



BY RALPH KEYES

TIME

Are You a Slave to Your Schedule?

We all struggle with the time crunch. But how can we know the difference between normal schedule overload and an unhealthy fixation on our calendars? Ralph Keyes, author of *Timelock* (HarperCollins), a book that looks at the American way of hurrying and offers insights into easing the strain, created this questionnaire to help us determine whether we are, in fact, enslaved by our schedules.

To complete the quiz, simply circle the number beside each answer that most

accurately describes your own personal approach to time. Then, use the answer key at the end of the questionnaire to score your answers.

1. In a typical week, how often do you wear or carry a watch?

- (1) Regularly
- (2) Part of the time
- (3) Occasionally
- (4) Almost never

2. How many hours do you sleep in an average week night?

- (1) Five or less
- (2) Six
- (3) Seven
- (4) Eight or more

3. When driving, how often do you exceed the speed limit?

- (1) Regularly
- (2) Often
- (3) Seldom
- (4) Almost never

4. As you approach an intersection, if a green light turns to yellow are you most likely to:

- (1) Speed up to get through before it turns to red?
- (4) Slow down and wait for the next green light?

5. Compared to your life ten years ago, would you say you have more or less leisure time?

- (1) Less
- (2) About the same
- (3) A bit more
- (4) A lot more

6. How would you compare the amount of time you spend running errands today with the amount you spent ten years ago?

- (1) More
- (2) About the same
- (3) Somewhat less
- (4) A lot less

7. During the past year, how many books would you estimate you've read from beginning to end?

- (1) Two or fewer
- (2) Three to five
- (3) Six to ten
- (4) Eleven or more

8. How good are you at glancing at your watch or a clock without anyone else noticing?

- (1) Very good
- (2) Good
- (3) Fair
- (4) Not good at all

9. How would you rate your ability to conduct a conversation and appear to be paying attention while thinking about something else at the same time?

- (1) Excellent
- (2) Good
- (3) Fair
- (4) Poor

10. How often do you find yourself interrupting the person with whom you're talking?

- (1) Regularly
- (2) Often
- (3) Occasionally
- (4) Rarely

11. When talking on the telephone, are you more likely to:

- (1) Do paperwork, wash dishes or do some other chore
- (2) Straighten up the surrounding area
- (3) Do small personal tasks (e.g., file nails, reset watch)
- (4) Do nothing else

12. In an average week, how many evening or weekend hours do you spend working overtime or on work you've brought home?

- (1) Sixteen or more
- (2) Eleven to fifteen
- (3) Six to ten
- (4) Five or less

13. During a typical weekend, do you engage primarily in:

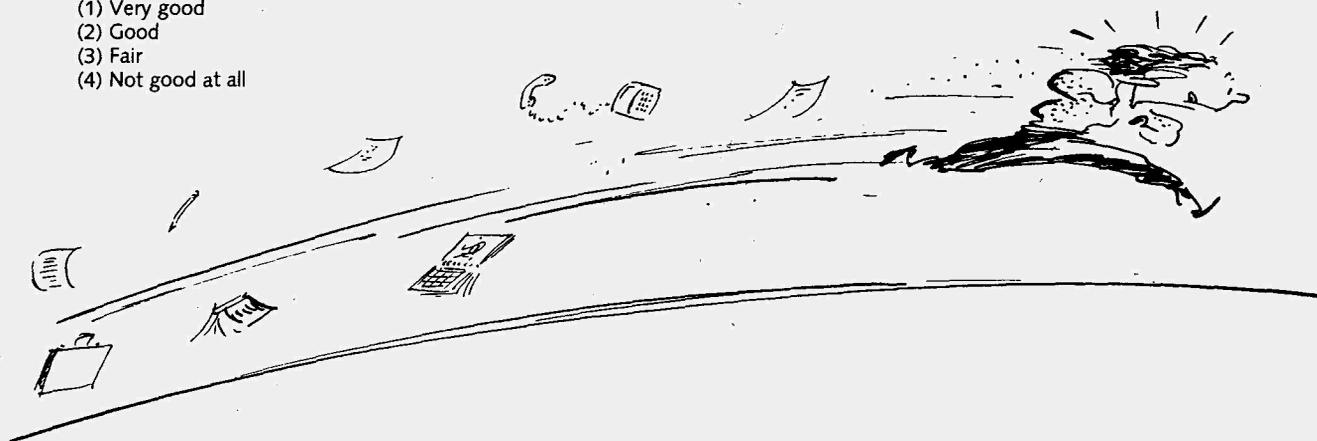
- (1) Work for income
- (2) Household chores and errands
- (3) Leisure activities
- (4) Catching up on sleep and relaxing

