



DR. RICK BRINKMAN'S

# CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATOR<sup>®</sup>

## Life by Design<sup>™</sup>

### How to Create More Time

*A scientific sampling  
of your time is the  
first step to time  
recovery.*

Without knowing your specific situation, I would say the two most important action steps that can be taken to be more organized and effective are clarifying values and doing a time log.

Without having an accurate assessment of your present situation, you cannot even begin to make changes. A time log will show you where your time is going, who your chronic interrupters are, what causes your crisis, and where you mismanage your own time. It is the most significant step you can take in Time Recovery.

Yes, it is an inconvenience to do a time log, but if you continue to just do what you always have done, then you will keep getting what you always have gotten. And in terms of time management, continuing as is, becomes a downward energy spiral. It actually gets worse and more difficult over time.

#### Take a Three Day Sample of Each Day Type

To get a sense of your time you need to take a three day sample of your days. If you have very different types of workdays then you need three of each type. For example I have a seminar workday when I am speaking, I have a travel workday when I spend the day going to an engagement, and I have a workday when I am in my office in Portland. To get a sense of what I do with my time, I need a three day sample of each type. Some people have seasonal differences in their workdays. For example at the offices of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, the 3 months of pre-national convention produces very different work days for staff, than the rest of the year. You may find that you even have different types of workdays during the week. Mondays may be radically different than Thursdays, and so you need to do a three day sample each day to really get an accurate picture of what you do with your time.

Doing a time log is an intrusion on an already busy day but the good news is it will pay you back ten fold and get easier to do in a short period of time. When you engage in any task there is an acceleration phase as you get up to speed with the task. Then you get "on a roll" with it and cruise very efficiently. As you start to do the time log it will get easier to do, and any inconvenience will be far outweighed by the value it brings to you in time recovery. For this reason I would suggest that while you are on a roll doing your time log you might as

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*If you are going to do it, you might as well go the "Full Monty" and do the whole 24 hour period.*

well do the whole 24 hour period and gather some useful information about what you do with your personal evening time.

The least obtrusive way I know to do a time log is to note activity changes. So if you arrive at work at 8 am you would write 8 o'clock arrive. If the first activity is to get a cup of coffee, you write that down. How long will that take? 30-40 minutes? Write it down. If you start working on something at 8:10 am and nothing changes then you don't touch your time log. If someone interrupts you, immediately look at your watch, write down the time and their name. They will probably ask you what you are doing. Make sure to take the opportunity to explain, "I'm keeping a log of my time. I want to see who wastes it. What can I do for you?" This by itself will cut your interruptions in half! ;-)

So what constitutes an activity change? Taking a phone call, getting a file, looking for something even if it is on your desk, or switching to your e mail program because you heard it ring. Basically an activity change is any change from what you are doing. When people interrupt you or a crisis occurs make sure to record what it was about, who was responsible, what it took to solve it. The more detail you get on interruptions and crisis, the easier it will be to try to prevent them.

**So let's take a look at a sample time log:**

8:00 am arrive and get a cup of coffee

8:10 am check e mail

\* (Take note this time log shows a 30 min block of time for checking e mail. For successful time recovery you should note the detail on what that e mail was about. Yes, each one. Perhaps only 10 minutes of it was high priority stuff, yet you took 30 minutes. And worse if the morning is your highest energy time, then you just wasted 20 minutes of prime time.)

8:45 am: done with e mail.

8:46 am: looked at to do list

8:48 am: phone call. Bill from xxx had two questions which took 3 minutes, but spent the rest of the time complaining about stuff.

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*The Time Log, annoying and a pain in the butt, but will pay you back in time ten fold.*

8:59 am: back to sorting the to do list

9:00 am: Mary Johnson, comes by. Needs the numbers for the X Files project. I tell her I can get it to her by this afternoon.

How did she not know this yesterday??!

9:03 am: add X files to my to do list.

9:04 am: go to bathroom

9:05 am: run into Jack on the way to bathroom. Pretty much just BS with him.

9:09 am: finally make it to the bathroom.

9:20 am: finally make it back to office, write note to self to eat more fiber.

Begin gathering the numbers for the x files and organizing data

\* (As long as nothing causes you to change activity you don't have to touch your time log.)

9:42 am: search for missing file

9:52 am: find it at bottom of desk pile on floor.

9:54 am: Phone call. They will not make the deadline.

\*Crisis Analysis: When a crisis (unexpected event that destroys time and schedule) write the details of how it occurred

9:59 am: off the phone with Johnson. Call the tech dept. No one there, left voice mail.

10:01 am: Call reception, ask for Tech Tim to be paged.

10:02 am: Send Tech Tim an e mail

10:03 am: go to look for tech Tim.

10:05 am: Run into Jane in the hall. She wants to chat. I tell her I don't have time. She says she understands and keeps on talking, where is her off switch? I look at my watch and she still doesn't get it. I finally just walk away, and she keeps talking. How does she breath? Perhaps through a hole in the head like

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*When you analyze the data, some "time atrocities" will jump off the page to you!*

a dolphin, I don't know.

10:15 am: head back to my office

10:31 am: Start working on blah, blah,

10:37 am: \* Interruption: Jack passes by, comes in, feels the need to tell me a joke. Unfortunately the same one he told me yesterday. What is with his memory, I swear mind readers would do him for half price!

And on and on and on....

