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This podcast was recorded at the 2009 Text and Academic Authors Association (TAA) Conference in San Antonio, Texas. TAA is the only nonprofit membership association dedicated solely to assisting textbook and academic authors. TAA's overall mission is to enhance the quality of textbooks and other academic materials, such as journal articles, monographs and scholarly books, in all fields and disciplines, by providing its textbook and academic author members with educational and networking opportunities. For more information about TAA, visit <http://www.TAAonline.net>

ROBISON: So, let me reintroduce myself. I'm one of the sponsors of the conference. I'm Susan Robison and I am a faculty development consultant, so my – name of my company's Professor Destressor, and I was a little worried while Robert was working with us that I might have to shove over the time management workshop and do one on stress management as we saw the climate changes, but I'm glad he brought our mood back up as he showed us those wonderful wind turbines, that there is hope that we can turn around some of the curves of the climate change with some of – quick change on how we use energy and what we do with carbon dioxide.

So, what you need to know about me is I'm a psychologist by training. I don't teach very often these days, but I was formally a tenured professor and a department chair at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, a small, Catholic women's college – the first women's college chartered in the United States, and it was chartered to offer Ph.D.s, although it's only recently that we've actually got a doctorate program there, but the Sisters that came over from Germany were very forward looking and said not only do women need education but they need higher, higher, higher education, and so they chartered us for distributing some Ph.D.s related to anything that might come up in the future. They didn't even know where it was going.



These days I spend most of my time helping faculty, doing workshops on campuses and also doing some coaching, and one of the topics I often work with is the topic of time management, although today is a brand new presentation, so you'll have to tell me if this suits you or not. I'm interested in finding out a little bit about why you came here or what your biggest time management challenge is. I collect these and they help me redo my presentations, so anybody brave enough to offer something that potentially might be embarrassing as you tell us your biggest time management challenge and let me reassure you, no matter what it is, someone else in the room, including me, has had this challenge because I've had them all. Any challenges someone would be willing to go public with?

Yes, Carol (sp)?

F: (inaudible) I run out of steam.

ROBISON: Run out of steam, run out of steam. OK, good.

M: Working on what's fun rather than what I have to work on.

ROBISON: Working on what's fun rather than what I have to work on. Oh, that's great.

M: My to-do list gets larger as soon as I walk in the room.

ROBISON: OK. To-do list gets larger and larger.

F: (inaudible)

ROBISON: OK. How do you control those e-mails, phone calls and other things on our to-do list. These are excellent. Yes?

F: I find it hard to say no to things.

ROBISON: OK. Saying no to things. We might practice that a little bit later.

M: Getting lost in the details.

ROBISON: Getting lost in the details. This is very good. Psychologists love to collect data, so here's what the data of our brief experience shows me. This is a different group than any group I have ever faced because the number one thing that



everybody puts no one mentioned. Now, somebody might have written this, but the thing that everybody mentions at other faculty workshops is not enough time.

And you are people who are already know that is not an issue, but just in case there's anybody sitting here who says I don't have enough time, what we're going to do for you is tell you you really don't need time management workshops because the more time you have, the more complaining you will do. Robinson and Godby, who do the American Use of Time Studies every 10 years have shown us this. Their last book came out in '97, so there's – they're a little overdue for the latest one, but I've been seeing some press releases, so I think they're about to come out with it.

What they found is that Americans by 1997, U.S. Americans, had more leisure time than ever before and perceived they had less time than ever before. So, more time, more whine, and I don't mean the Chardonnay kind.

You can't actually manage time. The reason you can't manage it is it operates independently of you. In fact, it's a construct. It's an abstract construct. It's not even concrete. So, time management workshops, in a way, are a lie, which is why I've titled why you can't do this and what we're going to do instead. I will for shorthand purposes refer to time management, but it's going to be the way we're going to use it here this morning and not in the way that it's typically used because you can't actually manage it.

Albert Einstein had a brilliant insight that insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results. So, if you keep thinking that you need more time and you keep making up the same kind of to-do lists and can't get through them, then you are insane.

My favorite definition of neuroses is the futility of trying to control what you can't control, the failure to control what you can control, and the foolishness of not even knowing the difference. So, if you don't have enough time, let me suggest that perhaps what you have are too many goals, and that what we need to get under control are the goals – which ones to do, how to do it and so on. What you can manage are the control of the tasks or goals and how to sequence them, what to do, when to do it, for whom to do it, and so on and so forth. Those are things we can control.

We also curiously have control over the perception of time. We can slow down this objective experience of time, and this was the second most brilliant insight of



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Albert Einstein -- the first being his definition of insanity and the second being $E=mc^2$, because what he said is time is relative.

