



Choosing Between Memories, Dreams and the Present Moment

By Seth David Chernoff

The issue of time management and prioritizing is everywhere. There is an endless stream of tools out there to help us, but it is not a tool that we need, it is a focus on our priorities, on those aspects of our life that matter the most. The question of most importance, right now, is what equals MORE? Does more mean having a “to do” list three columns long that gets accomplished at the expense of truly living and participating in our lives? Does it mean having more things and riches? More importantly, can we every really “manage” time at all? And WHAT do we sacrifice at the expense of the choices we make?

Each day, as we ponder our goals, we must begin with the priceless nature of the moment, the unpredictable expiration of our physical life, and a sense of urgency to that which truly matters. Above and beyond our task list, we must focus on our love, our joy, and our reason for being – to consciously understand a sense of service in the context of a magnificent life. We are so much more than our task list – so much more than what we accomplish in any given moment.

Facing death myself, as many of you probably have experienced personally or through the loss of a loved one, we are constantly reminded of the limited time we have available to experience and share love and joy in this amazing life. There is only one time to focus our priorities, and there is only one time to be there for those we love the most – and that time is NOW. There is nothing we can do about tomorrow, nor is there any sense feeling remorse for yesterday – this moment is the only one that matters, the only one we can impact and control.

As time progresses, in our conscious awareness and in only one direction – from birth to death, it can feel like a river rushing past us – some days the rapids appearing vibrant, powerful, overwhelming and almost dangerous. But even a roaring river can soothe us, with a meditating sound that can even caress us to sleep. Irrespective of the ways in which we perceive our reality, we have only this moment to live, to love, and to be. Let us embrace this stream of shared life experiences filled with enormous appreciation and awareness. Let us carefully choose where each moment will be spent.

There are some truly rich rewards that come from having gone through an illness like cancer, and I'm certain that they won't be surprising to anyone reading this. Why? Because within our core, we all know what the truly valuable things in life aren't things – they are the people, the memories, the magnificence of the present moment, and our ability to share and connect in love and friendship.

So often, however, we literally spend a lifetime focused on reaching our career and financial goals – or “providing” for those we love (often at the expense of our relationships themselves). We spend our lives LIVING for tomorrow, but missing the abundance of today.

Sometimes even reaching the goals we *think* we desire leaves us with huge voids in our lives, because at some point we awaken to the fact that money can never fulfill our purpose for being, our *Raison D'être*. This is one of the great enigmas of life – success and wealth do not define us, no matter what our limited perceptions may be. Success and wealth must, in fact, be *personally* defined in order to have any value. And in order to define those two ideas (yes, they are *ideas*), we must first define what is most important.

When did we decide that money was so much more important than happiness or that a big house somehow replaced our core need for love, friendship, and companionship? If we were to take the bold idea that our happiness and success are somehow separate from our financial position, how are we to experience the things and activities we truly desire? We have to put the tenets of happiness, love, inspiration and even FUN at the top of our list. Remember, it is not the expense of our adventure but the quality of our **connection and love** that makes all the difference.

I'm not saying to disregard all financial goals here, or to relinquish the dream of sipping cappuccinos in a corner café of San Gimignano, Italy (been there, done that, trust me – IT'S WORTH IT!). What I AM saying is that we must get our priorities in order, and if we are going to sacrifice time with those we love, it has to be for a worthy ideal, far more than the hoarding money for a future expenditure. We can be happy, we can be inspired, we can be of service, and we can be handsomely rewarded in the process.

This is the message for today – remember that life is short so choose carefully. Managing our “to-do” list is only part of the journey. We need to follow our truth, focus on what truly matters, and NEVER sacrifice your truth or your happiness. Dive into life, and embrace the beautiful moments passing by right before your eyes for that is where our oasis blooms, and our heart and soul embrace the true magnificence of life.

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