

If Not NOW, then WHEN?

An exploration of Daniel Pink's book
'WHEN: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing'

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A few months ago, I downloaded one of those productivity Apps that track and analyze how you spend your time each day, week, month and year. While I like to think of myself as a somewhat productive person, I must confess that this little technological tool has been a bit of a game changer for me.

As some of you may be aware, most days I commute a minimum of two hours to and from work. While I didn't need an app to tell me that I was driving more than 10 hours per week, or 40 hours per month (my back and shoulders could more than do that), the app did put that time I spent sitting in my car in perspective with my other daily and weekly activities. I recall vividly the day the projection suggested that, given current trends, I will spend more than 480 hours driving to and from work this year - third only to **work** and **sleep** in my projected "time" pie chart. Seeing it expressed in this way, I recall thinking, "That's almost three solid weeks of time - Whoa!"

This new perspective resulted in a search to find things that I can safely do while commuting to help me feel a little better about this 'wasted' time. My quest led me to audiobooks. My frugality (some would call me cheap 😊) brought me to my local library to find audiobooks I could access for **free**. The librarian introduced me to the beautiful online library available to me with my New Brunswick Public Library Card and the OVERdrive app. Voila! My 'wasted' commute time is now converted to 10 hours per week of 'learning time', fueled by over a thousand audiobooks that are updated regularly.

Coincidentally, one of my recent 'listens' was best-selling author Daniel Pink's book, "**When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing**". Named one of the best non-fiction books of 2018, it attempts to help unlock the scientific secrets of 'good timing', allowing us to flourish at work, at school, and at home. In the first chapter, Pink notes, "*Timing, we believe, is an art. I will show that timing is really a science — an emerging body of multifaceted, multidisciplinary research that offers fresh insights into the human condition and useful guidance on **working smarter and living better**.*"

*Rather than a **how-to** book, think of this book as a new genre altogether — a **when-to** book."*

“Don't count the days, make the days count.”

- Muhammad Ali

The following is a summary of my favorite quotes from the book with a special emphasis on those that I think deserve special consideration for teachers. I've taken the liberty to organize them in categories to make it easy to skim and scan for any that you believe may have application in your own life.

When (and How) to Structure Your Day:

"The day is perhaps the most important way we divide, configure, and evaluate our time." — We all get 24 hours a day, and you can really only design your life one day at a time.

*"Every day includes **"a peak, a trough, and a rebound" (a U-shaped pattern)**. "Positive mood rises in the morning, dips in the afternoon, and rises again in the evening." — Happiness, warmth toward others, enjoyment, and emotional balance all follow this U-shaped pattern.*

"One British survey got even more precise when it found that the typical worker reaches the most unproductive moment of the day at 2:55 p.m." — Hmmm...When are most staff meetings and opportunities for collaboration in education scheduled?

*"**Lunch breaks, naps, and taking walks** are not laziness — in many cases, they are necessities."*

"Whatever you do, do not let mundane tasks creep into your peak period."