Last month I was up in Austin. I live in Austin, Texas and Ellicott City, Maryland. I split my time, and in Ellicott City, Maryland, I work like a crazy person and play equally as hard, and in Austin, Texas, I'm a full-time domestic engineer for my daughter's household. I take care of my grandson, I cook, I go to HEB, I shop and I do all the things that a domestic helper does in Texas, and I have a lovely grandmother suite to do that in their home and I look forward to my time there.

While I was there last month speaking to NISOD, which is the Association for Community College people, I said to my grandson, well, I'm going to see you in a month. He said – he's six – he said it's going to be a short month. I said really, because I'm very interested in this perception of time thing. I said how do you know it's going to be a short month? He said well, he said, two more weeks of school, two weeks of camp, grandma! You know that time is relative because an hour spent sailing on your friend's yacht is not the same hour as an hour spent in your dentist's chair. So, we can control the perception of time by choosing the sorts of activities that we do.

What should you do instead of trying to manage time, which you can't do anyway and it's kind of futile and it's crazy to think that you can? What I think you ought to do is become a peak-performing professor, and I do a presentation on peak-performing professors, so I'm just going to borrow my phrase there and tell you that peak performing professors – for the short definition for today, so that we can work with concepts about time management – are professors who are both productive and happy. In other words, well-balanced people who live good lives.

How many of you, because I know you – this is my first time at the conference, so I want to do another little quick survey of what school levels that you might be teachers of if you are a textbook author who also teaches. So, let me start with higher ed? So, how many college university professors? So, we have a lot of professors. How about high school, and you can raise your hand as many times as possible. High school – OK. Junior high or middle school, depending on your region of the country. Any junior high? Elementary school? Preschool? OK. So, we've got one high school and one – and most everybody else is a professor.

So, professor, teacher are interchangeable for our purposes, and so a peak-performing professor is both productive and happy. I think there are five things



that peak-performing professors need to be able to do, and especially those who also have another whole hat that you wear, which is authorship, as many of you do.

The first thing you need to do is to anchor your tasks to a sense of meaning and purpose, and you have all these notes in your notes, so you don't have to write any of this. The second thing that we're going to work on is prioritizing which tasks are worthy of your resources of time, talent, energy and attention. And as Carol said to us, running out of steam often happens now before you run out of time. It used to be the other way around, and that's an energy resource and somewhat, these four resources are interchangeable, so you can sometimes interchange your talent for your energy. If you're really good at something, you can push yourself when you're running out of steam. If you attend very carefully to something, you can in some ways use your time better, although that's a misnomer.

Next we have to do is allocate tasks across units of time. Traditional time management workshops focus on this one, but today we're going to do two steps before we get to this. One of the things that the research on time management workshops show is that they don't work. What happens to people emotionally is they come out from the workshops feeling absolutely overwhelmed by a thousand techniques that they're not going to do, and so they're not going to manage their time any better. They're not going to manage their tasks any better, and now they feel terribly guilty because they're sure that if only they could implement these skills and these little things they're supposed to do, they would be a better time manager.

I'm going to suggest to you that you're already doing a lot of the right stuff, and I'm going to reassure you that if you keep on doing a lot of the right stuff and drop out some of the other stuff, this is going to be a very quick behavior change program for you. It's easier to drop stuff out than it is to put stuff in.

So, we're not going to do traditional time management except for a little piece here. We're going to talk about accounting for the results of the allocation. So, once you allocate time to – tasks to units of time, how are you going to keep track of that and who are you going to report to, and typically, time management workshops do not talk about these. And the last thing nobody every talks about in time management is how to build and broaden your resilience and happiness while you do these things. I am a great believer that if it ain't fun, it's not worth doing.

Now, there are tasks that we all have to do because they support what we want to do. Filing your grades from this past semester is probably one of those things. I



doubt if any of you just love to file because if you did, you would have gone and gotten a degree in filing, if there were such a thing. So, unless that's something you really love to do, it's just sort of a have-to, but it supports your being a good teacher, which is something you're motivated to do.

And so, we have yucky kinds of things we have to do, but mostly, we should be spending most of our time doing things we choose to do and that are fun to do. And we're going to start getting those to-do lists under control, so that they don't hit us when we walk in the door, that we determine how we're going to handle them.

So, I'm now going to start unpacking the toolbox. Let me tell you, even though I am supposedly a time management expert, I'm also a college professor who learned very early in their career – don't end class early. So, you know how you do that, don't you? You over prepare. So, you always bring more material and you hope the students will ask a lot of questions, but if they don't, you've got to be ready, and so I will apologize only once to you in advance. I brought way too much material. You've got a handout that covers some of it, but I'm going to give you some opportunities in case you're frustrated that there's too much material and you want some individual attention. Let me tell you a couple of options.

