.

You get the whole package. The other thing is delegate, but always do the ugliest job yourself. So if we need to vacuum the lab before a demo, I bring in the vacuum cleaner and I vacuum it. Do the dirtiest job yourself. So it's very clear that you're willing to still get the dirt on your hands. Treat your people well, people are the greatest resource and if you are fortunate enough to have people who report to you, treat them with dignity, respect, and to sound a little bit corny, the kind of love that they should have from someone who cares about them in their professional development. And for crying out loud, staff and secretaries are your lifeline. If you don't think you should treat them well because it's the decent thing to do, at least treat them well because if you don't, they will get you. All right. And they will get you good, and you will deserve it, and I will applaud them. Am I giving a talk on time management with Alf Weaver in the audience? Where is Alf? There he is. That's like talking about surviving the Jonestown flood if Noah's in the audience. One of the things that Alf Weaver taught me, is whether it's to a colleague or to a subordinate. If you want to get something done, you cannot be vague, he said. You give somebody a specific thing to do, a specific date and time. Thursday is not a specific time. Thursday at 3:22 gets somebody's attention. And you give them a specific penalty or reward, that will happen if that deadline or that thing is not met. And then he paused and he said, and remember the penalty or reward has to be for them. Not you. All right, I will be screwed over if you don't meet that deadline. Bummer. This is an important point to not get wrong. Challenge people. I've been told that one of the tricks is you delegate until they complain. I complain. But what I found is that under delegation is a problem. People are usually yearning for the opportunity to do more.

They wanna be challenged, they wanna prove to you and themselves they can be more capable, so let them. Communication has to be clear. So many times, people get upset with their bosses, because there's a misunderstanding. And particularly in the time of email, it's so easy to communicate the email and if you got a face to face conversation, send a two line email just to be specific after works. And it's not like we are gonna be a lawyer like, it's just there as Judge Weiner said, get it writing if you remember the people's court. And Judge

Weiner said, if there isn't a problem it's not a problem, it didn't take a much time. But if there is a problem, well wait a second, there won't be a problem because there's a written record. And that's the magic. There won't be a confusion, because you can't disagree about the written word. Don't give people how you want them do it. Tell them what you want them to do. Give them objectives, not procedures. Let them surprise you with a way of solving a problem, you would never have imagined. Sometimes, the solutions are mind blowing good or bad. But they're really much more fun than just having them do it the way you would have done it. And you know what if you're in university, your job should be to have people smarter than you, i.e your students. And they will come up with stuff you would never of thought. The other thing is, tell people the relative importance of each task. I meet so many people who say, my boss is an ogre, they gave me five things to do. I'm like, well, did they tell you which one is the most important? Yeah, I guess I could ask that. Knowing that if you have five things, which are the ones to get done, is really important. Cuz if you're flying blind, you got a 20% chance of getting them done in the right order. And delegation can never be done too young. Does everyone see the difference in the two pictures? This is my daughter Chloe, I love her to death. But I want her to grow up to be a wonderful person. And I knew, the sooner she holds her own bottle, the better.

Sociology, be aware upward delegation. Sometimes you try to delegate and people try to hand it back to you. One of the best things I ever saw was someone who had a secretary trying to say, I can't do this, you'll have to take it back. And he just put his hands behind his back, and took a step backwards. And then he waited. And then eventually, the secretary said, or maybe I could find this other solution, and he said, that's wonderful. I'm so proud you thought of that. It was an elegant gesture. Reinforced behavior we wont be repeated. One of my favorite stories in the One Minute Manager is, he talks about did you ever wonder how they got the killer whales to jump through the hoop? If they did it like modern American office managers, they would yell at the killer whale, jump through the hoop. And every time the killer whale didn't jump through the hoop, they'd hit it with a stick. . I mean, this is how we train people in the office place. Read the book if you want to see how they actually do it, because I'm curious. I know now, but it's really cool how they do get them to do it. So reinforce behavior you want repeated, when people do things that you like, praise them and thank them. That's worth more than any amount of monetary reward or a little plaque. People really like to just be told straight up, thank you, I really appreciate that you did a good job. The other thing is that if you don't want things delegated back up to you, don't learn how to do them. I take great pride, I don't know how to run photocopiers and fax machines and I ain't gonna learn. That's certainly not how I'm gonna spend my remaining time. Meetings, the average executive spends more than 40% of his or her time in a meeting. My advice is when you have a meeting, lock the door, unplug the phone, and take everybody's Blackberries. Because if it's worth our time, it's worth our time. If it's not worth our time, it's not worth our time. I don't have any interest in being in a room with six people who are all half there, because that's very inefficient.

