



By Joe Byerly

Originally Published on [We Are the Mighty](#)

Every day we use words and phrases, yet we rarely take the time to think about what they mean.

For example, think about the phrase, “Spending time”.

Typically when we talk about spending, we use it in the context of time or money. However, we treat both very differently. We're stingy with our money, spending days or weeks mulling over how we want to spend, save it or invest it. We track it down to the penny in our checkbooks or online checking accounts.

But time is different. Many of us don't think twice about how or where we spend it. We get in a routine or let life happen and then all of a sudden, time is spent. As a result, we neglect

important relationships, miss out on great achievements or let ourselves go physically, mentally and emotionally. Then, one day we look in a mirror and ask ourselves where the time went.

This isn't a 21st century problem; this is a human problem. The Stoic Philosopher Seneca commented on time wasters almost 2000 years ago, writing:

"Were all the geniuses of history to focus on this single theme, they could never fully express their bafflement at the darkness of the human mind...No person hands out their money to passerby, but to how many do each of us hand out our lives! We're tight fisted with property and money, yet think too little of wasting time, the one thing about which we should all be the toughest misers."

In addition to treating time differently than money, there is another major difference between the two: We can always earn more money, but as Tim Urban points out on his blog [Wait But Why](#), "Time is finite." Once it is gone, it is gone. We can't get it back.

He emphasizes the preciousness of time by saying the weeks of our lives are like a fine gem. If you multiply the volume of a .05 carat diamond by the number of weeks in 90 years (4,680) it adds up to under a tablespoon. We have to be deliberate about what we do with each carat - each day - each week - because they will quickly disappear.

So we have a choice.

Time can be wasted or it can be a powerful force multiplier. We can either focus on the fatalistic aspect of time, or we can use this awareness to motivate ourselves into doing something with the time we are given. Small investments of time in relationships, a skill or

toward a goal can add up and produce amazing results. Our relationships can be more rewarding, we can achieve things we once thought were too daunting and all we have to do is spend our time wisely.

For example, the author Stephen King has written over 60 novels and over 200 short stories. When asked about his productivity he said,

*"One word at a time...It sounds too simple to be true, but consider the Great Wall of China, if you will: one stone at a time, man. That's all. One stone at a time. But I've read you can see that motherf*cker from space without a telescope."*

Time is what I'm thinking a lot about as I sit at home during this uncertain period in America. I'm not sure how long social distancing will last or how long the gyms, restaurants, and schools will be closed. I only know that I don't want to get to the end of this -weeks or months from now and have nothing to show for my time.

So, I guess my advice to myself and to you over the next several weeks is to remember: One word at a time. One workout at a time. One moment at a time with a loved one. It adds up and it is time well spent.

Share this:

- [Email](#)
- [Tweet](#)
- 
- [Print](#)

Why we all need to pay attention to how we're spending our time

- [WhatsApp](#)