Tim has asked me to be one of the mentors, so this afternoon I have some mentoring opportunities. Some people have signed up for them, but there's a few that are open, and so that's an opportunity if you want to individualize your learning. I'm going to do an online version of this in a new resource that I'm starting to learn to use, which is called Elluminate Live. It's a visual and auditory live classroom with clickers for surveys and student voice participation. You can hook up cameras and get complicated. I'm not going to do that part of it.

And I'm going to do these over the summer, repeating them – usually an evening one and a day one here and there, and so if you're interested in going a little deeper with the toolbox, that's going to be an opportunity for you that I'm offering as a follow-up to our workshop. And if you would like some really individual help and you can't get in today because you have some other agenda -- you're going to one of the workshops this afternoon – I offer everybody here a half-hour complimentary coaching session as a follow-up.

Now, you'll think I'm nuts but I've been doing this for 35 years, and here's the stats. Only 50% of you will actually fill out the tear off on page seven. Of those,



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only 30% of you will actually follow-up, so I'm not going to be overwhelmed at all. I already know that.

Now, I would be delighted to be overwhelmed because I'm looking at a summer of some grandparent duties and a couple of other things I have to do, but I have slots of time and so I'm happy to give you time to extend your learning and deepen your learning because workshops don't work. They only introduce you to a topic. They don't really deepen the learning. So, if you're a person who feels yeah, I need a little bit more here, we're going to have an opportunity to do this.

Meanwhile, we're going to unpack the toolbox and the five areas that I just outlined. Let me pause here and see if there are any questions so far on anything we've covered, and in each of these little sections, I'm going to stop, pause and ask if you've got questions. Anything so far? Is it normative at TA not to ask questions? Is that – I just – I want to kind of check out the culture because I want to conform to things. (laughter) There are questions, aren't there?

M: (inaudible)

ROBISON: You do here? OK. So, we're going anchor. We're going to anchor everything we do to a deep sense of meaning and purpose. No more trivia unless the trivia are in support of things we are deeply, deeply moved by and want to do with our lives. So, how are we going to do this meaning and purpose? So, the positive psychologist, the happiness researchers, are publishing constantly the importance of connecting what you do to a sense of deep meaning and purpose. If you want lifelong happiness and happiness as they're using it is not la-di-da-di-dah – everything's fine, but a more kind of deep enduring sense of well-being and life satisfaction.

And so, I've come up with a way to break down and teach how the kind of world philosophical and religious systems have always looked at meaning and purpose and the time management people have looked at it and I have kind of put it together into a really, really simple model. It's a pyramid because that is the most stable structure you can construct. It has a wide base and a narrow top, and you will see that our goals are up here at the top. This can – this model can work top down and bottom up. This morning, we're going to do bottom up, and at the round table this afternoon, which is listed as a small group discussion -- it will not be a small group discussion. It will be a workshop on packing the pyramid of power, and we're going to do a little bit of top down as well as bottom up.



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Many people operate with their goals as a huge top and a very narrow bottom or no bottom at all. The goals are floating around up in the air and they aren't anchored to anything. So here, we're going to reverse that and we're going to get our goals anchored. So, purpose – and you have this in your notes – is a sense of answering the question why am I here on this Earth? It's very philosophical. It's very abstract. It connects with your deepest values, your highest belief systems. If you believe in somebody in charge of the universe or a committee or something, often they're included in your purpose statement.

One of my clients said I don't know who's in charge of everything, but I sure as heck know it is not me. So, if you have some philosophical belief, that goes in your purpose statement. The mission statement gets more practical. Purpose statement changes not at all. It may get rearticulated across your life, but it usually doesn't change once you find it. Mission statement will change about every three to five years for adults, quicker for students, so if you're replicating this little workshop, which I encourage you to do – those of you who direct grad students – it really helps grad students get anchored right from the start, before they transition to their assistant professor jobs and their other jobs – you might say to them, their mission is going to change very quickly because they're students.

And our mission answers the question, if I'm here for this purpose, what shall I do about it? So, it gets very practical. If I do my mission, what's going to happen, and so the vision is your outcome measure, if you want to put it in scientific terms. And lastly, what things shall I do to make my vision come alive because I'm living my mission because I know what my purpose is. So, top down, bottom up, and you've got these notes in your notes.

Exercise for you. You're going to now write your purpose statement. You won't be asked to share this with anybody, so this is private writing. I always tell my students when I have a writing assignment whether we're going to partner up or they're going to write just for themselves or they're going to announce it to the class because this determines sometimes how private you feel about your writing. So, I want you to know this is private writing, and you're going to write a purpose statement, and I pulled some from some people in my workshops and clients and that, so you get some samples so you know what you're aiming for here.

One woman told me she was a half-time – at her university, she was half-time teaching faculty and half-time liaison between a diversity center on campus and the urban community in which she lived. And so, we came up with a purpose statement for her -- I am a bridge connecting ideas and people for the greater good.