I don't think meetings should ever last more than an hour, with very rare exception. And I think that there should be an agenda. I got into a great habit a couple of years ago when I just started saying if no agenda, I won't attend. And the great thing about that is, whoever

called the meeting had to actually think before they showed up about why we were supposed to be there. Because otherwise, well, why are we here? Because we had a meeting, it's on all of our calendars. It's just a classic Dilbert moment. So, most important thing about meetings, and again this comes from the one minute manager. One minute minutes. At the end of a meeting, somebody has to have been assigned the scribe, and they write down in one minute or less what decisions got made, and who is responsible for what by when. Then email it out to everybody. Because if you don't do that, you have your next weekly meeting next week and you all sit around going, now who was going to do this? It's very inefficient. And it's so fast to just do these one minute minutes. Let's talk about technology. I'm a computer scientist, I would say which gadget will make me more time efficient? And I don't have any answer for that, it's all idiosyncratic. But I will tell you that my favorite comment about technology comes from a janitor at the University of Central Florida who said, computers are faster they just take longer. . That's zen right there. . So that's another way of saying, only use technology that's worth it. And worth it is, end to end, did it make me more efficient? And that depends on how you work and we are all different. And remember that technology is getting insane. I walked into McDonald's and I ordered, you know a happy meal number two and they said, would you like a cell phone with that? . I went to the grocery store to buy 16 slices of American cheese, and you get Grollier's encyclopedia.

So with 16 slices of cheese you get all of man's knowledge for free. . That's just spooky scary. And remember the technology really has to be something that makes your life better. You guys may have seen this, I just find it very humorous. . . . So only use technology that helps you. I find that technology is good if it allows you to do things in a new way. Just doing the same things a little bit faster with technology is nice. But when technology changes the workflow. So, I was carving pumpkins few years ago. And this is FM, a good friend of mine. And I don't know if you can see it, but down by her right knee is a pattern. And you lay this pattern over the pumpkin. And you get this little special carving knife. And you can, instead of these amateurish pumpkins- Like I made, you get this sort of howling at the moon. And her husband, Jeff, and I thought this was really cool. But it incited a reactionary, Burning Man kind of a moment. We grabbed our power drills. . And we carved our pumpkins that way. Use technology if it changes the way you do things because, believe me, the results of a power drill you get these little, it's just gorgeous. Let's talk briefly about email because email is such a large part of all our lives. First off, don't ever delete any of it. Save all of it. I started doing this ten years ago. And the interesting this is, that all the historians talk about, it's such a shame we don't have people keeping diaries. We don't know what their day is like. I'm like, you fools. We have just entered a society circa about ten years ago, and I'm a living example of it, every piece of my correspondence is not only saved, it's searchable. So if I were a person of merit, a historian, which is a big stretch. A historian could actually look at my patterns of communication much better than the most compulsive diary writer. Now we can talk about, whether or not, I'm being introspective, that's about content. But in terms of quantity, it's great. And of course, you can save your email and you can search it.

