

Wednesday's Wisdom

a weekly short note from Mike Minear

Time is More Valuable Than Gold

By Charlie Reese

When each human being is born, God opens a checking account in his name and makes a single deposit. The currency is more valuable than gold or platinum. It's time.

Now this celestial life account operates quite differently from human checking accounts. There is only one deposit. The account holder will draw on it, in fact has to draw on it, but he can not add to it. No deposits are allowed. No interest is paid.

THE MOST INTRIGUING thing about it is we are never allowed to know the balance in our accounts. We just write checks on it until suddenly one day we are notified that the balance is zero and the account is closed.

Time also differs from human currency, like dollars. When we buy something with money, we can take it back and get a refund. When we spend time, there is no refund, no exchange, and no credit. Whatever we spend our time on, we are stuck with forever. Hours spent watching television, for example, cannot be reclaimed and relieved. We have paid units of life for the view, and for better or worse that's what we get memories of sitcoms or ballgames.

Money can be invested and earn more money, but time cannot. No matter what we do we cannot increase the balance in our life account by a single second. We can only draw it down. Even if we do nothing but sit in a corner and stare out the window, we are spending time units and drawing down our balance.

Contrary to popular and profitable misconceptions, we cannot manage time. No matter what we do it flows away at the same steady, inexorable rate. All we can do is choose what activities we will pursue during the flow of our time units. We can control ourselves, but not time.

Time units do share one thing in common with money. If we have \$ 1 billion, then \$1 seems insignificant. This psychological phenomenon has a name in economics jargon 101, but I can't recall it. It just means that the more we have of something, the less valuable each individual unit seems. And "seems" is the key word, for we are talking about perception, not reality.

Are you spending your time wisely? I think you can see where I am headed with this 3 part series.

Note Charlie Reese was staff reporter of our local newspaper, the Orlando Sentinel.