Here's a fellow here who just very simply had discovered some version of this when he was a kid and he thought it still applied to him. He sort of re-vocabularied it, but other than that, he – that was very simple for him. Here was somebody who taught political science. I bring joy and peace to the world. Good luck with that one. And here's a working artist who was a faculty member and also did shows and won awards for her paintings. I bring order and beauty to an ugly and chaotic world.

So, you're going to take a minute now and write you purpose in life and begin to build your pyramid of power. So, feel free to continue working on that while I move on. If you're like most audiences and I already know that you're not in one regard because we did our survey at the beginning, there's probably a bi-modal distribution on this task.

Some of you could do this almost immediately, perhaps because you've done it sometime in your life or perhaps it just came to you. And the other group may take about a year and a half. It is no reflection on your intelligence, your physical attractiveness, or your mental health. It has no correlation with any of those things. It just is a phenomena all by itself. So, if you're struggling with this, it's something that's going to be an ongoing take-home assignment for you. There's already homework in advance of the next time we meet, and you'll tell me what your purpose statement is or your struggle with it or to be in pencil and you want a little bit of help, and if you come to the workshop that I'm going to do at lunchtime twice, the round table, we may get a chance to do a little bit of that.

So, I'm going to presume somewhere you come up with a purpose statement, and we've got the bottom wide part of your pyramid begun, so we know what your purpose in life is.

I'm not going to unpack the entire pyramid today. It takes 45 minutes and that will be the follow-up opportunities I've offered to you. I'm going to tease you with what we would do. In order to write a mission statement, which is the next thing that we need to do on our pyramid, I would want you to know three things, and I'm borrowing this from a little book called *The Path* by Lori Beth Jones.

You need to know what your strengths are. There are measures of strengths and you can also just make this up from what you know you're good at. They should be verbs, and you need about three of them. You need your values, and values are abstractions, like truth or beauty or justice or peace, and you need the people that you typically offer yourself to. So, they might be your students, they might be your



readers, they might be your friends and family, and you need at least one to three. You can go on further than that. Somebody asked me if they could have their pets on the list. I said sure, go ahead. Pets are people, too.

So, when you get this put together, it goes into a formula that sounds like this. My mission is to verb, verb, verb, that are my strengths, for, to, or with people, people, people, who want value, value, value – my four to eight values. Now, you might ask what if they don't want it. Well, guess what? They're going to get it anyway from you because if you live your mission, your values show up. If you never mention the word peace, but it's something you're trying to live, people who know you well will use that word to describe you.

When you put your mission together, it's really helpful to use information from the outside world, otherwise, you're sitting in a closet with a light bulb on a cord trying to figure this out and it doesn't go very well. So, taking some kind of measures to find what your strengths are, like the Gallup Strength Finder, the Authentic Happiness Virtues and Action -- these kind of measurement tools can be helpful. Your student feedback forms at the end of the semester are extremely helpful, and to give you an example, I thought I would embolden and embarrass myself here and tell you what my mission statement is.

I knew my whole life I was a born teacher, so educate was an obvious verb. I never would have picked the other two verbs, which are to inspire and entertain, but my students kept saying, gosh, this class was so much fun. I really enjoyed it. It was fun, it was funny, we had fun together. And so, entertain was a word that they often used and would people would often tell me they would be inspired. I never would have picked those two verbs. They just sound very snobby and wouldn't be something that I would pick, but that was the feedback I got.

Who are my people? Well, right now, since I do faculty development, faculty are my people, friends are people, and family are my people. And what are some of my values? Well-being, balance, love, and fun, and I got a bunch of others.

M: (inaudible)

ROBISON: Yes, yes. Let me repeat that. I'll repeat. So, the question is – A reiteration of the question I phrased a minute or so ago -- what if they don't want it or they don't know they want it? Or I don't think of values as something people want. Have I got the question? No. OK, do it again. Try it again. You don't think of values as something --



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M: (inaudible) pose this why would I force it on them? That's not my issue.

ROBISON: No?

M: My issue is why are we even defining a value as something that has anything to do with anybody else?

ROBISON: Oh, OK. OK. So, these people – the reason we're doing this, Paul (sp?), is because your values show up in what you do. So, when you get clear about what you do, with whom you do it, and why you're doing it, your values are answering the question why for you, but it also has to do with what shows up in your work. Let me use an example and again, I don't mind being a case example.

People say, you know, you look like you live pretty well. I do, and I know a couple secrets, so I can teach people a little bit more about well being. How about work life balance? I was a woman Ph.D. when I never met a woman Ph.D. None of my teachers in college or graduate school were women and Ph.D.s. I had one woman teacher in college – one, a French teacher with a Master's. No women Ph.D.s. So, how did I put together a career as a working mom and have balance?

