

- **There isn't enough time.** "This space that has been granted to us rushes by so speedily and so swiftly that all but a very few find life at an end just as they are getting ready to live" – Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life*

- **We feel this most acutely as overwhelm,** the sense that there's more we must do with the available time than we can do – even though, on close inspection, this makes no sense. How can it truly be the case that you must do more than you can?

- It's not just that there's too little time, though. It's that **we don't feel we're spending what time we have on the right things.** "The spirit of the times is one of joyless urgency, [our lives spent] preparing ourselves and our children to be means to inscrutable ends that are utterly not our own" – Marilynne Robinson, *The Givenness of Things: Essays*

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- Our usual responses to this feeling of being out of control of time are focused on **trying to increase the feeling of being in control:**

- conventional productivity tools and techniques
- efficiency: getting through more stuff in the same amount of time
- rushing
- compulsive planning
- even procrastination is a kind of attempt at control

- **But they don't work, and usually make things worse,** because they're in denial of reality. We don't get to have the kind of control over time that we seek. The way forward to is to surrender to that truth.

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## PERSPECTIVE SHIFTS

**1. There will always be too much to do:** It's not a matter of how you arrange the rocks in the jar. It's that there are too many rocks – so that the real art of time management is figuring out what to neglect, and being willing to neglect much. "It isn't prioritization until it hurts." Try keeping a "done list."

**2. Stop clearing the decks:** ...and pay yourself first: "If you don't save a bit of your time for you, now, out of every week, there is no moment in the future when you'll magically be done with everything and have loads of free time" – Jessica Abel

**3. "This is it":** At some point, the meaning of life has to be *now*. "The purposive man is always trying to secure a spurious and delusive immortality for his actions by pushing his interests in them forward into time. He does not love his cat, but only the cat's kittens; nor in truth the kittens, but only the kittens' kittens, and so on forward forever to the end of cat-dom" – J M Keynes

**4. You only need to deal with the next moment:** We never really "have" time, only one moment followed by the next, so that's all you need to focus on (even if, sometimes, the way to use that moment is in longer-range planning). "Quietly do the next and most necessary thing. So long as you think you don't yet know what that is, you still have too much money to spend in useless speculation. But if you do with conviction the next and most necessary thing, you are always doing something meaningful and intended by fate" – C. G. Jung