And it's just wonderful, because you can pull back stuff from five years ago. So never delete your email. Here's a big email trick. If you wanna get something done, do not send the email

to five people. Hey, could somebody take care of this? Every one of those five recipients is thinking one and only one thing. I deleted it first. All right? So the other four people will take care of this, I don't have to. So you send it to one and only one person. But if you really want it to be done, send it to somebody who can do it. Tell them, what again? Alph Weaver, specific thing, specific time. And then the penalty can be more subtle, you just CC their boss. All right? And the other thing, I had this conversation with every student in my entire career, cuz they send email, and then they just wait for the person to respond. And I say, if the person has not responded within 48 hours, it's okay to nag them. And the reason it's okay to nag them, because if they haven't responded within 48 hours the chance that they are ever going to respond, is zero. I mean maybe not zero, maybe that small. But in my experience if people don't respond to you within 48 hours you'll probably never hear from them. So just start nagging them. . Let's talk about the care and feeding of bosses. There's a phrase managing from beneath. Cuz we all know that all bosses are idiots. That's certainly the expression, the the business sense I've gotten from everybody who has a boss. When you have a boss write things down, do that clear communication thing. Ask them, when is our next meeting? What do you want me to have done by then? So you got sort of a contract. Who can I turn to for help, besides you? Cuz I don't wanna bother you. And remember, your boss wants a result not an excuse. General advice on vacations, phone callers should get two options. When you are on vacation, the first option is, contact John Smith not me. I'm out of the office, but this person can help you in the office if it's urgent, or call back when I'm back.

Why? Because you don't wanna come back to a long sequence of phone messages saying, hey Randy, can you help me take care of this? And you calling back and you've been on vacation for week, they already solved it. And the other thing is, it's not a vacation if you're reading email. Trust me on that. It's not a vacation if you're reading email. I can stay in my house all weekend and not read email, and it's a vacation. But if I go to Hawaii and I've got a Blackberry, I'm not on vacation. And I know this, when my wife and I got married we left our reception in a hot air balloon, which did not have wireless on it. And Dean Jim Morris at the time, we took a month long honeymoon, which was great, but not really long enough And Jim Morris said, and I said I'm not going to be reachable for a month and Jim said that's not acceptable. And I said what do you mean that's not acceptable? He said well I pay you. So that's the not acceptable part. And I said okay, so there has to be a way to reach me, and he said yes. I said okay, so if you call my office there would be a phone answering machine message that said, hi this is Randy I'm on vacation. I waited until 39 to get married and so we're going for a month. And I hope you don't have a problem with that. But apparently my boss does. So he says I have to be reachable. So here's how you can reach me. My wife's parents live in blah, blah town, here's their names. If you call directory assistance, you can get their number. And then if you can convince my new in laws that your emergency merits interrupting their only daughter's honeymoon they have our number. Here's some of the most important advice, we close with some of the best stuff. Kill your television, people who study to say the average American watches 28 hours of television a week. That's almost three quarters of a full time job. So if you really wanna get time back in your life, you don't have to kill your television, but just unplug it, put it in the closet and put a blanket over it.

See how long it takes you to get the shakes. Turn money into time, especially junior faculty members or other people who have young children. This is the time to throw money at the problem. Hire somebody else to mow your lawn, do whatever you need to do, but exchange money for time at every opportunity when you have very young children because you just don't have enough time. It's just too hard. And the other thing is eat and sleep and exercise. Above all else, you always have time to sleep because if you get sleep deprived, everything falls apart. Other general advice, never break a promise but renegotiate them if need be. If you said I'll have this done by Tuesday at noon, you can call the person on Friday and say I'm still good to my word, but I'm really jacked up. And I'm gonna have to stay and work over the weekend to meet that Tuesday deadline. Is there any way there's any slack on that? And a lot of times they'll say Thursday's fine, cuz I really need it Thursday but I told you Tuesday. Or they'll say it's no problem, I can have Jim do that instead of you. He has some free time. Now if they say no, there's no wiggle room here, you say that's okay, no problem, I'm still good at my word, all right. If you haven't got time to do it right, you don't have time to do it wrong, that's self-evident. Recognize that most things are pass-fail. People spend way too much time, there's a reason we have the expression, good enough. It's because the thing is good enough. And the last thing is, get feedback solutions. Ask people in confidence. Because if someone will tell you what you're doing right or doing wrong and they'll tell you the truth, that's worth more than anything else in the whole world. I recommend these two books. Time management is not a late breaking field. Both these books are old books but I recommend them highly.

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