Well, again, I figured out some stuff. People want that from me and they told me they did and it was very subtle because I didn't set out to do this. Also love. If you care about your students, I bet love shows up as a value for many, many of you, and your caring – if you look at Barbara Walvoord's research on faculty and good teachers, caring was one of her three major factors in her national study that she found. So, caring is something that shows up in what we do.

So, why would we think about those people wanting it? It's not so much that we think what they want. It's who we are, and then we match who we are to the people who want it. So, if my students really never, ever care about any of this, maybe I'm teaching the wrong subject or the wrong students or at the wrong place, or maybe I shouldn't be in teaching. Does that sort of start to put the tension in there for you?

M: I can live with that.

ROBISON: OK. So, Paul, this is mostly about you at this moment.

M: (inaudible)



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ROBISON: It's really about – It's really about your pyramid of power. It's going to show up for your students, your readers, the people here. We already know that one of your gifts is humor. One of your strengths is entertainment. I'm sure people tell you that all the time. And one of the ways we know that somebody has a gift or a strength, is they answer this question in the affirmative. Paul, has your humor ever gotten you into trouble? (laughter) OK. So, when we're really strong at something, we also do it too much. So, maybe Paul and I, because I'm also a bit of an entertainer, we're the class clowns. Maybe it got us in to trouble. Maybe we had to sit in detention because of our problems with this.

Those of you that are real sociable and just love people -- OK, Mister, would you like to share that with everyone else? These things got us into trouble. That's one of the measures when you know you have a strength. So, there's a long version of the vision. We're going to do that at lunch, those of you that come.

I'm going to give you a short version. I'm going to ask you a very teasing question. The phone rings five years from now. You've been waiting a long time for this very special call. Who is it and what do you want them to ask of you? So, is it the Nobel Committee asking you to come to Stockholm to accept your award? Is it yet another publisher chasing you down, offering you millions of dollars to write a book? Is it your daughter, who finally is getting married? What kind of call is it that you have hoped for and worked for your whole life and that it's finally coming together? Everything you value, everything you do seems to come together on that call. It's just a device to get at your vision. This may or may not be something that you can answer.

OK. So, we've got a pyramid of power in place. Actually, we don't, but we could. Once your pyramid of power is in place, it motivates and energizes everything you do. Now, we're going to start seeing how do we prioritize our activities. You've probably all seen this. Stephen Covey made this quadrant thing popular. It really comes from a little book called *The ABCs of Time Management* by Edward Bliss. It was a lovely little book in the late '60s, early '70s, a little tiny paperback, but it's kind of a dumb idea to put self-help tips in alphabetical order as a glossary. It really doesn't work. There's no conceptual framework to pull it together, so it was never a very popular book but it had a lot of insight.

One of the insights was that time can be categorized into urgent, non-urgent kinds of tasks and then important and non-important things, and if you've ever read Stephen Covey, you know that most of us do the urgent and important. Your kid's



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bleeding, you take him to the emergency room. Where we get hung up is the non-urgent but important and this is where authors or would-be authors have trouble. Those of you that are published authors have figured out how to handle this, and mostly we shouldn't do anything that's not too important. That's the idea.

The problem with this is that it really isn't a priority system because it only categorizes time. It doesn't tell you what to do about it. So, I'm going to suggest some things for what you do when new opportunities come to you. So, here's a list of questions and you can put this in your opportunity section. You don't have this in your notes, but I'm going to zip through this very quickly.

First question is does it fit my pyramid of power? Marcia (sp?) had trouble saying no. Now, it's going to get easy because anything that's not in your pyramid of power is a no. What's the opportunity cost, and there's two aspects, at least – it's more complicated than that – what does the opportunity cost me in time, money, energy and attention, my four resources – and then number four, what's the loss and gain of this opportunity and what I didn't have here, ran out of room and just want to say to you is what's the loss or gain of the other opportunities you don't do while you do this opportunity.

So, those of you who have read books – have written books have given up other things in order to do that perhaps, depending on how you have managed those tasks. Sometimes a book that you might write is at the right time in your life. Sometimes, it's not. We've all known students who say I'm going to write my dissertation and have a baby the same year because I'll be home anyway, and you say there's a name for those people. They're called non-parents because anybody who's ever had a baby knows that there's a challenge of a baby that you just never expect. They just take so much time, don't they?

And so, how am I going to get time for this task? I have to get rid of current tasks or I need to say no to all the other opportunities and there's a cost for that. So, this is a system for starting to decide what opportunities you want to take. There are other systems. I'm just going to tease you with this. We're not going to go over it. Ed Hallowell, the ADD expert, has return on investment. He has a whole formula – effort fulfillment and is it necessary or the right thing. You multiply them out, you get a weighted kind of score, but back to our pyramid of power.

