

What Would You Do If You Had the Time?

by Mike Hawkins
mike@alpinelink.com



Most people have more to do than time in which to do it. Perhaps it has always been this way, but in recent years it seems there have never been so many projects to complete, events to go to, meetings to attend, devices to maintain, applications to use, articles to read, people to keep up with, assets to maintain, and places to go.

When we see someone and ask how they are doing, the usual answer is something like “Doing fine, but very busy. Wish things would slow down a little.” It’s odd when you think about it though. Being busy is a choice we make. Then we complain about it. But complain for good reason. We go nonstop all day every day. We can’t sit still without looking at our phones. We can’t exercise without watching TV. We

can’t go on vacation without filling it with activity. Some of us are so busy on our vacations we have to go back to work to recover.

What if the opportunity to have more time actual happened? What if there was a pandemic that forced people to stay home as has been the situation for many? Or a workplace furlough for a period of time? Or an opportunity to take a sabbatical? What would people do?

As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, we now know what many people would do. Many would simply want their prior hectic lifestyle back. They can’t stand not being busy. They can’t deal with a calendar full of white space. Without the constant demand for their attention, they are like a boat without a rudder. If people aren’t asking them what to do or telling them what to do, they don’t know what to do.

For others during the pandemic, as horrific as it was, they did something good with their downtime. Some exercised. Some spent more time with family. Some caught up on projects at home. Some read or studied. Some had a spiritual revival. Some acted on ideas they had been considering for years. Some helped others. Many used the opportunity to do things they’d been wanting to do for a long time.

What would you do if you had more time to do whatever you wanted? What if you unexpectedly received two months of free time in the near future? Would you be intentional about how you used it? If you’re not sure, here is an opportunity to give it some thought:

Make a list of the activities you would like to do. Separate them into two categories – tactical and strategic. Define tactical as activities that have a due date. In other words, they have a deadline. Define strategic as activities that don’t have a due date. In other words, they don’t have to be done at all or done by a specific date. Strategic activities are often more important in the long-term than tactical activities, but because they can be deferred, they are often not acted upon.

Now prioritize your list of tactical and strategic activities. What are the top three in each category? Which one(s) would you most like to do if you had the time? Estimate how much time would you need for each.



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Now you can add these to your to-do list and wait for your time off. Or perhaps not wait. Consider whether or not the benefits are significant enough that you could justify allocating time to them sooner than later. In particular, assuming the strategic activities provide the highest long-term benefit, consider how you might allocate more time to them now. Could you deprioritize some of your tactical or less important activity in favor of that which is strategic?

Unless you are retired, allocating time to that which is strategic but not urgent is difficult at best. Impossible for some. Some can't even get all of their tactical work done. But if you seriously comprehend the potential benefit of doing that which is strategic, you might realize that it is a better use of your time. Especially if you are fortunate to have some time to give it.

Appreciate how significant your top strategic activities could improve your family or home life. Or how they could help you professionally or financially. Or spiritually or socially. Or physically or mentally. Or how they could impact your community or others in some significant way.

Can you create some white space on your calendar now for one of your top strategic opportunities? Can you stop doing something else for a while? As the idiom goes, *there is no time like the present*.

Go for it.

Article written by Mike Hawkins, award-winning author of *Activating Your Ambition: A Guide to Coaching the Best Out of Yourself and Others* (www.ActivatingYourAmbition.com), author of the *SCOPE of Leadership* six-book series on coaching leaders to lead as coaches (www.ScopeOfLeadership.com), and president of Alpine Link Corp (www.AlpineLink.com), a boutique consulting firm specializing in leadership development and sales performance improvement.

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