14. In a typical year, how many weeks of paid vacation do you take?

- (1) One or less
- (2) Two
- (3) Three
- (4) Four or more

15. On the whole, do you find vacations:

- (1) Frustrating
- (2) Tedious
- (3) Relaxing
- (4) Rejuvenating



16. How often do you find yourself wishing you had more time to spend with family members or friends?

- (1) Constantly
- (2) Often
- (3) Occasionally
- (4) Almost never

17. During a typical day, how often do you feel rushed?

- (1) Constantly
- (2) Often
- (3) Occasionally
- (4) Almost never

18. Which one of these statements best describes your typical daily schedule?

- (1) There aren't enough hours in the day to do everything I have to do
- (2) On the whole I have just about enough time to do what I have to do
- (3) I can usually do the things I have to do with time left over
- (4) The day seems to have more hours than I'm able to fill

19. During the past year, would you say your life has grown:

- (1) Busier
- (2) About the same
- (3) Somewhat less busy
- (4) A lot less busy

Which of the following statements best describe your attitude? (Choose only one answer per grouping.)

- (1) When I have a train or plane to catch, I like to arrive as close as possible to the scheduled departure time so I won't have to waste time sitting around.
- (4) I always try to leave extra time to get to an airport or train station so I won't have to worry about missing my departure.

- (1) At a restaurant, I like my food to arrive as soon as possible after I've ordered.
- (4) I don't mind waiting a few minutes for the food I've ordered at a restaurant.

- (1) What I like about microwave ovens is that they cut way down on the amount of time it takes to prepare meals.
- (4) I'd rather spend extra time preparing meals than use a microwave oven on a regular basis.

- (1) I often use a remote-control device to scan a lot of television channels so I can see what's on.
- (4) To me a remote control is a convenient tool for turning the television on or off, adjusting the volume or occasionally changing channels.

- (1) I like the lively pace of today's television programs.
- (4) I have trouble keeping up with the pace of today's television programs.

- (1) With so many other demands on my time, I find it hard to keep up friendships.
- (4) I try to make time to see my friends on a regular basis.

SCORING

Add up the total of all the numbers you circled. A score of 25 to 40 indicates that you are *timelocked*. A total of 41 to 55 indicates you are *pressed for time*. If you scored 56 to 71, you are *in balance*. And a score of 72 to 86 indicates you have *time on your hands*.

HOW TO FREE YOURSELF FROM SCHEDULE SLAVERY

If you are struggling with time pressures to an unhealthy extent, here are some ways to help ease the crunch.

1. Develop a new, more relaxed sense of time. Psychologist Martin Seligman observed that humans "invented" time—time is an abstract idea, not some natural phenomenon or unstoppable force. Time is not your enemy. Try approaching time with a more relaxed attitude.

2. Plan life, not time. There's more to life than crossing off items on a to-do list. Ask yourself, "What do I hope to accomplish overall?"; not "What do I want to get done?" Ruthlessly weed out anything that doesn't enhance your day.

3. Don't force yourself into some time-management mold. Don't feel you have to make lists, prioritize and keep orderly schedules. Listen to your own internal clock, paying particular attention to those times of day or night you are most effective. Don't feel you have to make every minute count—it will only make you feel more stressed. And cut back on sleep only in an emergency.

4. Don't be a "rushaholic." Take brief timeouts through the day. If at all possible take naps, and don't

be embarrassed about it. Occasionally take the slower path (climb the stairs instead of riding the elevator; bake something instead of microwaving it).

5. Adjust your schedule, and vary the rhythm of your days. Give yourself a free hour—when you're really busy, that hour feels like a day in the country.

6. Don't wear a watch, and try not to glance at the clock every few minutes.

7. Limit too much frenetic sensory input—TV, radio, newspapers, car phones, call waiting. Cultivate hobbies that are quiet, slow and not time-bound. Take Sundays seriously as days set apart for worship and relaxation.

8. Limit purchases. The less we own, the more time we have at our disposal. And remember that the fancy, high-tech gadget that promises to be a timesaver may actually take *more* time (do you need to keyboard it on a computer, or will pen and paper suffice?).

9. Pay attention to yourself and others. Spend more time per person with fewer people.

10. Upgrade family time. Leading less hectic lives improves our ability to pay attention to our families. Any "sacrifices" made to ease our schedules will be more than paid back in an improved quality of life at home.