When opportunities come in, the pyramid, like a prism, breaks up the opportunities that appear into a rainbow of things that you are willing to commit to, and lots of things that you're going to say no to in order to have this beautiful, wonderful



colorful life. In order to work with your pyramid, you've got to procrastinate. Neil Fiore, whose work I love --- he has a little book with the big word Now on the front cover – he says that procrastination is the tyranny of time. I'm not sure that I would agree. I think we all need to procrastinate a whole lot more than what we do, but what we need to do is delineate different kinds of procrastination,

Destructive procrastination we probably need to get rid of. This is the failure to do what you value and want to do. Constructive procrastination, however, is what we need to do more of and this is doing what you value, ignoring or putting off what you don't value. So, hereto, getting clear about those values is going to allow you to decide what you want to teach, sometimes when you want to teach it, for whom you want to teach it, what you want to write, etc., because when you know what you value, you can begin to say eh-eh to the stuff that doesn't fit.

And I think we also need to have a little dose of creative procrastination, and this is when we delegate our higher for lower activities to free you up for higher level activities. So, if you're spending a lot of time filing and someone else could do that and you could pay them, you might think of creatively procrastinating it, which is delegating it to somebody else. So, when you increase your nos, your yeses get stronger.

This is why I said at the beginning we're going to eliminate a lot of things, so the more you can get rid of and not do, the better off your life is going to be – the happier and more productive it's going to be. It's that simple.

We often use the word I have to. I have to go to the grocery store today. I have to go teach my class. I'm going to suggest that a semantical change will be very useful to your mood management. If you change I have to to I choose to watch what happens. I choose to go to the grocery store today. Hmm, do I? I don't even really want to. I think I'll choose to do that tomorrow. Hmm, that's interesting. I choose to teach class. Well, I'm not in the mood for it, but I do choose to teach it because basically, my mission is about education and I really do love to teach even though I'm not in the mood today, and if I don't show up for a whole lot of classes, they're going to fire me and it probably means I'm doing a job that's not aligned with my mission, so I'm going to choose to go to class today.

So, choosing the next time you're looking at your to-do list and you say I have to do this and I have to this and I have to do that, think about whether you can choose to do it. And I'm going to suggest that you pace yourself by knowing when you are at your best. Are you a morning person, afternoon person, a night person? Do you



need a power nap? Do you come alive at midnight? And what are your highest productive tasks you need to do, such as writing, and how do you match your energy and your tasks and time?

Here's some brain research. When we work hard and we rest, we produce – help – where's the anatomy people? OK, over here. Nitric oxide, yes? No? A substance that the neurotransmitter dopamine evolves from. Why do we need dopamine? Dopamine is the gas pedal of our brain. It's the physiological basis of our energy system as far as our thinking and our higher cognitive tasks and our productivity. Not enough dopamine, you drag around, you feel depressed, you – coordination's not so good, your physical energy's not good, your psychological energy.

So, in order to produce enough nitric oxide so we get enough dopamine, we need to hit the brain pause button every 90, 7 and 3. What do I mean by that? Every 90 minutes at least, take a break. When you're doing deskwork, do something physical – walk around, get up, have a cup of tea. Make it only a five or 10 minute break and you can get back into your task. Every seven days -- most of the major religious systems of the world have some idea of Sabbath. Sabbath comes as a derivative of the word seven -- and so resting on a Sabbath, having a day or part of a day that you consider work-free or obligation-free or however you want to define that for yourself, and then about every three months, you need a longer break, a long weekend, a week's vacation.

As academics, often times the semesters are just a wee bit long. Do you ever notice that? My first time teaching job was in a quarter system. Man, that agreed with me. 10 weeks I could sustain the effort. 15, oh, those last five weeks it's harder. So, it would be nice because our body/mind system is organized according to seasons, and the only reality of the abstraction of time is that in most parts of the world there's some element of seasons.

Even in parts like around the equator or around the poles, there's some shifting of energy, particularly you see this in the equator. You talk to people who live around there and you say it doesn't ever change near you. You always have the same kind of weather. They say oh, no, these things bloom, these things bloom in the summer. How do they know it's summer because it looks the same to me. So, there's seasons. So, every season is a good reason to take a longer break. If not a whole week off, maybe a longer three-day weekend.

Any questions so far? Now, we're going to talk about allocation. I see a question back here. Yes?



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F: (inaudible)

ROBISON: Great question. Thank you very much. If you find you're continually procrastinating something, then one of two things is important to know. Either that thing is really not worth your time, energy and attention and it's time to kind of redefine why that's on your list because it doesn't belong, or there's some other, maybe deeper block. Sometimes we really want to do something and then we're procrastinating it. Sometimes, non-writers who like to be writers, which is not you all folks, procrastinate writing because of the anxiety, so they need help with the treatment of that anxiety, and I don't necessarily mean clinical kinds of counseling. They may do just a little coaching, a little shaping up. Some of the things that Sonja Foss and William Waters do, some of Bob Voyce's (sp?) research, some of Tara Gray's stuff – they just need a little restructuring of their anxiety and they can stop procrastinating, but a lot of times, procrastination gives you a clue to a mismatch between your pyramid of power and your to-do list.