;-) Sarcastic commentary is optional. ;-)

#### Analyze the Data

Now it is time to analyze your data. You are looking for the following:

1. What shouldn't you be doing at all? To really do this step effectively you will have to have already clarified your priorities. You must know what you want to say "Yes" to, if you are to have the strength to say "No" to other things. All priorities are not "A" priorities but must be weighed relative to each other and the amount of time you realistically have in a day. For more information on clarifying priorities, see my book "Life by Design", published by McGraw-Hill, or my audio tape by the same name. Both are available at [www.rickbrinkman.com](http://www.rickbrinkman.com).
2. What should be delegated to others? If you can't seem to get all the highest priorities done that must be done by you, then you must look at what tasks you engage in that really could be done by others. How much time can your recover and would it be cost effective to have someone else perform those tasks.
3. What has been delegated to you? It is very easy for those who have delegated tasks to you, to lose touch with how much they have delegated. That means they have sent you on a suicide mission where there is no possibility that you can get it all done. To get anything to change you will need to reflect back to them realistic numbers so they can make some decisions as to what the relative priorities should be.



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*Who is interrupting  
who?*

*How often do you  
distract yourself?*

*How long can you  
stay focused?*

4. Who are your major time wasters? In this category you find out who are your chronic interrupters and how much they are costing you in time. Who calls or visits your workspace for a business reason but then stays too long. And of course don't forget to look at where you waste the time of others.

5. What are you doing with your prime time? As you know, you have different energy periods over the course of the day. There is certain work that would be better done in your prime time and other work that would be fine to in your down time. You definitely want to use your prime time for your work that requires more focused brainpower. Just by resorting work accordingly you will get a major boost to your productivity.

6. How long do things really take? This is one of the most important facts that you will learn from your time log. You can't really begin to schedule realistically until you know how long things really take. If you over schedule you set yourself up for failure and lose energy. You can't trust your perceptions on how long things take, because anything you like is going to seem short and things you dislike will seem longer. Having a realistic sense of how long things take will also allow you to calculate what is called the time/benefit ratio. For every activity in which you engage there is some benefit, however at minimum it will cost you a certain amount of time. You must ask yourself if the benefit is worth the time it is costing you. Despite the fact that you consider some things a priority there is still another important and difficult cut to make. After examining your time log you may find that one of your major priorities will take too great a percent of your time. You may have to consider a compromise in terms of the level of perfection you put into things.

It is a good idea to do a time log once a year like a check up. Another sign that it is time to do a time log is if you are feeling overwhelmed and not getting it all done. You can also do a time log to just focus in on one aspect of your work. For example, how long does it take you to deal with your e mail.

Whenever you choose to do it, you will recover precious time that you can refocus on your highest priorities.



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## LIFE BY DESIGN

*Your humor - laced, high impact display of how work and attitude are tied together by communication is a real key to on and off the job fulfillment..*

– **Howard Schumacher**  
Occupational Safety & Health Manager,  
Department of Energy

### *Managing Time through Conscious Organization™*

Some clients have nicknamed this program, "How to Get a Life." Dr. Brinkman shows people how to organize for success, establish clear priorities, separate work and personal time, recover time to do what is important and eliminate procrastination. It is based on Dr. Brinkman's many years as a counselor in private practice, helping people remove the obstacles to moving forward on what is dear to them in life.

#### **Audience members learn how to:**

- Recognize, clarify and stick to their priorities.
- Master being here now, and eliminating low priorities.
- Recover time for what is important to them.
- Know when they are winning, because they can be winning and think they are losing if they're are not keeping score.
- Understand how health and energy is connected to feeling in control.
- Use time management techniques that continually work.
- Recognize and dump pseudo-procrastination

This program is hugely popular because attendees learn personal skills that they can apply to both their work and personal lives. This is a thought provoking, feel-good program, with a depth of content that impacts people's lives whether they experience it in a full day, half-day or keynote format. And because it is filled with Dr. Brinkman's trademark style of humor and memorable stories, many clients have used it to finish off a conference on a positive personal message. A book signing of Dr. Brinkman's McGraw-Hill book, ***Life by Design*** (Brinkman & Kirschner, 1998) an be also be arranged.



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## MEETING MAGIC™

*We have had a 3 hour weekly meeting for years. The first time we did your process we got it done in one hour and got more accomplished at a higher quality.*

Wow.

– **Don Anselm**  
Integrated Scheduling,  
Boeing Aircraft & Missiles

### *Using Conscious Communication to Bring Out the Best in People at Meetings*

There is a great mystery that cries out to be solved: why are most meetings so awful, and what can we do to change them? According to a Wall St. Journal survey, 98% of people agreed that 50% of their time in business meetings is wasted. Over the last twenty years, Dr. Brinkman has developed and taught organizations how to have great meetings that are shorter, more effective and more enjoyable!

#### **Dr. Brinkman's compelling meeting tactics include learning how to:**

- Communicate in a way that bypasses conflict and creates an environment where everyone can really hear each other.
- Make sure that the more aggressive types can't dominate and the more passive types feel compelled to participate.
- Appropriately involve people in decisions that affect their work.
- Allow new ideas to evolve in a group process, instead of being shot down.
- Integrate people's opinions and make it easier to make decisions.
- Shorten meetings while getting more accomplished.

This seminar is ideal as a half-day session/breakout or a full-day that includes other useful material from the Conscious Communication program. Participants receive free course materials and can purchase the Meeting Magic book and other tools to help them apply what they've learned in their meetings.

Even in a keynote presentation, Dr. Brinkman's proven process will transform the meeting experience of the audience. If time permits, we can arrange a book signing of Dr. Brinkman book, Meeting Magic. (Publication date pending.) This session is also a perfect breakout to follow a "Dealing With People You Can't Stand" keynote.