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| Spirituality

## Beating the clock starts with you

*Understanding the core of effective time management requires a shift from clock management to self management. Explore how personal values dictate priorities and time allocation*



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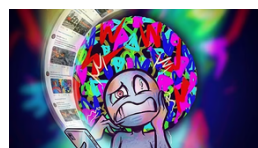



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We don't even know what the real issue is like. It is not about time at all. Don't ask how to manage time. Don't ask how to utilise time. Ask yourself, "How do I manage myself?" Because it is the self that is wasting the time; it is the self that is wasting everything that is around it.

There are a thousand opportunities that come to you; life itself is a grand opportunity, but the self is squandering all the opportunities. So, we will go to the more basic question, to the more useful question, and that is: How to manage the mind? Because it is the mind that wastes time. We will forget time. Nobody can manage time. It just flows. What can be managed? The self, my own mind, that needs to be managed. We will look at that.



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Now, you need to ask yourself: What does your mind find attractive? What does your mind do most of the time? There are 24 hours in the day for everybody. Ask yourself: Where does my mind spend these 24 hours on? When you look at this, you will come across your values; you will come to know what it is that you prefer in life because whatever you prefer in life, that is what you spend your time doing. If I have told myself that the biggest pleasure in life is sleeping, then don't be surprised if I find that I sleep 11 hours a day. And why do I sleep 11 hours a day? Because I have thoroughly convinced myself that sleeping is the highest happiness.

We are looking at the mind now, right? We have kept time behind. We said we would find out what I spend my time doing, and when I find that out, I immediately come upon my values, what I have told myself to be valuable.

Whatever you have told yourself is valuable, you will find that your time is going exactly in that direction.

And if you are unable to find time for something and say, "It is important, but I can't find time for it," please be assured that somewhere you are convinced that the thing for which you cannot find time is not important. It is embedded deeply in your psyche that it is not important. So, howsoever much you are trying now, you will still find no time. Had it been really important, had you been careful enough to examine and see its importance, time would have made itself available. There are 24 hours in the day for everybody. How is it possible that somebody finds time and somebody does not?

You are the one who is allotting time, and you allot time according to your values. It is a question of values. What do you find valuable? "I find it deeply valuable that one must sit with the family and watch television." So, don't be surprised if you are doing that three hours a day.

“My definition of a valuable friendship is when you talk three hours a day to somebody on a mobile phone.” So, don’t be surprised if that is what you do three hours a day.

You are spending time exactly according to your values. Not even a second is spent otherwise. Be convinced that time does not slip away; time strictly follows your values. So, if you say, “I don’t know, time just flies away,” then you are deceiving yourself. No, time never flies away. Every second of it is controlled by your mind.

If you do not find time for studying, the conclusion is obvious: you do not find studying valuable. In your value system, you do not accord priority to studying. In your value system, had studying been important, time would have presented itself. Is this becoming clear? When you are clear about what is really valuable in life, you will find that all your time is devoted to that which is really valuable.

Do you know anything about what is really important in life? It is not a huge secret, it is an obvious fact—if only you would bother to inquire. You are intelligent, you have the capability. I assure you, all of you are capable of looking at the facts and being in the Truth—if only you are not afraid, if only you have not closed your eyes saying, “I already know.”

***Acharya Prashant is an author and the founder of Prashant Advait Foundation***

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