Is that kind of – and then, did I see another? Paul, yes, no, go on? OK. Now, we're going to allocate and maybe Paul will shape up the question.

I need a client. Here's the deal. If you would like to volunteer to be a client, you get to be coached by all these really brilliant people in the room. The bad news is you do have to go public and be somewhat humble to allow us to do that and grant us permission. We need a project or a phase of a project that is due within a month, so a month from now, something you're closing off. It could either be the whole project or a phase of the project, and your role as a client is merely to be in gratitude with us. So, you will write down our suggestions. You can throw out the piece of paper as soon as you walk out the door. You don't have to do anything of them. You're not going to argue with us why you won't do them. Just write them down and say thank you and be very grateful.

OK. May I have a client? Is there anyone who would love to be coached by the, this wonderful roomful of people and has a project? Great, great, great. There's another mike. Would you –

F: I can speak pretty loudly.

ROBISON: You can? And your name, please?

F: My name is Diane Paster (sp?).



ROBISON: Diane Paster's going to be our client.

F: (inaudible)

ROBISON: OK. Diane --

F: No pressure, no pressure.

ROBISON: I think I can share if they'll let me. Here we go. So, Diane's going to tell us an answer to a question. Diane, we're going to do something very different. We're going to ask you what that project has to be like in a month, so would you describe just ever so briefly three bullet points.

F: And I volunteered because I feel very pressured, so thank you. I'm a nursing faculty member in New York, and I've been accepted at NYU in two weeks to a two-week program that's run by a national organization to develop geriatric nursing researchers, and the outcome of the project at the end of two weeks – it's full time – there's 20 of us nationally that were selected. First, I got excited I was selected and now I'm panicky that I've been selected – and my phone is ringing. I'm so sorry. I'm sure it's one of my girls, but I'm supposed to have an outcome of an NIH-ready grant.

ROBISON: OK. And NIH-ready grant -- that's what I'm looking for. So, Diane's going to check –

F: (inaudible)

ROBISON: If they're on your speed dial, you need this workshop. (laughter) So, Diane needs an NIH-ready grant in one month. Diane, what stage is it at right now?

F: It's mostly drafted and with a very good review of the literature and research questions but (inaudible)

ROBISON: So, she's making our job easy. It's most drafted. There's good literature review. What does Diane have to have ready a week before the point where she need the NIH-ready grant? What would we describe it as? Here's where you start to take notes. They're going to give you something. What do you think has to happen? Anybody ever done an NIH-ready grant or something comparable? Yes? What does she need the week before?



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F: A draft that people can review.

ROBISON: Yeah. She needs a draft that some friends, some colleagues, could look at. So, that draft really needs to be written by the week before. So, that's going to be three weeks from now. In order to do that, what does she need at the halfway point, which is two weeks from now and two weeks back from the end?

M: An initial draft?

ROBISON: An initial draft? She's got some material. What else does she need? She gave us a clue. She said her method section not too good. So, by that two-week point, we need a pretty good method section. What's that going to take? Is that going to take thinking or talking to other people or looking stuff up – all of those things. OK. So, by next week, you're going to do all of those things, so that you can write between week one and week two – the end of week one and the end of week two – you're going to have it all looked up, so you can write your method section.

At the two-week point, you're going to have a kind of rough draft of everything. You're going to start playing with it then and getting maybe a little bit creative. At the three-week point, she's going to give it to reviewers, friends and associates, people in her department, other nursing instructors – and then it's going to get done. Yes?

This is called backward planning. Common sense would say – we'd say Diane, what do you think you have to do this week, and she might talk about the entire project, overwhelm herself, get grandiose, or the opposite – she might say oh, I think I could look up a few more things. If read a few more books, I might know something – the writer's mistakes that we make sometime. But by planning backward, you're anchoring into the cells in this little table, the descriptors of what has to be done by that date.

So, take one for yourself. We're just going to do this for – very laser-like for a moment. Won't be sharing this with every – anybody. On page three at the top, you'll see a chance to put a project that you have. So, where do you need to be in a month? Where do you need to be at the halfway point? How about splitting the difference – the quarter way point, the three-quarter way point? And feel free to keep writing.



On my little chart up here, I have that Diane also has a life, so she may have another goal. She may be tearing down the back porch off her house and building a new one. She might be teaching a summer class in the first five weeks of summer, so she has goal number two, at least. So, she has some backward planning on that goal to do as well.

What starts to happen is when you put this all together, you have something called a tracking system, and when you put this tracking system together, the vertical strip becomes the to-do list. Ah-ha! Now we have the to-do list that is not determined when we walk in the room with the phone calls and the e-mails. We have a to-do list we determine based on the projects we've agreed to, the opportunities that we've decided are commitments. So, here's your week's to-do list on all your projects, and I suggest one tracking system for personal and professional.

