



January 2010 [\(pdf - available within 24 hours of this email\)](#)

By Donna Zajonc



Change Your Relationship with Time in 2010

It is common to reflect each January on how we are spending our time and what accomplishments we want for the next year. Each year I realize I am moving at a faster pace and going "24/7." When I recently read the following research study, I knew I wanted to change my relationship with time in 2010. Read on and you will see what I mean.

Social psychologists John Darley and Dan Batson investigated how seminary students at Princeton University behaved when preparing to give a speech on the parable of the Good Samaritan. The speech was to be presented in a building across campus and was to be evaluated by the seminarian's supervisors.

Each student completed their speech preparation and was told that either: (A) He was already late for his speech and that he must hurry to the studio; or (B) He had plenty of time before his presentation but he might as well head on over now. The only difference between the two research groups was the subtle manipulation of time pressure.

As each student walked alone from the preparation classroom to the presentation studio across campus, he encountered a person slumped and coughing in an alleyway, obviously in need of help. Unknown to the student, this person was an accomplice in the research experiment. With no other people nearby, the seminarians were faced with a choice between helping a stranger in distress---as a Good Samaritan would do---or passing him by to fulfill the obligation to present his speech about the importance of being a Good Samaritan.

Would the students in the "late" group be as likely to help the stranger in distress as the students in the "on time" group? Doing the right things for a seminarian ought to take precedence over saying the right thing, right? Not in this research study!

The majority of the students who believed they had plenty of time before their speech---those in the "on time" group---stopped to help the person. This behavior is consistent with their choice of vocation. People who have devoted their lives to helping others would be expected to help a stranger in distress. However 90% of the students in the "late" group failed to stop and help the person in distress.

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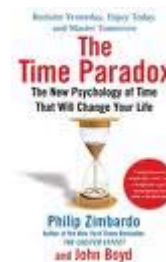
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Book of the Month *The Time Paradox*

by
Philip Zimbardo & John Boyd



[Buy online at Amazon.com](#)

"Based upon thirty years of research, you will gain insight into the seven most common ways people relate to time and take a brief assessment survey of which time perspective you most relate to.

Our rapid-fire lifestyle requires that we understand more about our relationship to time. This

They went directly to give their Good Samaritan speech despite the fact that all of the seminarians in the study reported in a post-study interview that they saw the person in distress. The only difference between the groups was that one group felt pressured by time and the other group was given a more relaxed time schedule. (*The Time Paradox*, p. 16.)

These results stopped me in my tracks. I immediately began to pay more attention to how my attitude and behavior shift when I feel time pressures. I notice I am not as friendly or helpful to people when I am rushing. Occasionally I cut people off in mid sentence or not listen. If I am in a hurry I don't allow a driver to move into my traffic lane. As I look objectively at these patterns, I don't like who I am as a person or leader when I am in a hurry.

If seminary students rushing to give a speech about the Good Samaritan become callus to the needs of a person in obvious distress, imagine what happens to the rest of us when we are facing significant pressures at work. The somber news is our fast-paced way of life is likely to speed up as we use more hi-tech gadgets and our communication patterns become more cryptic. Productivity is going up, but at what price?

I now realize that changing my relationship with time is going to be my primary new focus in 2010. This is no small shift, given that I still want to keep my busy work schedule and personal commitments. Altering my relationship with time does not mean that I am willing to let go of accomplishments I want to achieve or immediately say "no" to opportunities that come my way (although saying "no" more often may be a good thing).

Think of great leader you have been associated with. The truly great ones have mastered this time paradox. They appear to have all the time in the world to share a powerful teaching story, or be the sounding board that you needed in the moment.

This is the time paradox. The more we can be fully present in the moment the more time expands. As the time box swells, we breathe deeper and our awareness grows. A new heightened state of awareness allows us to see things we haven't seen before. We become more available and suddenly we listen more deeply to others, enjoy creative new insights and focus more on what we want to complete in the moment rather than worrying about the time constraints.

We begin to be the person and leader we want to be rather than allow circumstances or self-imposed time constraints to run our life. And here is where another paradox appears. Once we let go of the internal time-talk (examples might sound like: "I have to get that promotion by the end of the year" or "I will loose 20 pounds by April 1" or "I must have my MBA by the end of 2012") we lighten up and have a greater capacity to excel and achieve in the moment.

I am not suggesting that you let go of your goals--quite the contrary. Allow your goals and desires to guide your life but do so with a little less time pressure. Feel the immediate relief when the self-imposed time demands melt away. Your human capacity to nurture powerful relationships and have more creative thoughts will actually increase.

Here's the ultimate New Year challenge. When you meet someone you haven't seen for a while and they ask, "How are you?" Resist the time-cliché

book will give you that insight."

~Donna

Movie of the Month *Invictus*



"This new movie tells the true story of South Africa's Rugby World Cup Championship in 1995. The story behind the story is the leadership genius of Nelson Mandela. *Invictus* will become a classic when models of inspired leadership are discussed decades from now ."

~Donna

Quote of the Month

"The question is not what you look at but what you see."

Henry David Thoreau

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response that we often say, "Oh, I am so busy." Try instead, "I am enjoying slowing down and being more available in the moment." Try it. I guarantee your new relationship with time will allow you to be a more fulfilled person and successful leader.

*Story taken from *The Time Paradox: the New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life* by Philip Zimbardo and John Boyd, Page 16, 2008.

Testimonials

"Donna Zajonc knows her business. She has experience in the public sector and is well-informed on issues that create an effective team. Donna has a very engaging style that makes people feel comfortable and ready to learn. I hope you will consider her for your next team retreat."

Mayor Cary Bozeman
Bremerton, WA

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