

..... Day 1 .....

# Today *Is* the Time of Your Life



Being rich is having money;  
being wealthy is having time.

—Margaret Bonnano

“Hi, honey. All 168 boxes are packed and ready to go.” I held the phone in one hand and a well worn to-do list in the other as I sank into a chair. I was relieved to tell my husband that all of our belongings and I would soon join him. David was already in California while I was closing things out at our home in upstate New York after our decision to move across the country for his new job. Our three teens would join us later that week.

As we talked, I suddenly noticed a gaping hole with only the prongs standing upright on my engagement ring. I gasped and almost dropped the phone. “Oh no! My diamond is missing! David, you won’t believe it. It’s gone!” At that moment, a million thoughts raced through my mind. Where did I lose it? The movers had just spent two days packing boxes which were ready to be picked up and delivered. I could just picture our three teenagers unpacking the boxes

at the other end and me distraught with agony, scolding them, “Be careful. My diamond could be in there.”

I knew I didn’t want to add any more tension than we already felt. So I took a deep breath and spoke to David in a calm voice. “OK. What do I do now? Was it insured?”

“No,” David said, “but don’t worry; just come. Everything is great here in California.”

“What?! It’s not insured?” I didn’t know whether to scream or cry. This was no ordinary gem. My husband had picked out the diamond especially for me when he was a college student traveling through Europe with his family.

## Was That My Only Diamond?

That night I went to dinner with friends and their two sons, and I told them my dilemma. “We’ll go back and find it,” offered one of the boys. Their parents were eager to come too. However, there was one obstacle—no lights in the house. “No problem, we’ll bring flashlights,” they volunteered.

After dinner, the five of us went back to our empty home. In the darkness, we focused our flashlights on every step we took. “Where were you today?” my friend asked.

I remembered going up the attic steps, so we decided to start there. Carefully, we unfolded the stairs from the ceiling and creaked up one step at a time. Then down the stairs. Next we explored the bedroom . . . the family room . . . the kitchen . . . the living room. As we walked carefully through the last room, I began to lose hope of ever seeing my diamond again.

I paused to regain my thoughts and asked of no one in particular, “Now what would this diamond look like?” I glanced down at the carpet tweeds. “It would look like

this,” I said as I spied something shiny like a piece of plastic wrap. When I picked it up, it held its shape. It was my diamond!

There it was—just sitting at the foot of the attic folding stairs. All five of

### Time-Saving Tip #1

If I have a clear mental picture of what I’m looking for, I can take steps to find it.

us had been up and down that stairway looking for it, yet we missed it. Thankfully, I now had a second chance to appreciate my treasure.

## Time Management Lessons from My Diamond Hunt

I learned some lessons from that emotion-packed diamond hunt that relate to our topic of simplifying time:

**LESSON #1: WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW WAS COSTLY.** As a starry-eyed fiancée, I must have missed the instructions to regularly check the prongs holding the diamond. Regular maintenance would have saved me from a crisis at a critical moment in life.

In time management, there are some basic rules, tools, and skills you need to keep your life running smoothly too. Don't wait for a crisis to realize you missed some important steps. You'll learn them in this book.

**LESSON #2: I TOOK IT FOR GRANTED.** I was wearing my diamond every day but not really seeing it. I liked knowing it was there, but I didn't realize I needed to take better care of it.

Something similar can happen with time. We use time every day, but we don't realize it can get away from us if we don't manage it well.

**LESSON #3: WHEN I KNEW WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR, I FOUND IT.** I thought I knew what my diamond would look like, but I missed it several times. Until I focused on the gem's qualities of size, shape, and color, it remained lost to me.

To simplify your time, you need a clear picture of what you want to find, such as an hour a day to rest or read, an evening a week to meet with friends, or a weekend a month to focus on a hobby or to take a trip. Without attention to your personal goals, you'll never "find" the time to do these things.

It takes insight and new perspective to see what we have missed. In this book, I will give you both.

### Time-Saving Tip #2

Remember, time is on your side if you use it well. But it works against you if you bite off more than you can chew.

# Your Time Is Simple; Your Life Is Not

If practice makes perfect, then we should be awesome time managers! After all, we have been using time every day of our lives. So why aren't we experts at using our time? Because life happens to us. Because we get fuzzy and unfocused. Because we get tired of the "have-tos" and prefer the "want-tos" but get trapped in the "never-get-around-tos." And before we realize it, we run out of time.

When you need more time, where do you go to get it? There are no ATMs or banks for time deposits or withdrawals. But there is something you can do: redistribute your commitments and spend time where you want to. You have 24 hours a day, 168 hours per week, and 8,736 hours per year. They contain all the time you need to achieve the hopes and dreams you were created for—one day at a time.

## Time-Saving Tip #3

You can add time to your life by deleting an activity that is unproductive. But you multiply your time when you add an activity that energizes you.

## Simplify Your Time—How?

To simplify your time, you need to look at the key strategies used by successful time managers, people much like you. These strategies comprise four main categories, and I've chosen one focus per week. Under each category, we'll look at one key skill each day that you can immediately put into practice to simplify your time.

Each week, you'll save enough time to enjoy some extra downtime—whether for work, family, or fun. By the end of our thirty-day journey, you'll be ready to plan future goals and sail right through them. Here's the agenda ahead:

**WEEK 1: PRACTICAL TIME-SAVING HABITS.** From making your bed to handling your paperwork, good habits done quickly will save you lots of time and help your day run smoothly.

**WEEK 2: PRACTICAL TIME-SAVING TOOLS.** With the right tools, you'll be able to organize, simplify, maintain your time, and minimize stress as you respond to myriad daily challenges.

WEEK 3: PRACTICAL TIME-SAVING SKILLS. Once you have implemented time-saving habits and time tools, you'll want to learn the skills to "break the rules" and solve problems that arise.

WEEK 4: PRACTICAL TIME-SAVING STRATEGIES. Once your everyday life is working, you'll have time to look ahead and plan for future seasons, as well as create a plan for what to do when life brings challenges you didn't expect.

With thirty days of time-saving tips and systems, plus 100 time-saving tips tucked into the thirty chapters, you can begin having the time of your life. You will be more conscious of how you spend your time, who you spend it with, how you squander some of it, and how you wish to reorder it. In other words, you'll be in charge of your time instead of your time being in charge of you.

## What Does It Mean to Simplify Your Time?

Simplifying your time involves managing yourself in regard to your available time to accomplish your goals at a reasonable pace. Once you start applying the principles in this book, you'll be able to simplify your time to stop running and start living.

With more time as your sought-after treasure, you can

- divide it;
- multiply it;
- supersize it;
- minimize it;
- evaluate it;
- delegate it;
- reassign it;

As we begin our journey to simplify your time, we are going on a hunt—for your "time" diamond. Time is the basis of all that you do and want to do. Let's find the time problems and time solutions that will simplify your life—starting today!

## Decision Statement

I want to make my life better—and I believe the place to start is learning how to spend my time more effectively. I’m willing to go on a “diamond hunt” to find the solution to my time challenges for thirty days.

I want to simplify my life by simplifying my time. And I’m determined to make the necessary changes by taking this four week 30-day journey. After all, this *is* the time of my life!

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Your Signature

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Start Date

The highest reward for a person’s toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.

—John Ruskin