Here's how we're going to put together the to-do list. What's our to-do list question? First name? It's Scott. Scott? Scott, yes? OK, Scott, this is for you. So, you get to do – you choose to do nine things a day. Here's how you decide which nine. You want three things that move your vision forward – that's a V. You want three things that avert disaster – pay your bills, show up at a meeting the dean is going to be at. Three things you're going to take care of yourself – maybe your bedtime, your exercise routine and what you're going to eat, or going to have some nice time with your spouse catching up that's very reinforcing, or you're going to spend time with a best friend. These are self-care things – that's the S.

And if you finish all nine of them, you get to start on tomorrow's list and that's the T. So, you have VAST to-do list that's limited to nine items or possibly more. No more et al. No extra e-mails, no extra phone things unless the e-mails and the phones are in the A for avert disaster, or they move your vision forward, or they're an invitation for something for self-care. They must be in your pyramid of power. Your to-do list now is not going to be a to-do list of all the things you wish you could do. It's going to be a list of the things that you choose to do that day, and you will get all nine of them done. I guarantee you that.

What you do with all those things you wish you could do, you park them in a dream book, and at lunchtime, I'm going to over how to put a dream book together, if – depending on what people want. So, here's what you're going to do. You're going to divide up everything you ever want to do into 15 minute segments and you can get nine of them done a day. One of the things on your list might be to teach your class. In a way, forget the obvious. We don't write this down, but we do it,



so it's part of your to-do list and it brings your vision forward because you want to be great teachers if you love teaching.

So, the focused 15 is another thing, and the key here is to divide the goals into 15 minute tasks. Now your writing gets a lot easier, doesn't it? Because if all your writing tasks are 15 minute tasks, you can carry something around and do it while you're waiting for your son to finish his soccer game. While you're waiting at the dentist's office, you can get two paragraphs written. You can get two pages revised with something that you're looking for that you typically make a mistake, like subject-noun agreement or something. You can do a brief sweep through of two pages' revision in 15 minutes.

Let me pause for questions here. So, we've allocated our time and that's based on our prioritization, which is based on our pyramid of power. Questions. Yes?

M: So, thing and task are two different concepts? The thing that's going to be
(inaudible) You said nine things a day.

ROBISON: Tasks, they could be tasks – synonym. They're synonyms. Yeah – tasks, goals, subgoals – I'm using all of those synonymously, yes.

Let's go to account. I'm going to skip this one and talk about accounting. We've covered all of these almost – backward planning, time against task. A buddy system is when you work with a buddy. Mastermind group is a whole group that reciprocally helps each other. A coach is non-reciprocal relationships – someone either informal or someone you hire formally. A tracking system you already know.

And the last thing you're going to do is try to take care of yourself while we do this. So, if we had lots more time today, we would talk about all the things you could do to broaden and build your resources. Here's the key take-home message about broaden and build. Resilience is your ability to handle stress. If you don't build in some credits, when the debits come along, you're depleted. Some people live right at the edge of their threshold, and when something comes along, they flip out. The key to doing stress better is to actually purposely choose to stress yourself in choiceful ways, so you build your capacity for stress.

Anybody into exercise? What happens when we work our muscles?

F: (inaudible) endorphins.



ROBISON: We fatigue them. We get a good feeling of endorphins, but we fatigue our muscle and we get microscopic muscle tears. When we rest for 24 hours or we wait for the next set, those microscopic muscle tears heal more solid in the striations of the muscles and we build our capacity to lift a bigger weight a longer amount of time. Same with our kind of stress resistance and resilience. So, building and resilience means that self-care is first, then comes all the other things. I give you the Unschedule in your notes. The Unschedule is where you put in the immutables, then the fun, then your other work tasks. It's not common sense.

The immutables are the class that you show up, your son soccer schedule, the place of worship, Sabbath, where you go if you go to a place, the meetings you have to go to because you choose to go to them because you choose to do the work of those committees.

Then you put in the fun, the play, the friendship and so on. Then you put in the other work tasks that are mutable – class preparation, writing time and so on and so forth. This is the Unschedule.

Well, we could do a lot with everything we've got here. Some of you may wish to follow up with me, so opportunities are going to be round table at lunch this afternoon. Also, online seminar. What I want for you, my wish for you is that you dream big, you figure out a way to track your dreams – dream book or some of the other systems that (inaudible) Enlist help when you need it, hire it otherwise. You lower your stress. You take care of yourself.

If you do this, this quote will be true for you, and this is one of my favorite authors. You all know who he is – Thich Nhat Hanh, who says you don't want to waste your time anymore. Cherish the time that you are given. I've cherished our time together. Thank you very much.

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